

ANTH 469
APPLIED FIELD STUDIES: MARSHALLESE IMMIGRANTS AND THE U.S.
EDUCATION SYSTEM

Holly M. Barker
Tues. and Thurs., 11:30 a.m. to 1:20 p.m.
MEB 243

Office hours: by appointment, but generally before or after class.
hbarker@rmiembassyus.org or hmbarker@u.washington.edu

Prerequisite:

If you took the applied anthropology course in the winter quarter or if you are a Pacific Islander then you are eligible to take this course. If you cannot meet this prerequisite then you should not be in the class without special permission from the instructor.

Course description:

As with any experience, you will get out of this class exactly what you put into it. Course learning is designed to provide experiential, hands-on linkages between our classroom work in the applied class and a real life context. In the applied class we considered the contexts where anthropologists become engaged, the methods they use to identify needs, their positionality and work with communities, their research and data collected in collaboration with communities, and their efforts to promote changes defined by stakeholders. In this class we will now put what we learned in the applied class into practice. Specifically, students will be introduced to issues facing immigrants from the Marshall Islands who enroll their children in U.S. schools. We will be collaborating with one elementary school in Everett, Washington, Hawthorne Elementary, to better understand the experiences of teachers, families, and students. Hawthorne Elementary School is located at 1110 Poplar St., Everett, WA, 98201. Telephone 425 385-4600.

Because this class exposes students to the realities of working in the field, we cannot predict for certain the many factors that will impact the outcome of our work. Patience, understanding and flexibility are all required as we learn from the beginning that we cannot control the outcomes of fieldwork. Many of the class discussions will focus on how to interact with communities different from our own in culturally appropriate and respectful ways.

This course is divided into three parts. In the first section, we will do background research about Marshallese immigrants to prepare us for our fieldwork. We will read relevant literature by anthropologists and information about the education system in the RMI. We will also review ethics and methodologies for needs assessments, field notes, participant observation, interviews, and focus groups before employing these methods in the field. Everyone will be required to participate in class, group, and individual trips to the Everett area to work with the Marshallese community. Some of these trips will occur during class time, but students' trips to the community will be required outside of class as

well. Every effort will be made to give advance notice of these outings for planning purposes, but it will be impossible to pass or do well in this class without active involvement with the Marshallese community in Everett. Students will also be responsible for one hour of volunteer work at Hawthorne Elementary which students can arrange according to their own schedules and the needs of the school.

In the second part of the class, we will consider the needs of Hawthorne Elementary, the Marshallese families, and their students. Students will conduct individual interviews with informants who are knowledgeable about the course topic (key informants); those interviews will be a part of our collaboration with the Marshallese church rather than Hawthorne Elementary because undertaking a study in a public school requires a lengthy permission process. We will also learn methods for analyzing interview data from our fieldwork.

The last section of the class will consider the outcomes of our fieldwork by producing “deliverables” that we can give back to our three partners -- the school, the families, and the students. Our class will divide into three groups to design projects for each of these target populations. We cannot determine what the deliverables will be until we conduct our needs assessments. Some of the questions we will want to consider during this process include: Who can benefit from the information we gather? Can anyone be harmed by the information? What form should our deliverables take and who should they be delivered to? What “actionable” outcomes can we pursue? Readings during this last section of the class will focus on ethics, public policy, empowerment and education.

Class participation and individual initiative are critical to the success of this course, and therefore will comprise a major part of the student grades. Students are expected to show up to every class, participate in class discussions, conduct their own research, work independently in the field, and share the results of research and observations with the class.

Background:

Citizens of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) have a unique bilateral relationship with the United States Government that extends rights and privileges to Marshallese citizens that other immigrants groups do not have (with the exception of FSM and Palau). There are approximately 10,000 Marshallese living in the United States, and roughly 700 Marshallese in the greater Seattle area. Few U.S. federal, state or local government officials understand the rights and privileges of Marshallese. Marshallese often contact their Embassy in Washington, D.C. because American employers or schools are often hesitant to extend special privileges to the Marshallese such as the right to enter the U.S. without a green card or visa, or to live, work and go to school in the United States without any special documentation.

The RMI’s Ambassador to the United States, Banny deBrum, requested that we help him better understand the challenges for teachers, families, and students when Marshallese children transition to a U.S. elementary school. The Principal of Hawthorne Elementary School, Betty Cobbs, also agreed to collaborate with us as she is clearly committed to

helping the Marshallese succeed in the U.S. We will also work in close partnership with Pastor Conrad Anni, a Marshallese pastor in Everett who has a congregation where many families from Hawthorne attend; the church is the center of Marshallese community activities.

