



Anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston with notebook tucked under her arm in Eatonville, Florida, where she conducted long-term fieldwork. *Alan Lomax Collection, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., 1935.*

## ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH DESIGN & FIELD METHODS

ANTH 652

T: 5:30-8:00

EQB 205

Prof C. Anne Claus

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Anthropology Department, Hamilton 306

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:15-5:00 or by appointment

**Course Description:** This graduate seminar is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of ethnographic research. The course focuses on anthropological research ethics, ethnographic research design, interview-based and observational methods of data collection and documentation, and qualitative ethnographic data analysis. This class assumes that you are already familiar with anthropological texts, ethnographies. A major outcome of this class is the preparation of an ethnographic research proposal, in National Science Foundation (NSF) Cultural Anthropology format, which incorporates the skills and approaches discussed in class.

**Seminar format:** Classes will be 2 hours and 30 minutes long, usually introduced by the instructor and followed by student-led discussion of the readings and assignments, occasional short lectures by the instructor or other guest speakers, and in-class data collection and analysis exercises. We will have one short break during the class. Regular peer review of assignments in small groups will be an important component of this class. Students will commit to reading proposals for discussion and feedback, in an atmosphere of constructive critique, engagement, and peer support.

**Required and Recommended Texts:** The following books can be obtained new or used from the campus bookstore or an online bookseller. If you have difficulty purchasing the books, please contact the instructor. These books are also on 2-hour reserve at the library. All other course readings will be available on Blackboard or in class.

- Tuhiwai-Smith, Linda. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books, 2012. (There are two editions of this book, from 1999 and 2012, either is fine.)
- Wolf, Margery. *A Thrice Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility*. Stanford University Press, 1992.
- (recommended) Bernard, H. Russell. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. (Many editions of this book exist, but you could probably get by with an older one. Page numbers/chapters are from the 2011 (5<sup>th</sup>) edition.)

**Grading:** Major assignments and their percentage of student grades are as follows:

Class participation	30%
Assignments	30%
Final proposal/presentation	40%

**Requirements:** There are three requirements for the course:

**1. Participation**

I expect that students will come to each class fully prepared to discuss that week's assigned readings in depth. Active, ongoing, engaged classroom participation counts for 30% of your grade. This includes peer-review of the work of other students, which is an integral part of this class. If you cannot attend a particular class, let me know in the first two weeks of the semester.

**2. Leading discussion:**

In partnership with other students, you will help to lead our discussion three times during the semester. In the syllabus below you will see that, during some weeks, the readings are divided into "A" and "B." "A" reading discussions will be facilitated by a group of 2 students. Those who sign up to present "A" readings will (in partnership with others) frame what you see as some significant issues in that week's readings and prepare some questions and topics for the class to explore, or later in the semester lead an exercise as noted below. Feel free to use the class blackboard site to circulate questions before the class meets (ideally, by Sunday at 5:00 p.m.). The

fact that someone else will usually be preparing to lead discussion about the “A” readings does not excuse you from coming to class fully prepared to discuss the material.

“B” readings (marked as “recommended”) have practical advice for field methods, and will be reviewed and presented by one student only—and accompanied by a handout, uploaded to BB and circulated in class, that summarizes the insights gained from reading the article.

### 3. Assignments:

This class is designed to prompt you to do much of the work for your final projects as the semester progresses. We will be concurrently doing two things over the course of the semester: 1) learning (experientially) about ethnographic field methods and 2) writing a research proposal. You will be required to write an NSF-style research proposal for this class. There will be regular peer-review sessions of sections of your research proposal, so that by the end of the semester when you turn it in, sections of the proposal will already have been reviewed and revised. The finished proposal is worth 40% of your final grade.

In almost every class meeting that we are not conducting peer review of your proposals, we will have field method assignments. Together your methods assignments make up 30% of your grade. Some of these assignments will be turned in to me, and others will be turned into your (rotating) peer review group. All assignments that you turn in to me should be single spaced and, if possible, printed on both sides of the paper (more details are on the assignments sheet). Please also upload a copy of your final proposal to the BB site. *\*\*Note that most assignments are due by the Sunday before our Tuesday classes either to my mailbox in Hamilton or to your peer review group via BB (see chart below). If you have trouble submitting your assignments earlier in the week or getting to campus to hand in paper copies by the due date, please talk to me in the first 2 weeks of the semester.*

