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**Emory College
Language Center**

Emory College of Arts and Sciences

Presents

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Monday, November 18, 2013

4:15 pm

White Hall 207

The Ethnography of Language Learning in Study Abroad

Research on language learning outcomes demonstrates that study abroad can have a positive impact on every domain of language competence, particularly in domains related to social interaction. At the same time, in most studies involving U.S.-based participants, outcomes are highly variable. Why do some students register important gains in documented communicative ability, and others do not? These findings have inspired a significant number of ethnographic, micro-ethnographic, and other qualitative projects examining language learning in study abroad settings. This presentation will first review key themes in the research on qualities of contemporary study abroad as they influence language learning. Ranging in scope from the personal to the ideological, these themes include: the significance of language proficiency and awareness; the role of program design; societal changes wrought by globalization, including the rise of English as a Lingua Franca; and discourses of national superiority or of study abroad as a modern-day Grand Tour. We will then consider the perils of “ethnographic” research focused on student experiences exclusively, since study abroad participants are novice interactants who do not necessarily understand the motives and values of their interlocutors. The presentation will conclude with an argument for the revival of ethnographic participant observation in language pedagogy for study abroad.

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the Center for International Programs Abroad**

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