Required class materials:

Everyone will need access to a recording device to record interviews. Students must turn in recorded copies of interviews to the instructor.

Students also need to keep a journal of fieldnotes to turn in at the end of the class. You can make or purchase a fieldnotes journal, but the journal should be entirely devoted to this class. Bring your fieldnotes journal with you to class everyday as your fieldnotes should contain any information or insights you have about the Marshallese that will assist with our projects.

Required course packet:

Rams Copy Center, 4144 University Ave. NE.

Recommended books:

1. Barker, Holly M. – Bravo for the Marshallese (2004). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
2. Ervin, Alexander M. – Applied Anthropology: Tools and Perspectives for Contemporary Practice (2004). Boston: Pearson, Allyn & Bacon.

Grading:

Participation/initiative	20%
Short paper about the experiences of Marshallese immigrants	10%
Short paper about focus groups and the community meeting	10%
Short paper about the individual interview	10%
Short paper about participant observation/volunteer work at Hawthorne	10%
Group project (including thank you letters)	20%
Individual contributions to group project, and weekly group reports	10%
Fieldnotes journal	10%

Group grades will be given for the final projects for each group, but individuals will have to account for their contributions to the group process.

The four short papers should be 3-5 pages. Grades will be marked down a full point for every day they are late and are due at the start of class on the due date (A 4.0 becomes a 3.0 if it is one day late). Papers will answer the following and cite class readings whenever possible:

Paper #1, April 10 - Based on our readings and class discussions, what have you learned about Marshallese immigration experiences that are useful for our class projects?

Paper #2, April 17 - What did we learn from our community meeting, focus groups, and observations at the church that are useful for our class projects?

Paper #3, May 1 - Analyze the information gathered from your individual interview. What did you learn that will be helpful for our class projects?

Paper #4, May 10 - Based on your participant observation working with a Marshallese student(s) at Hawthorne Elementary, what did you learn that will be useful for our class projects? How can your insights be useful to the school, the parents, and/or the students?

Incremental steps for the class project:

- Step I: Background research about the U.S. immigration experience for Marshallese.
- Step II: Planning for, and eliciting data from the school, families, and students about the challenges Marshallese face in transitioning to elementary school in the U.S.
- Step III: Analysis of data collected from the community meeting, focus groups, individual interviews, and participant observation.
- Step IV: Taking information from the needs assessments and making them actionable. Planning for deliverables for the school, families, and students.
- Step V: Delivering student projects to recipients.

Topical outline and assignments:

Unit I: Who are the Marshallese? Background information about Marshallese immigration experiences in the United States.

March 27 - Introductions, mechanics of the class. Why this particular project? The resource book developed by the last class. Fieldnotes journals in the classroom and in the field. Background information about the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The Compact of Free Association and the immigration rights of Marshallese.

Reading: 1. Bernard, H. Russell – pp. 180-192.

March 29 - Instructor absence (SfAA meeting in Tampa). In-class film by Dale Carpenter, A New Island (2006) and discussion led by Erika Strong.

Readings: 1. Section of the reader entitled “background materials.”
2. Hezel SJ, Francis X. “Micronesians Abroad.”

3. Visit www.yokwe.net and familiarize yourself with the website (the website is for the Marshallese community in the U.S.). Find a discussion or information of interest and be prepared to share it with the class.

April 3 - Life in the Marshall Islands. The history, the culture, and the education system in the islands. If time allows, an in-class film: The U.S. and the Marshalls: The Next 20 Years (2003).

- Readings:
1. Hezel SJ, Francis X. - "What Should Our Schools be Doing?" and "The Myth of Education."
 2. Canney, Mark et al - RMI Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2007-2011, pp. 1-24.
 3. RMI Chamber of Commerce Forum on Education
 4. Johnson, Giff
 5. The Marshall Islands Journal (electronic version to be emailed)

Unit II: Planning for, and eliciting data about the challenges Marshallese face while transitioning to elementary schools in the U.S.

April 5 - Anthropologists and the Marshallese immigration experiences. The centrality of the church. Day-to-day life for Marshallese in Everett, Washington.

- Readings:
1. Walsh-Kroeker
 2. Hess, James et al
 3. Allen, Linda

Guest speaker(s): Key-informant(s) from the Everett community.

April 10 - Paper #1 due: Based on our readings and class discussions, what have you learned about Marshallese immigration experiences that are useful for our class projects?

American journalists and the Marshallese immigration experiences.

