Your assignment: Read an ethnography on a culture discussed in your anthropology class or perhaps on any culture or region that interests you.

Hmmm! An ethnography is a first-hand account about the life of a cultural group, based on primary materials, usually the interviews, life histories, surveys, and observations made by an anthropologist in the field. An ethnography analyzes these primary materials and places them in a theoretical framework.

So you will just go to Rush Rhees and find one. Unfortunately, it is not that simple. Ethnographies are not grouped together in the library and, to complicate your search the word ethnography often does not appear in the Voyager catalog record.

You may know that Anthropology books are in the GN call number range. Not true for ethnographies. Lots of them are shelved with books about the culture described in the ethnography. This means that ethnographies are located in many places in Rush Rhees. Most Asian cultures are in the DSs. For example, Poetics of Village Politics: The Making of West Bengal’s Rural Communism by Arild Engelsen Ruud is found at DS485.B493.R88 2003.

**Strategies for finding an ethnography**

1. *Course readings.* Check the bibliographies in assigned articles and books for the course.
2. **Reference Books.** Most encyclopedias include bibliographies at the end of each article. These are valuable leads for further research. For example: In browsing *The Encyclopedia of World Cultures* (Rhees Ref GN307.E53. I found nine titles listed after the essay on Kurds. Our libraries own five of these. For the Tonga of Zambia, the libraries hold five of eight titles listed.

   Not sure what culture you want to read about? Browsing through this encyclopedia will give you lots of good leads.

3. **Databases.** Search databases for book reviews for ethnographies. In both ProQuest Research, Newspapers & Business and Wilson OmniFile, you can limit your search to “book reviews” then search on a cultural group and add “ethnography” as a search word. While the search engines in AnthroSource and Sage Premier are not as precise, you also can find book reviews in these two databases.

   Example from Wilson Omnifile Search: ethnography and Egypt Limit: book reviews. Here are some of the book reviews I found. Note the call numbers.


   *A Trade Like Any Other: Female Singers and Dangers in Egypt* by Karin van Nieuwkerk. 1995. PN2977.N682


4. **Voyager Catalog.** No direct path to ethnography exists in Voyager catalog. Ethnography is not a subject heading. For some books, ethnology is given as a subject heading. The subject heading most often given to an ethnography is: (name of group) **Social life and customs.** For example: *Tambo: life in an Andean Village* by Julia Meyerson has the subject: *Quechua Indians Social life and customs. A useful strategy is to find the group you are*
interested in; do a subject search on that group’s name followed by “social life and customs”.

You can also do a keyword search for the group you want to read about. Once you have a call number you can browse the shelves for additional books.


Please consult **Lee LaFleur**, the Anthropology librarian, at llafleur@library.rochester.edu or ask at the Rush Rhees Library Reference Desk for help.