



AHAN4004

SKILLS FOR THE FIELD

40 Credits

Module convenor Eloise Govier

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Class time: Thursdays 11am-2pm

Materialities Lab

Important dates for your diary:

- Deadline for contacting Eloise registering your commitment to conducting this fieldwork or registering any concerns: Friday 26th Jan 2018.
- Field trip meeting (compulsory): Thursday 8th February 2018 10-11am Materialities Lab.
- Field trip Monday February 26th- Sunday 4th March 2018.

Introduction

This module introduces you to some of the field methodologies and ethical issues which lie at the core of anthropology. By experiencing and ‘doing’ a brief spell of fieldwork, you will be able to devise your own mini research project and explore anthropological questions that interest you. Your responses to such questions will help you engage with relevant theoretical issues in anthropology. In preparation for doing fieldwork, we will examine some of the methodological approaches relating to anthropological research, and consider how anthropologists set their research questions. After we return from the field, 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 intended as a fieldwork ‘taster’ which we will build on next year. Thus, in this

module you will experience (and debate!) the ‘field’, other ways of life and what it means to be an anthropologist.

- As applied anthropologists you have the opportunity to spend a whole week at Skanda Vale. Deadline for contacting Eloise registering your commitment to conducting this fieldwork or registering any concerns: **Friday 26th Jan 2018.** (e.govier@uwtsd.ac.uk).

Aims

The aim of this module is to enable you to devise, conduct and communicate your own piece of ethnographic research. We will have some initial preparatory discussions to 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 community, ritual, identity, place and space, gender.

Objectives

- To acquire an initial experience in the practice of 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

Applied Anthropologists: Considerations

Your fieldwork will be conducted at Skanda Vale, a hospice which is a service project run by the monks and nuns of Skanda Vale Monastery. As Applied Anthropologists, you should be thinking about how to use anthropology to find *solutions*. A key factor is the consideration of the

problems that the community feel they have. We have managed to secure a full week this year for those enrolled on the applied anthropology degree, so this is a golden opportunity to gain a genuine research experience. We will discuss the field trip together and go through the details of the type of work you will be conducting at Skanda Vale. It is worth considering that there are a number of rules that the community ask us to abide by both before and during our stay (please see below), and you may find these challenging. Eloise is very happy to discuss details with you one-to-one, and both Luci and Eloise will meet with you on Thursday 11th February 10-11am in the Materialities Lab to go through health and safety and other aspects of your trip.

Class Schedule: Thursdays 11-2 in the Materialities Lab

1st Feb Skanda Vale details/Entering the 'Field'/Writing a research proposal
8th Feb Participant Observation/Keeping a diary
15th Feb Informants/Conducting interviews
22nd Feb Ethnographic Methods/Practice
Monday 26th Feb – Sunday 4th March FIELD TRIP (Reading Week)
8th March Debrief: Skanda Vale/Ethnographic writing
15th March Anthropology at home
22nd March Applying theoretical principles and concepts
29th March Interpreting your data
23rd April Sharing your research
1st May Assignment session

All students doing Applied Anthropology will also sit in on the classes for Humanitarian Intervention HPID4002, Tucker 2, Monday 2-6 with Andy Bevan with this module. You will only complete the assignments for this module (AHAN4004).

Assignments

- Reflexive Field Diary (50%): 3,000 words. Deadline: 18.4.18 via turnitin

- Mini Ethnography (50%): 4,000 words. Deadline: 2.5.18 via turnitin
- Coursework Assignment: Mini-Proposal 500 words - Not Assessed but is compulsory. Due: Thursday 15th February via email: e.govier@uwtsd.ac.uk

Component 1: Reflexive Field Journal (50%, 3000 words). Due: 18.4.18 via Turnitin

A reflexive diary with daily entries and reflection that follows the course lectures and time in the field (equivalent to 3000 words).

A diary is a subjective enterprise and will be personally constructed in a style that suits you. Consequently, 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 daily entries that together 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: Mini ethnography 4000 words – 50%. Due: 2.5.18 via Turnitin

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 and then construct a piece that informs the reader about the people you were studying but also offers some analysis about the cultural practices, customs, habits and social expectations you experienced.

