



Introduction to Fieldwork

HPAN4006

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Introduction

This module introduces you to some of the field methodologies and ethical issues which lie at the core of anthropology.

Anthropologists aim to learn-with the people they are hoping to understand. They do this by immersing themselves in the lives of others and allowing those people they are with to teach them. When in 'the field' anthropologists conduct participant observation - that means they watch and do - and by living as others do they obtain an experiential learning of what it means to be human in different settings.

This module examines the historical roots of anthropological fieldwork and develops a sense of how the methods of the discipline work today. It also introduces you to some of the ethical issues which determine how anthropology collects data (particularly online), and how that data can be analysed and turned into text.

We will examine some of the methodological approaches relating to anthropological research, and consider how anthropologists set about undertaking field research. Whilst completing online ethnographic research, we will reflect upon the nature of the data collected, the methodologies used, as well as examining some of the assumptions and limitations of such approaches.

This module is not intended to give you a thorough grounding in field and research skills – we cover that next year – rather, it is to expose you to different anthropological research methods, demonstrate how we can explore other ways of life online, and what it means to be an anthropologist today.

Due to the pandemic, this module will be delivered virtually through pre-recorded lectures, podcasts, power point presentations, and daily online meet ups and email correspondence. We will conduct online ethnographic research (netnography, virtual ethnography, cyber ethnography and so on) to explore complex social situations in the Digital Age.

Aims

The aim of this module is to enable you to devise, conduct and communicate your own piece of ethnographic research. We will have a series of lectures that will provide you with a methodological, ethical and theoretical background to help you prepare and conduct your research, but importantly the module is designed to enable you to learn ‘by doing’, as you embark on fieldwork for the first time. Specifically the module aims are:

- To acquire an introduction to a reflexive understanding of field research
- To provide an introductory experience of some primary field methods
- To provide an introduction to concepts such as ‘the field’, reflexivity, gender theory and material culture and methods such as ethnography, autoethnography, participant observation, and netnography.

Objectives

- To acquire an initial experience in the practice of online field research
- To acquire first skills in the interpretation of research data
- To understand and apply data recording methodologies

Assignment Details: Assessment criteria will be posted on Moodle

Class Schedule: The Pre-recorded lectures and podcasts will be released at the beginning of the module. In the first week we will meet online at 3pm Mon, Tues, Thursday and Friday for group seminar discussions.

Week 1 Introduction Lecture
 History of Anthropological Fieldwork
 Ethnographic Knowledges
 Digital Anthropology

Week 2 Autoethnography

Netnography
The Ethnographic Interview
Ethnographic Writing

Week 3 The Diary as Witness
 Material Culture Studies
 Autoethnography with your Smartphone
 The Field Site as Network and Ethical Dilemmas of Online
 Research

Week 4 Anthropology of the Senses
 Gender Theory
 Writing-up
 Writing-up

Assignments

- Component 1 Reflexive Research Journal 2000 words 50%
Deadline: 11:59pm 15.6.20
- Component 2 Research Field Report using Online
Ethnographic Research and/or Autoethnography 2000 words
50% Deadline: 11:59 pm 5.6.20

Component 1: Reflexive Research Journal (50%, 2000 words).

A reflexive diary with daily entries and reflection that follows the course lectures and time in 'the field' (equivalent to 2000 words).

A diary is a subjective enterprise and will be personally constructed in a style that suits you - thematic entries that discuss particular ideas and observations are a useful way of structuring your journal. There are few guidelines to structure content; however, whilst you are free to establish your own method, and are encouraged to be as creative as feels fitting, you are also expected to include entries that detail how you are feeling about your experiences, the lectures, the lecture content and the process you are going through during the module. These entries should consider the part you play in the process (reflexive) and in total should form a reflection of the process as a

whole through your eyes. You should be thinking of yourself as an anthropologist and can draw on other anthropological journals for inspiration.

Component 2: Research Field Report using Online Ethnographic Research and/or Autoethnography 2000 words – 50%.

The findings of your research should be written up as a report, taking the form of a mini-ethnography. In other words, you will use this as an opportunity to write up what you have learnt in the way that mirrors that of professional anthropologists. A mini-ethnography is a piece of writing that uses thick, detailed description to depict and analyse the experience you had in the field. You should structure it with an introduction, create a brief methods section, an ethics section, and the option to include a theoretical section too (remember to also include a bibliography). The piece should inform the reader about the people you were studying but also offers some analysis about the cultural practices, customs, habits and social expectations you experienced.

Reading List

Amit, V. (ed.) 2000 *Constructing the field: ethnographic fieldwork in the contemporary world*. London: Routledge (ebook available through the LRC catalogue)

American Anthropological Association. [2007] 'Code of Ethics', in *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader*: Antonius Robben & Jeffrey Sluka (eds), chapter 23, 325-330, Oxford: Blackwell Press. Or visit the AAA website Coffey, Amanda 1999 *The ethnographic self: fieldwork and the representation of identity*. London: Sage.

Davies, Charlotte Aull 1999. *Reflexive ethnography: a guide to researching selves and others*. London: Routledge.

Emerson, Robert M., Fretz, Rachel I. and Shaw, Linda L. 1995. *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Evans Pritchard, E. 2004. *Social Anthropology*. Oxon: Routledge.

Feuchtwang, Stephan 2007 'On religious ritual as deference and communicative excess', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13(1): 57-72. Available through JSTOR.