Due date	Field Method Assignment (due in CAC mailbox, 5 p.m.)	Research Proposal (for peer review, except for final).	(ss=single-spaced)
1/15	<i>In-class assignment</i>		
1/22		Abstract of research proposal (4 copies)	1 p ss
1/27	Fieldnotes/coding		
2/5		Outline, 3 bodies of literature (4 copies)	1-2 p ss
2/10		Abstract analysis/grants outline (*on BB)	
2/17	Personal genealogy		
2/24	Interview trans/case study		
3/12	<b>No class, Spring Break</b>		
3/17		Intro/Lit Review/Broader Impacts (BB)	3 pp ss
3/24		Objectives/Hypotheses (BB)	1-2 pp ss
3/31		Research design/work schedule (BB)	3 pp ss
4/7		Methods/analysis (BB)	1-2 pp ss
4/14		Proposal abstract, NSF-style (BB)	1 p ss
4/23		Proposal presentation (in-class)	
4/30		Final proposal due	8-10 pp ss

### COURSE SCHEDULE:

*Readings:* All assigned readings and assignments are due the day they are listed in the syllabus. You are expected to have completed the readings before class in order to

attain the level of class discussion desired. Do not come to class unless you have completed them.

In some class sessions, there are “A” and “B” readings. **All students are required to read the “A” readings.** Usually one student will be responsible for reading and summarizing the “B” readings(s). Other students should treat the “B” readings as **recommended references** that they may draw on to compose their assignments and draft their research proposals. **Optional readings** are for your information, and are to be used as resources for discussants and for future reference.

**DISCUSSION-LEADING RESPONSIBILITIES: “A” readings:** Please prepare to lead or co-lead discussion for around 60 minutes. Leaving time for other students to bring up their own questions on the readings is a good idea too. **“B” readings:** Please prepare to spend about 10-15 minutes reviewing and explaining the reading, discussion how you think it will be useful for other students in the class and at what point of their research design/implementation.

## **I. THE NATURE OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH**

### **Jan 23: Class introduction**

**\*\*In-class exercise:** *searching out anthropology grants.*

**\*\*In-class assignment:** *short essay about your goals in the class.*

- (optional) Malinowski, Bronislaw. “Method and Scope of Anthropological Fieldwork.” Pp 4-25 in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Western Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1982 [1922]].
- (optional) Malinowski, Bronislaw. “Appendix II: Confessions of Ignorance and Failure.” In *Coral Gardens and their Magic*. American Book Company, 1935.
- (optional) Firebaugh, Glenn. 2008. Ch. 1, “The First Rule.” In *Seven Rules for Research*. Princeton University Press.

### **Jan 22: Premises of the ethnographic method**

**\*\*In-class assignment:** Find and read requirements for NSF anthropology grants online.

**A:**

- Ingold, Timothy. 2017. Anthropology Contra Ethnography. HAU, Journal of Ethnographic Theory. Vol 7:21-26.
- Da Col, Giovanni and David Graeber. 2011. Pp vi-xv in “Foreward: The Return of Ethnographic Theory.” HAU, Journal of Ethnographic Theory. Vol 1:1.
- Katz, Jack. (2001) "From How to Why: On Luminous Description and Causal Inference in Ethnography (Part I)." *Ethnography* 2(4): 443-473.
- (optional) Katz, Jack. (2002) "From How to Why: On Luminous Description and Causal Inference in Ethnography (Part II)." *Ethnography* 3(1): 63-90.

**B:**

- (recommended) Abbott, Andrew, 2011. “Library Research Infrastructure for Humanistic and Social Scientific Scholarship in America in the Twentieth Century.” In *Social Knowledge in the Making*, ed. C. Camic, N. Gross, and M. Lamont, 43-87. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- (optional) The Paris Review, 2009. "Gay Talese, The Art of Nonfiction no. 2." Available at <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/5925/gay-talese-the-art-of-nonfiction-no-2-gay-talese>

**\*\*Bring 4 copies (printed) of an abstract of your research proposal to class (details on BB).**

**\*\*\*Field notes/coding assignment due next Sunday.**

## **II: ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN**

### **Jan 29: Qualitative Research Design**

***\*Guest workshop on using Nvivo software, meet in class and bring a laptop or prepare to share with another student.***

**A:**

- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). "Competing paradigms in qualitative research." In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications.
- Bernard, Russell. "Field Notes: How to Take Them, Code Them, Manage Them." Ch 14, and "A Vocabulary for Fieldnotes." In *Fieldnotes*. R. Sanjek, ed. Cornell University Press: 1990.
- Pzeworski, Adam and Salomon, Frank. "On the Art of Writing Proposals." SSRIC, 1995 (available online at [www.ssrc.org/publications](http://www.ssrc.org/publications))

**B:**

- (recommended) LeCompte and Schensul, 1999. "Analysis from the top down." Ch. 5 in *Analyzing and Interpreting Ethnographic Data*, Book 5 in The Ethnographer's Toolkit. Altamira Press.
- (optional) "Examples of Fieldnotes." In *Fieldnotes*. R. Sanjek, ed. Cornell University Press: 1990.
- (optional) Bernard, Russell. "Participant Observation." Ch. 12.