Applied anthropologists additional coursework assignment: Mini-Proposal 500 words - Not Assessed but is compulsory. Due: Thursday 15th February

As this is the first time you will be writing an ethnographic report, you will be required to submit a mini-proposal by Thursday 15th February (via email to Eloise, e.govier@uwtsd.ac.uk). This should include:

- The title of your project
- The aims and objectives of your project (your research question)
- A discussion of how you chose this topic and why you think it is relevant to Skanda Vale.
- A consideration of the data you intend to collect and the methods you will be using.
- A summary of your research methods (who you need to speak to and why)
- An overview of any ethical or other concerns you have
- A brief bibliography of the relevant topical literature

This mini-proposal is not assessed, but is a requirement of the module (and will help you with your other assignments).

Location of Field Activities

Skanda Vale (Community of the Many Names of God),
Llanpumpsaint, Carmarthen, Wales. SA33 6JT

Essential websites:

- www.skandavale.org (You must read the pilgrims' guide in advance of our visit, as well as other parts of the website)
- ASA Ethics Guidelines <http://www.theasa.org/ethics/guidelines.shtml>

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Applied Anthropology texts

MacKay Ervin, A. 2005. *Applied anthropology: tools and perspectives for contemporary practice*. Boston; London: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

McDonald, J. H. 2002. [The applied anthropology reader](#). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Pink, S. 2006. *Applications of anthropology: professional anthropology in the twenty-first century*. New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Podjed, D. and Gorup, M. 2016. *Applied Anthropology in Europe: Historical Obstacles, Current Situation, Future Challenges Anthropology in Action*. Vol.23(2), pp. 53-63.

Shackel, A. P. and Chambers, E. J. 2004. *Places in mind: public archaeology as applied anthropology*. London: Routledge.

Trainer, S. 2010. *Environmental Anthropology, Applied Anthropology, Medical Anthropology*. *Current Anthropology*. Vol.51 (3), pp.315-315.

Willigen, J. V. 2002. *Applied anthropology: an introduction*. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey.

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>

Field trip Preparations

Clothing:

Please ensure that you wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the trip to Skanda Vale. Appropriate footwear and clothing means warm, modest, safe and weather-proof. The community at Skanda Vale has certain expectations and, as guests, our aim is to fit in and be respectful: we need to dress the part. There are also safety considerations too; for example, wearing high heels or shoes without adequate grip can be dangerous around livestock and on uneven ground. It is essential that you do not take leather jackets, belts or handbags into the temples.

Accommodation:

You will be spending the night in very basic pilgrim's accommodation, consisting of either wooden chalets or caravans. Skanda Vale will kindly provide beds, mattresses and heating; you are expected to bring all your required bedding (sleeping bags, pillows, sheets and/or duvet). You will also need £1 coins for heating – the

monks and nuns will not be able to change money. You will also find an alarm clock and a torch useful. Skanda Vale accommodates sexes separately, but you will be expected to share with each other. The number of beds per room is between 2 and 6. You will not share accommodation with any other pilgrims.

Food:

Skanda Vale are kindly providing us with breakfast, lunch and dinner. The food will be simple and consist of rice, lentil dahl and curried vegetables. You must inform Eloise in advance if you have any dietary requirements; this is your responsibility. Skanda Vale ask that you do 'not consume any meat, poultry, fish, alcohol or illegal drugs for at least three days before' you arrive. You are expected to respect this request. Remember that we are anthropological 'pilgrims' and it is important that we both respect and reflect upon the wishes and practices of our host community. Students who do not respect this request will not be able to fully participate in all the activities. You must not bring any of these prohibited items to the site.

Behaviour at Skanda Vale:

- Mobile phones and tablets are not allowed anywhere in the ashram
- No cameras are allowed anywhere in Skanda Vale
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere in Skanda Vale
- Men and women sit separately
- Please respect other pilgrims and members of the community
- The grounds are sacred. Do not pick any flowers or drop any rubbish.

REMEMBER: These are our host's rules, and whilst we do not have to like these rules, we may want to consider (from an anthropological perspective) why they are in place, as well as their consequences within the community. You may also want to reflect on your own response to these rules and your experience of 'living' them, in addition to thinking about how they can be used analytically to enhance our understanding of the community.