**Ethnographic research methods applied in intercultural settings**

**Abstract**

Ethnographic research is the study of the cultural patterns and perspectives of participants in their natural settings. The goal of ethnographic research is to study the meanings structured by culture, that is to describe, analyze and interpret the culture of a group, over time, in terms of the group’s shared transmitted symbols, language, understandings, beliefs, behaviors, and ways of being. As a type of qualitative research, ethnographic perspective recognizes the complex relationship between researcher and participants as part of the research questions. The research results are understandings that make sense to the actors themselves in terms of collective shared interpretive frameworks. Ethnographic inquiry involve necessarily time for the researcher to become familiar with foreign cultures and languages, to learn to navigate within unfamiliar physical, social and communicative environments (institutions, daily routines, beliefs that guide actions).

This lecture will be focused on:

• epistemological postpositivist and constructivist assumptions of ethnographic approach (e.g., reality can never be fully apprehended, only approximated, the reality is socially constructed, there are multiple realities, the knower creates understandings and a naturalistic set of methodological procedures are applied to generate knowledge);

• main questions addressed through ethnographic research (e.g., What is happening here? What kinds of activities are these persons engaging in? What are the folk theories that inform and rationalize their activities? What are the larger contexts and activities in which these activities are embedded?);

• stages of ethnographic research (i.e., determination of research purpose and of research field, obtaining the access to the institution(s) where research take place, collecting data, analyzing data, and writing the ethnographic account);

• ethnographic methods (e.g., long-term participant-observation in naturalistic settings and in-depth interviewing) providing qualitative (nonnumerical) data, such as extensive notes taken at a research site, videotape and audiotape recordings and other artifact;

• required conditions for researcher to fulfill in conducting ethnographic research.