### **Feb 5: Research in the Archives**

***\*\*We will meet with an archival librarian from AU this week. Meet in the Spring Valley Building, more info below:***

***\*No discussion leaders this week, and light reading load to enable you to dedicate ample time to your lit review.***

**A:**

- (optional) Stoler, Ann Laura. 2002. "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance." *Archival Science* 2: 87-109.
- (optional) Ulrich, Laurel. 1987. "Housewife and Gadder: Themes of Self-sufficiency and Community in Eighteenth-Century New England." In: Groneman C, Norton MB To Toil the Livelong Day: America's Women at Work, 1780-1980. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, pp. 21-34.

**\*\*\*Bring 4 copies (printed) outline of three bodies of literature that you will address in your proposal to class today (assignment details on BB).**

**\*\*\*NSF Abstracts/Grant outline assignments due to BB folder by next Sunday.**

Pens, food, drink, coats, or bags are not permitted in the Reading Room. We have lockers available for use. Patrons are welcome to bring in laptops, silent cell phones, pencils, and paper. The reading room is very cold, please dress to your comfort.

Archives and Special Collections is located in the Spring Valley Building (SVB) at 4801 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20016. There is a parking garage with pay-as-you-go fare machines located under the building – the entrance is off Massachusetts Avenue. Additional metered parking is available on the surrounding streets. There are also free University shuttle services available to get to and from the Spring Valley Building <https://www.american.edu/finance/facilities/shuttle.cfm>:

- The Red Route Express runs between SVB and the Tenleytown Metro Station, and stops at the Katzen Arts Center at Main Campus in between.
- The Green Route runs between SVB and Main Campus.

Once inside the building, Archives and Special Collections is located on the second floor next to classrooms 201 and 202. Follow the building directories and signs for University Archives (the signage lists both 204 and 205 as the suite number, both get you to the same place). Please ring the doorbell outside the Archives suite when you arrive and a staff member will greet you at the door to assist you.

### **III: FIELD METHODS**

#### **Feb 12: Systems for organization and interpretation**

**\*\*We will discuss note taking and bibliographic software in class this week.**

**A:**

- Geurts, Kathryn Linn. 2002. "On Rocks, Walks, and Talks in West Africa: Cultural Categories and an Anthropology of the Senses." *Ethos* 10:3, 178-198.
- Feld, Stephen. 1987. "Dialogic Editing: Interpreting How Kaluli Read Sound and Sentiment." *Cultural Anthropology* 2:2, 190-210.

**B:**

- (optional) Converse, J. M. and Presser, S. Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardized Questionnaire. Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, No. 07-063. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1986. (*A succinct introduction.*)
- (optional) Fowler, F.J. Jr. Improving Survey Questions: Design and Evaluation, Applied Social Research Methods Series Volume 38. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1995 (*Introductory text, more info than C&P.*)
- (optional) Sudman, S., & Bradburn, N. Asking questions: A practical guide to questionnaire design. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1982.

**\*\*\*Personal Genealogies Assignment due Sunday next week.**

#### **Feb 19: Ethnographic Research: Delimiting People(s) and Place(s)**

**\*\*\*Class mapping workshop in second half of class**

**\*No discussion leaders this week.**

**A:**

- Sprague, David. 2011. "Mapping Anxiety." Hot Spots, *Cultural Anthropology* website, July 26. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/306-mapping-anxiety>

- (recommended) Harley, J.B. 1989. "Deconstructing the Map." *Cartographica* 26:2, 1-10.
- In-class viewing of *Beyond the Map*.  
<https://beyondthemap.withgoogle.com/en-us/beyond-the-map/rio>

**\*\*\*Interview Transcription/Case Study Due Sunday next week.**

## **Feb 26: Unstructured, Semi-structured, and Structured Interviews**

**A:**

- Wolf, Margery. 1992. "The Woman Who Didn't Become a Shaman" (ch 4) in *A Thrice Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility*. Stanford University Press.
- Bernard, Russell. Ch 9. "Interviewing II: Questionnaires."