Geaves, R. 2007 *Saivism in the diaspora: contemporary forms of Skanda worship*. London and Oakville, CT: Equinox.

Geertz, Clifford 1972 'Deep play: notes on the Balinese cockfight', *Daedalus* 101(1): 1-37. Available through JSTOR.

Govier, E. 2018. 'The Coal Beds of Generations X, Y and Z: Syncing, Learning, and Propagating in the Age of the Posthuman'. *Journal of Posthuman Studies: Philosophy, Technology, Media*. 2(2). 147-165.

Hylland Eriksen, T. 1995. *Small Places, Large Issues*. London: Pluto Press.

Hayano, D. 1979. Auto-Ethnography: Paradigms, Problems, and Prospects. *Human Organization*. Vol. 38, No. 1 (Spring 1979), pp. 99-104.

Kozinets, R. 2010. *Netnography : doing ethnographic research online*. London: Sage.

Marcus, George E. 1999 'The uses of complicity in the changing mise-en-scène of anthropological fieldwork', in Sherry B. Ortner (ed.) *The fate of 'culture': Geertz and beyond*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp 86-109.

Miller, Daniel. 2018. *Digital Anthropology*. In The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology (eds) F. Stein, S. Lazar, M. Candea, H. Diemberger, J. Robbins, A. Sanchez & R. Stasch.

Okely, Judith 2012 *Anthropological practice: fieldwork and the ethnographic method*. London and New York: Berg.

Malinowski, Bronislaw 2012 [1922] 'Method and scope of anthropological fieldwork', *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (Chapters 1 & 18). Also in *ethnographic fieldwork: an anthropological reader*, Antonius Robben & Jeffrey Sluka (eds), chapter 3, pp 69-81, Oxford: Blackwell Press.

Pink, S. 2014. Digital–visual–sensory–design anthropology: Ethnography, imagination and intervention. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, Vol.13(4), pp.412-427

Ruby, J., Pink, S., Wessels, J., Macdougall, D. 2001. Visual Anthropology: Digital Video. *Anthropology Today*, Vol.17(5), pp. 23-25

Skanda Vale n.d. The pilgrim's guide, <http://www.skandavale.org/thepilgrims-guide/>

Sluka, Jeffrey and Antonius Robben. 2012 'Fieldwork in cultural anthropology: an introduction' in *Ethnographic fieldwork: an anthropological reader*, Antonius Robben & Jeffrey Sluka (eds), pp 1-35, Oxford: Blackwell Press.

Warrier, M. 2010 'The temple bull controversy at Skanda Vale and the construction of Hindu identity in Britain', *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 13(3): 261-78. Available through library catalogue.

Other Readings

The following books are just a small selection of those that address anthropological research methodologies and ethics. In addition, you

are also expected to read around, and research, the subject of your mini-research project.

Atkinson, P. 2001 *Handbook of ethnography*, London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Aunger, R. 1995 On ethnography: storytelling or science? *Current Anthropology* 36(1): 97-130.

Bell, D. Caplan, P. and Karim, W. (eds.) 1993 *Gendered fields: women, men and ethnography*. London: Routledge.

Bernard, H.R. 1994 *Research methods in anthropology: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Bickman, L., & Rog, D.J. 1998 *Handbook of applied social research methods*, Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage.

Bryman, A. 2004 *Social research methods*. Oxford: OUP.

Caplan, P. 2003 *The ethics of anthropology: debates and dilemmas*. London: Routledge.

Creswell, J.W. 2003 *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Davies, C.A. 1999 *Reflexive ethnography: a Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. London: Routledge.

Denscombe, M. 1998, *The good research guide: for small-scale social research projects*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. 2005 *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ellen, R.F., 1984 *Ethnographic research: a guide to general conduct*. London: Academic Press.

Faubion, J.D., & Marcus, G.E. 2009 *Fieldwork is not what it used to be: learning anthropology's method in a time of transition*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Fetterman, D.M. 1989, *Ethnography: step by step*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Gash, S., 1989, *Effective literature searching for students*. Aldershot, Hants, England and Brookfield, VT: Gower Pub. Co.

Jackson, A. (ed.) 1987. *Anthropology at Home*. London: Tavistock. See, especially, chapters by Hastrup and by Strathern.

Rose, D. 1990 *Living the ethnographic life*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Ryang, S. 2000 'Ethnography or self-cultural anthropology? Reflections on writing about ourselves', *Dialectical Anthropology*, 25 (3-4): 297-320.

Shaffir, W. & Stebbins, R.A., 1991 *Experiencing fieldwork: an inside view of qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Silverman, D. 2006 *Interpreting qualitative data: methods for analysing talk, text, and interaction*. London: Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Silverman, D. 2000 *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strathern, M. 1985 'Not a field diary "Anthropology at home" – with the Association of Social Anthropologists', *Anthropology Today* 1(3): 25- 26.

Taussig, M.T. 2011, *I swear I saw this: drawings in fieldwork notebooks, namely my own*. London: The University of Chicago Press.

Warren, C.A.B. 1988 *Gender issues in field research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Wolcott, H.F. 1995 *The art of fieldwork*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.

Useful Web Resources

- Association of Social Anthropologists. These are the ethical guidelines issued at an Extraordinary AGM held in Lampeter <http://www.theasa.org/ethics.shtml>
- National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (part of American Anthropological Association) <http://www.practicinganthropology.org>
- Handbook on Ethical Issues in Anthropology <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/toc.htm>
- The Society for Applied Anthropology <http://www.sfaa.net>