- Readings:
1. Olson, David (2 articles)
 2. Leonard, Christopher (collection of 4 articles)
 3. Roche, Walter F. and Willoughby Mariano (2 articles)
 4. Mehaffey, Trish

Guest speaker: Betty J. Cobbs, Principal, Hawthorne Elementary.

April 12 - Methods: Needs assessments, participant observation, key-informants, community meetings, and focus groups. Review and discussion of ethics.

- Readings:
1. Fife, Wayne, pp. 71-92.
 2. Angrosino, Michael – pp. 11-21.
 3. Ervin, Alexander M. – pp. 76-90, 168-181.

Sunday, April 15 - Required class meeting with the Marshallese in Everett.

Unit III: Analysis of data collected from the community meeting, focus groups, individual interviews, and participant observation.

April 17 - Paper #2 due: What did we learn from our community meeting, focus groups, and observations that are useful for our class projects?

Individual interviews. Practice interviews in class.

- Readings:
1. Fife, Wayne – pp. 93-106.
 2. Angrosino, Michael V. – pp. 33-39.
 3. Bernard, Russel H. – pp. 360-367.
 4. Interview with Vidialino Staley-Raatiior

April 19 – Class trip to Hawthorne Elementary School.

- Readings:
1. Heine, Hilda C.
 2. Low, Marilyn et al
 3. PREL – “Languages Open Doors,” “Let’s Do Homework (in Marshallese)”
 4. Hawthorne Hawk Weekly, March 1
 5. Visit Hawthorne’s website:
<http://www.everett.k12.wa.us/hawthorne/>.

Unit IV: Taking information from the needs assessments and making them actionable. Planning for deliverables for the school, families, and students.

April 24 - Possible absence of the instructor (meeting with DOE in Majuro). In-class showing of Radio Bikini. Discussion of how nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands defines the history of the modern era in the RMI.

- Readings:
1. Barker, Holly M.
 2. Alcalay, Glenn

April 26 - Possible absence of the instructor (Meeting with DOE in Majuro). Group meetings. Kwajalein, missile testing, and the needs of the local people.

- Readings:
1. Marshall Islands Journal (electronic version to be emailed).
 2. PREL – Retention and attrition article

3. Wypijewski, JoAnn
4. SOPAC

May 1 - Paper #3 due: Analyze the information gathered from your individual interview. What did you learn that will be helpful for our class projects? Make sure to turn in a recording of your interview, too.

What needs or problems that emerge from our research are actionable? What do we do with information that does not shed a positive light on the people we are working with? The ethics of data collection.

- Readings:
1. Carucci, Laurence
 2. van Willigen, John
 3. Ervin, Alexander M. – pp. 233-242

May 3 - 15 minute reports from each group: Where are you with your work? What is next?

In-class radio segments of Jacqueline Froehlich of NPR. Healthcare issues for Marshallese residing in the U.S., including diabetes.

- Readings:
1. Review the RMI Embassy's website: www.rmiembassyus.org. Be prepared to talk about information on the website that is useful to Marshallese immigrants in the U.S.
 2. Pobutsky, Ann M. et al
 3. Walsh Kroeker, Julie – PACT questions
 4. Wilson, Christie

May 8 - In-class focus group with UW students who previously took the field studies class with the Marshallese to learn about their experiences. Information from the education, legal, employment and health groups.

- Readings:
1. Return to the www.yokwe.net website and try to determine if your knowledge about issues facing the Marshallese has increased. How can you tell? Be prepared to discuss your findings with the class.
 2. Read the RMI Government's website: <http://www.rmigovernment.org/index.jsp>. Be prepared to talk about what information on this website is of importance to Marshallese residing in the United States.
 3. Materials from the resource book

May 10 - Paper #4 due: Based on your participant observation working with a Marshallese student(s) at Hawthorne Elementary, what did you learn that will be useful for our class projects?

15 minute reports from each group: Where are the groups with the projects? What is next?

Class discussion: To be determined based on needs of the class at the time.

Readings: Take a break! No readings for this class because papers and group reports are due.

May 15 – Higher education and the Marshall Islands. The need to build capacity in the islands. Will Marshallese educated in the United States return to the islands? What is the RMI Government’s policy regarding scholarships and encouragement of off-island studies?

Readings: 1. Review the website for the College of the Marshall Islands: <http://64.129.3.54/> or <http://www.cmiedu.net/index.html>
2. Graham, Ben (2 short articles)
3. Graham, Ben and Charles Paul (2 short articles)

May 17 - Climate change and the Marshall Islands. What happens if the Marshall Islands is no longer inhabitable in the next fifty years? How would this change the immigration experience for Marshallese?

15 minute reports from each group: Where are you with your work? What is next?

Readings: 1. RMI Government Climate Change Strategic Plan (2006)

May 22 – Education in the post-colony. The education system in the RMI was established by outsiders. How should current educational practices address the post-colonial needs of the Marshall Islands? Can the University of Washington assist with these goals? What else could the University of Washington or individuals do to assist the Marshall Islands?

Reading: 1. Hezel SJ, Francis X. “Colonialism with a New Name.”

Unit V: Delivering student projects to recipients.

May 24 - 15 minute reports from each group: Where are the groups with their projects? What is next? What are group plans for turning final products over to those who can use them?

Groups to meet in class to finalize group projects and presentations.

May 29 - Each group will bring in signed thank you notes to key informants and individuals who assisted the groups. These thank you notes are part of the final group project.

Who else can benefit from the information gathered for our class projects? Should we make this information available to anyone else? How do we return our data to the community?

What else could you do if you want to continue work with the Marshallese?

May 31 - Final projects due. Presentations to the class from each group, including information about how these projects were turned over to recipients.

Groups will invite key informants to join our final class.

Class party!

Contents of the course reader:

Agronsino, Michael V. (2005). "Basic Principles of Ethnographic Research," and "Ethnographic Interviewing." Projects in Ethnographic Interviewing. Pp. 11-21, and 33-39. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Alcalay, Glenn (June 28, 2002). "Utrik Atoll: The Sociocultural Impact of Living in a Radioactive Environment. An Anthropological Assessment of the Consequential Damages from Bravo." Pp. 1-43. Prepared for Utrik Atoll Local Government and the Office of the Public Advocate of the Nuclear Claims Tribunal. Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Allen, Linda (2002). "Maintaining Marshallese Fundamentals with Christian Fundamentalism." *Pacific Studies* 25(1/2): 95-116.

Barker, Holly M. (1997). "Fighting Back: Justice, the Marshall Islands and Neglected Radiation Communities." Life and Death Matters: Human Rights and the Environment at the End of the Millennium. Barbara Rose Johnston, ed. Pp. 290-306. London: Alta Mira Press.

Bernard, H. Russell (1995). "Field Notes: How to Take, Code and Manage Them," and "Analysis of Qualitative Data." Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. Second Edition. Pp. 180-192, and 360-367. London: Alta Mira Press.

Canney, Mark et al (Nov. 3, 2006 draft). RMI Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2007-2011. Majuro: Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. [draft only, not for circulation].

Carucci, Laurence (1990). "Negotiations of Violence in the Marshallese Household." *Pacific Studies* 13(3): 93-113.

Ervin, Alexander (2005). "Needs Assessments," "Key-Informant Interviews," "Focus Groups," and "Some Principles for More Effective Practice." *Applied Anthropology: Tools and Perspectives for Contemporary Practice*. Second Edition. Pp. 76-90, 168-181, and 233-242. Boston: Pearson.

Fife, Wayne. "Participant-Observation as a Research Method," and "Interviewing." *Doing Fieldwork: Ethnographic Methods for Research in Developing Countries and Beyond*. Pp. 71-106. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Graham, Ben (2003). "Recent Census of Marshallese in Hawaii Shows Notable Change." www.hawaii.edu/cpis/mi_workshop/files.marsh_census.htm

Graham, Ben. No date. "A Statistical Analysis of Public and Non-Public Employees in the RMI. Part One: Educational Attainment and Wages." Insular Areas Statistical Enhancement Program. <http://www.yokwe.net/ydownloads/EmploymentPart1.pdf>

Graham, Ben and Charles Paul. No date. "Does Higher Education Really Lead to Higher Employability and Wages in the RMI?" Insular Areas Statistical Enhancement Program. <http://www.yokwe.net/index.php?name=Downloads&req=viewdownloaddetails&lid=14>.

Ibid. No date. "A Statistical Overview of Ebeye. Part Two: Elementary School Attendance." Insular Areas Statistical Enhancement Program. <http://www.yokwe.net/ydownloads/EbeyePart2.pdf>

Johnson, Giff (July 1, 2006). "On Majuro: Money Vs. Malaise. Marshall Islands Struggles to Show Results." *Pacific Magazine*. <http://www.pacificmagazine.net/issue/2006/07/01/on-majuro-money-vs-malaise>

Hawthorne Hawk Weekly. March 1. Vol. 1, Issue 23. Everett: Hawthorne Elementary School. <http://www.everett.k12.wa.us/CMS/cmsSites/cmsUserFiles/hawthorne/files/newsletter%20feb%2028.PDF>

Heine, Hilda C. (2002). "Culturally Relevant Schools for Micronesian Immigrant Students." Honolulu: Pacific Resources in Education and Learning. http://www.prel.org/products/pc_/culturally-responsive.pdf

Hess, Jim, Karen L. Nero and Michael L. Burton (2001). "Creating Options: Forming a Marshallese Community in Orange County, California." *The Contemporary Pacific* 13(1): 89-121.