**B:**

- (recommended) Bernard, Russell. Ch 8, "Interviewing I: Unstructured and Semistructured."
- (optional) Columbia School of Journalism, "Interviewing Principles."  
Available at  
<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/isaacs/edit/MencherIntv1.html>

**\*\*\*Continue to work on your lit reviews this week**

## **March 5: Collaborative Research**

**A:**

- Choy, T. K., Faier, L., Hathaway, M. J., Inoue, M., Satsuka, S. and Tsing, A. 2009. "A new form of collaboration in cultural anthropology: Matsutake worlds." *American Ethnologist*, 36: 380-403.
- Campbell, Lisa. 2005. "Overcoming Obstacles to Interdisciplinary Research." *Conservation Biology* 19:2.
- (optional) Kelly, William. 2000. "Caught in the Spin Cycle: An Anthropological Observer at the Sites of Japanese Professional Baseball." In S. Long (ed.), *Moving Targets: Ethnographies of Self and Community in Japan*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

**B:**

- (recommended) Maxwell, Joseph A. 2012. "Conceptual Context: What Do You Think Is Going On?" Ch. 3 in *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Sage Publications.

**\*\*\*Intro/Lit Review/Broader Impacts Section due the Sunday after spring break, 3/17.**

## **March 12: No class, Spring Break**

## **March 19: Ethics, Human Subjects, and Informed Consent**

**A:**

- Bourgois, Philippe. 1990. "Confronting Anthropological Ethics: Ethnographic Lessons from Central America." *Journal of Peace Research*. 27:1, 43-54.
- Code of Ethics, AAA (available on the AAA website).



- (optional) Parry, Marc. 2015. "Conflict Over Sociologist's Narrative Puts Spotlight on Ethnography." *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Available at <http://chronicle.com/article/Conflict-Over-Sociologists/230883>
- (optional) Lederman, Rena. 2007. "Educate your IRB: An Experiment in Cross Disciplinary Communication." *Anthropology News*, September.

**\*\*AU IRB exercise, led by discussion leaders, in class**

**\*\*In-class peer review of Intro/Lit Review/Broader Impacts assignment**

**\*\*\*Objectives/Hypotheses Section Due Sunday next week.**

## **March 26: Reflection and Reflexivity in ethnographic fieldwork**

**A:**

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1991. "Writing Against Culture." Ch. 43 in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, ed. Richard E. Fox. School of American Research, Santa Fe.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Mules and Men*. Introduction, Chapter 1 (pp 1-17).
- (optional) Favret-Asaada, Jeanne. "The Way Things Are Said." Ch 33 in *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader, Second Edition*. Robben and Sluka, Eds. Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
- (optional) De Neve, Geert, 2006. "Hidden Reflexivity: Assistants, Informants, and the Creation of Anthropological Knowledge." Ch 5 in De Neve and Unnithan-Kumar, eds. *Critical Journeys: The Making of Anthropologists*." Ashgate Press.

**\*\*In-class assignment led by discussion leaders: reflexive essay on your own position as researcher.**

**\*\*In-class peer review of Objectives/Hypothesis Section.**

**\*\*\* Research design/work schedule due Sunday next week.**

## **IV: FIELDWORK CHALLENGES**

### **April 2: Audiences, Defined and Debated**

**A:**

- Tuhiwai-Smith, Linda. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books, 2012.
- (optional) Dove, Michael. "New Barbarism" or Old Agency Among the Dayak? Reflections on Post-Suharto Ethnic Violence in Kalimantan. *Social Analysis*, Vol 50: 1: 192-202. Spring 2006.

**\*\*In-class peer review of Research Design/Work schedule assignment**

**\*\*\*Methods/analysis section due Sunday next week.**

### **April 9: Anticipating Hazards and Dangers of Fieldwork**

**\*Guest speaker panel in class**

**A:**

- Nash, June. 2012. "Ethnology in a Revolutionary Setting." Ch 15 in Robben and Sluka, *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader*. Wiley-Blackwell.



- Mahmood, Cynthia Keppley. 2008 "Anthropology from the Bones: A Memoir of Fieldwork, Survival, and Commitment." *Anthropology and Humanism*. 33:1-2, pp 1-11.
- Sluka, Jeffrey. 1995. "Reflections on Managing Danger in Fieldwork: Dangerous Anthropology in Belfast." In *Fieldwork Under Fire*: University of California Press, Editors: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius Robben, pp.276-294

