This is a seminar on ethnomethodology. The purpose of the seminar is to learn how to find and analyze a phenomenon that is identifiably a phenomenon in and for the experience of members to a local setting. There are three interrelated sub-objects. (1) We will obtain a grasp of basic ethnomethodological issues by reviewing Garfinkel’s early (1967) as well as recent (2002) writings. (We will also examine ethnomethodology in relation to social theory more generally, with an emphasis this semester on pragmatism.) (2) We will engage in “demonstrations” and other ethnographic experiences that help reveal structures of daily life—phenomena as defined above. (Be prepared, literally, to look at the world upside down, and in other odd ways.) (3) We will explore various contemporary directions in which the ethnomethodological enterprise has gone, including studies of work and conversation analysis. Along the way, we will consider misconceptions and also critiques of ethnomethodology. A background in sociology is sometimes helpful, sometimes not, which means that there are no real prerequisites.

READING: ARTICLES are available in a packet at the Social Science 6th floor copy shop. BOOKS are available at Underground Textbook Exchange:

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


**Requirements** include (1) attendance, (2) participation in class and certain “exercises” outside of class, (3) writing a weekly review and commentary on the reading, and (4) writing a final paper on some ethnomethodological phenomenon. Grand total points for course = 100:

1. **Attendance.** Each week, attendance is required and counts one point. (The initial class meeting doesn’t count.) 13 x 1 = 13 total points.
2. **Participation.** Each week, read all the selections for that week, and come to class prepared to discuss them. Participation in class is important and will be assessed each week on a two point scale. For some weeks, there will be exercises to carry out. (Playing tic tac toe, waiting in line, observing rule-constrained settings, using inverted lenses, etc.) You need to write notes on these exercises to bring to class for discussion. I may ask you to hand them in from time to time but they will not be graded except as part of your class participation score. 13 x 2 = 26 total points.
3. **Review and commentary.** Each week, you are to hand in a review and commentary on the week’s readings or portions thereof. For some weeks, particular students may be in charge of discussing aspects of the reading or the exercises for that week, but that is not to relieve everyone else of responsibility. Questions (handed out) for *SE* will help you focus on some of the key passages in that book. The review and commentary, at a maximum of two single-spaced pages (12 point Times font), should take specified readings into account and treat them as a whole fabric, constructing a unitary theme or themes of importance, and discussing these themes critically (state what you learned and/or what applications they have and/or what you found difficult or unclear or needing fuller explication). Each review and commentary is worth 3 points and 12 are required (the first week doesn’t count and you can skip one week or have your lowest score thrown out). 12 x 3 = 36 total points.

4. **Final paper.** A relatively short paper of around 8-12 pages is required, due on the last day of class (Monday, December 8). This paper will analyze an ethnomethodological phenomenon as defined above and as will be defined during the course. This paper can derive from one of the exercises we do for the class or from some research in which you are currently engaged or from some other interest. A preliminary version of the paper is due in the 10th week of the course and is worth 5 points. The final paper is worth 20 points. 25 total points.

**SCHEDULE**

1. **Week of September 8.** Introductory matters: Ethnomethodology and Social Theory

   Reading:  


2. **Week of September 15.** Trust and Commonsense

   Reading:  

   Suggested: *Bad News, Good News*, Chapter 1

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1Harold Garfinkel’s writings are notoriously difficult to read, but I don’t want to hear about that particular problem.
3. **Week of September 22:** What is Ethnomethodology (then and now)?

Reading:  


4. **Week of September 29:** Common Understandings; Features of Lectures

Reading:  


5. **Week of October 6:** Ethnomethodology and Rules

Reading:  


6. **Week of October 13:** Accomplishment of Accountable Gender

Reading:  
(1) Garfinkel, *SE* Chapter 5, “Passing and the Managed Achievement of Sex Status in an Intersexed Person.”  
(2) Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*.

Suggested: Colapinto, *As Nature Made Him*.  
7. Week of October 20: Records, Instructions, and Human Activity

Reading:  
(1) Garfinkel, SE Chapter 6, “Good Organizational Reasons for ‘Bad’ Clinic Records.”  
(2) Garfinkel, EP Chapter 6, “Instructions and Instructed Actions.”  


8. Week of October 27: Jury Deliberations and Rationality

Reading:  
(1) Garfinkel, SE Chapter 4, “Some Rules of Correct Decisions that Jurors Respect.”  
(2) Burnett, A Trial by Jury.  

Download from JSTOR: http://www.jstor.org/browse#Sociology


9. Week of November 3: Positivism and Phenomenology

Reading:

Suggested:

10. Week of November 10: Embodied Activity

Reading:

Suggested:

11. Week of November 17: Linguistic Philosophy: Overcoming Cognitivism

Reading:

Suggested:
12. Week of November 24: Gestalt Perception as Interactive Practice

Reading:
(2) Frith, Chapters 1, 6, and 8 in Autism: Explaining the Enigma


13. Week of December 1: Studies of Science/Work

Reading:


14. Week of December 8: Ethnomethodology and Its Critics

Reading:


**Further work:** Constituting Phenomenal Objects (EM & Conv. Analysis)

**Reading:**