Hezel SJ, Francis X. (1995). "Colonialism with a New Name." Strangers in Their Own Land: A Century of Colonial Rule in the Caroline and Marshall Islands. pp. 242-296. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Ibid (March 2001). "The Myth of Education: A Second Look." Micronesian Counselor #33. Chuuk, FSM: Micronesian Seminar.
<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/counselor/frames/mythedfr.htm>

Ibid (October 2000). "What Should Our Schools be Doing?" Micronesian Counselor #31. Chuuk, FSM: Micronesian Seminar.
<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/counselor/frames/schoolsdofr.htm>

Hezel, Francis X. SJ, and Eugenia Samuel. December 2006. "Micronesians Abroad." Micronesian Counselor #64. Chuuk, FSM: Micronesian Seminar.
<http://www.micsem.org/pubs/counselor/frames/microsabroadfr.htm>

Leonard, Christopher (2005). "Traditions Kept and Lost," "An Economic Quandary," "Learning Experience," and "What Price Paradise?" Articles in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. www.ardemgaz.com/ads/mi.

Lesson, Margo King. "A Micronesian in America." Interview with Vidialino Staley-Raatiior. Pacific Voices Talk Story: Conversations of American Experience. pp. 143-174. Vacaville, CA: Tui Communications.

Low, Marilyn, Destin Penland, and Hilda C. Heine et al (2005). "The Language Question in Pacific Education: The Case of the Republic of the Marshall Islands." Honolulu: Pacific Resources in Education and Learning.
http://www.prel.org/products/re_/language_question.pdf

Olson, David (April 26, 2004). "The Congregation of Delta Community Baptist Church Sees its Long-Held Vision for a New Church Building Take Shape in Steel and Concrete." *Herald News*.

Ibid (Jan. 19, 2004). "Keeping Up with Culture, Not the Clock: Immigrants from the Marshall Islands Adjust to the Faster Pace of Life in Snohomish County." *Herald News*.

Pacific Resources in Education and Learning (1997). "Languages Open Doors to Success and Wisdom: A Conversation with Parents about Language." Honolulu.
<http://www.prel.org/products/Products/Marshallese-Conversation.pdf>.

Ibid (November, 1999). "Retention and Attrition of Pacific School Teachers and Administrators (RAPSTA) Study: Republic of the Marshall Islands." Research and Development Cadre. <http://www.prel.org/products/Products/RMI-RAPSTA.pdf>

Pobutsky, Ann M. et al (2005). "Micronesian Migrants in Hawaii: Health Issues and Culturally Appropriate, Community Based Solutions." *Californian Journal of Health Promotion* 3(4): 59-72.

RMI Chamber of Commerce (June 14, 2006). Forum on Education. Majuro: Republic of the Marshall Islands. <http://www.majurochamber.net/Education%20Forum%206-14-06.htm>

Roche Jr., Walter F. and Willoughby Mariano (Sept. 17, 2002). "Indentured in America: A Ray of Hope in Springdale." *Baltimore Sun*.

Ibid. (Sept. 15, 2002). "Money, Migration and U.S. Missiles." *Baltimore Sun*.

SOPAC (2001). "Report of Visit to Ebeye, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, 22-24 October 2001." SOPAC Preliminary Report #134.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (Feb. 11, 2005). "Status of the Citizens of the Freely Associated States of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands." A memorandum provided by the U.S. State Department to the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Washington, D.C.

van Willigen, John (2002). "Ethics." Applied Anthropology: An Introduction. Third Edition. Pp. 47-62. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Walsh Kroeker, Julianne (2004). "An Analysis of New RMI Adoption Policies. Interview with Dr. Julianne. M. Walsh Kroeker: New Adoption Controls in the Marshall Islands." www.yokwe.net.

Ibid (no date). Responses to questions by Parents and Children Together (PACT). Honolulu: Small Islands Network.

Wilson, Christie (June 17, 2002). "Stigma of Hansen's Challenges Officials." *The Honolulu Advertiser*.

Wypijewski, JoAnn (Dec. 2001). "This is Only a Test: Missile Defense Makes its Mark in the Marshall Islands." *Harper's Magazine* 303(1819): 41-51.