*\*\*In-class peer review of methods/analysis assignment*

**\*\*\*Rewritten NSF-style research abstracts due Sunday next week.**

#### **April 16: Revisiting the relationship between Fieldwork, Analysis, and Writing A:**

- Wolf, Margery. (read the rest, including commentaries, in) *A Thrice Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility*. Stanford University Press, 1992.
- (optional) Claus, C. Anne. 2015. "How a Professional Writer Improved My Academic Writing." *Savage Minds: Notes and Queries in Anthropology*. <http://savageminds.org/2015/02/16/how-a-professional-writer-improved-my-academic-writing/>
- (optional) "Sample Budgets" from Institute of International Studies online Dissertation Workshop ([http://iis.berkeley.edu/sites/files/pdf/sample\\_budgets.pdf](http://iis.berkeley.edu/sites/files/pdf/sample_budgets.pdf))

*\*\*In-class peer review of proposal abstracts*

#### **April 23: Grant proposal presentations (5 slides in 2.5 min)**

#### **April 30: Final grant proposals due, hard copy to prof's mailbox.**

#### **Course Policies:**

##### *Attendance and participation*

Attendance and participation are important in this class. Each day's readings should be completed before coming to class. Please bring electronic or paper copies of the relevant readings and your notes to class for reference. Come prepared to raise questions and discuss ideas with the class. Active and thoughtful participation is expected of every student.

If you anticipate the need to miss class for religious holidays, approved participation in University activities, or other reasonable outside commitments you should inform me during the first two weeks of class. Many students have legitimate reasons to miss one or two classes over the course of the semester. If you miss more than that you will be participating less, missing important discussions and class exercises, and your grade will likely suffer. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from another student and then come and talk to me if you have questions.

##### *Writing Submissions*

Written assignments for the instructor must be single spaced, 12 pt font, with 1 inch margins on all sides. All assignments must comply with the generally accepted rules of academic

writing, style, and citation (for guidance see the MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing <http://thewritesource.com/mla.htm> or the American Anthropological Association style guide: [http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style\\_guide.htm](http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm)). Presentation and clarity are important; I recommend spending 80% of your effort writing and 20% on editing your assignments before turning them in.

#### *Respectful engagement*

You may disagree with statements made by others in class or things you encounter in the readings. Understanding different interpretations is part of what anthropology is about, and respectful disagreement can be a productive way of thinking through difficult issues. This class is a safe space for sharing diverse viewpoints. Don't be afraid to talk, and always be respectful of others.

#### *Tech policy*

Tablets/laptops are welcome in class as long as wireless capabilities are disabled. Various studies<sup>1</sup> suggest that taking notes with pen and paper results in better recall and retention than note taking with a laptop or tablet, think about it! The instructor reserves the right to change this policy mid-semester. Audio or video recording of the class is not allowed without the express permission of the instructor.

#### *Late Work*

Timely completion of the assignments is important. Unexcused late work will be marked down by half a letter grade for every day it is late. Excuses will be granted for emergency situations only.

#### *Contacting me*

I am happy to discuss course readings, lectures, and assignments with you, please come to office hours or make an appointment! You can also get in touch with me via phone or email, though please note that I generally do not respond to phone messages or emails received after 5:00 p.m. until the following work day.

#### *Course Content*

I reserve the right to change the content and schedule of this course syllabus during the semester.

### **Important Information**

#### *Accommodations*

If you qualify for learning or other ability accommodations, please notify the instructor with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center (885-3360, [www.american.edu/ocl/asac/](http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/)) as soon as possible so that we can make the proper arrangements.

#### *Academic Integrity*

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<sup>1</sup> Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking. *Psychological Science* June 2014 vol. 25 no. 6 1159-1168.  
Carrie B. Fried, In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning, *Computers & Education*, Volume 50, Issue 3, April 2008, Pages 906-914.  
Yamamoto, Kevin, Banning Laptops in the Classroom: Is it Worth the Hassles? *Journal of Legal Education*, Vol. 57, 2008.

American University holds its students to the highest academic standards, and violations to academic integrity like plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, dishonesty in examinations or assignments, using your own previously submitted work, and fabrication of data are unacceptable. By enrolling at AU and registering for class you have acknowledged your commitment to the Academic Integrity Code found here: <http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm> I am required to report violations of academic integrity to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, whose policy it is to fail students for the course. Please talk to the instructor, your TA, or a reference librarian if you are unsure of what plagiarism is.

#### *Resources*

AU has many resources designed to help students with difficult academic and personal circumstances. Academic Support Services include time management, reading, note taking, and test-taking strategies, among other things; and in 2013 over 7,000 students used AU counseling services. These resources can generally be found at the Office of Campus Life's Academic Support and Access Center ([www.american.edu/ocl/asac](http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac)). Please come and see the instructor if you are having trouble locating any of these resources.

#### *Emergency Preparedness*

In the event of a weather or health related event, please note that AU policies state that "Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard...students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies."