

ANTH 5020

ANTHROPOLOGICAL FIELD METHODS

The Chinese University of Hong Kong | Spring 2023

Course Time: Tuesday 6:30pm-9:15pm

Course Location: TBD

Course website: TBD

Faculty Instructor: ZHANG Chaoxiong, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: TBD, and by appointment (NAH 408)

Course Description:

How do anthropologists conduct research? What distinguishes research as anthropological? How do field methods shape anthropological knowledge production? How does the writing process frame and redefine a project? What are the strength and limitations of anthropological field research? In this course, we will learn about how anthropologists conceptualize, conduct, and analyze their research. You will read texts on anthropological research methods, fieldworkers' reflections on their experience, and a few ethnographic writings. Through various assignments, you will acquire hands-on experience in data-collecting techniques, including participant observation and interviews. In the last part of the course, we will focus on the writing-up process and reflect on anthropological field methods in the contemporary world of global connections.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completing this course, students will be able to

- deepen their understanding of anthropology and anthropological knowledge production,
- employ and further explore anthropological research methods and data collecting techniques,
- evaluate the quality of an anthropological research project, and
- enhance their critical reading of ethnographic works.

Reading Materials:

All readings will be posted on Blackboard

Course Requirement:

This seminar course is discussion intensive. You are expected to finish all required readings before and and participate actively in class.

- **Participation (15%)** marks reflect your engagement in lectures. While the quality of a student's comments matters, what is even more critical is whether you have prepared for the class, shown strong motivation to engage with your classmates, and made contribution to further our discussion.
- **Methods Exercise and Short Writing Assignments (60%):** We will conduct six methods-related exercises in class. After most exercises, you will submit short reflections via Blackboard. These exercises aim to help you get hands-on research experience. Though they are still different from long-term fieldwork, they help you to understand methods by doing, in addition to reading and discussion. These exercises will also prepare you for your finals. Details will be further explained in class. **Due in various weeks via Blackboard.**
- **Final Paper (25%):** By the end of the course, you can choose to write a draft "research proposal" **or** submit an essay. (1) Research Proposal: Submit a "research proposal" that explains your research question, relevance to anthropology, methods, training, and contribution. The course adopts the Wenner-Gren Foundation model of proposal writing. More details will be explained later. (Length: approximately 2500 words in English and 5000 words in Chinese). (2) Final reflection essay: Write an essay to reflect on what you have learned in this course critically and how your reflection would affect your research design. (World limits: 2500 words in English and 5000 words in Chinese). **Due by May 2.** The paper should be written in the following format: Double line spacing, Times New Roman, and font 12. Please upload it to VeriGuide, and then upload your paper and VeriGuide Certificate to Blackboard.

Course Schedule (Subject to modification)

Section I: Introduction

- **Week 1 (Jan 10): Introduction to the Course**
 - Go through syllabus and course overview
 - No readings
- **Week 2 (Jan 17): History, Fieldwork, and Ethnography**
 - Malinowski, 1922. "Introduction: The Subject, Method and Scope of this Enquiry." In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. Pp. 1-25.
 - Boas, Franz. 1932. "The Aims of Anthropological Research" In *Science*. New Series, Vol. 76, No. 1983 (Dec. 30, 1932), pp. 605-613.
 - Geertz, Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight. 1973. Pp. 412-453 in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic Books
- **Week 3 (Jan 24): Happy New Year!**
 - No class
- **Week 4 (Jan 31): Reflection on fieldwork and ethnography**
 - Rabinow, P. 2007 (1977) "Preface to the Thirtieth Anniversary Edition." In *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*. Pp. xi – xxv. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press.
 - Barley, Nigel (1983) "Chapter 1: The Reason Why," "Chapter 2: Be Prepared," "Chapter 3: To the hill," & "Chapter 4: Honi soit qui Malinowski." In *The Innocent Anthropologist: Notes from a Mud Hut*. Pp. 7- 36.
- **Week 5 (Feb 7): Fieldwork ethics, power, relations**
 - Bourgois, Philippe. 1997 (1991). *Confronting the Ethics of Ethnography: Lessons from fieldwork in Central America*. In *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an anthropology of liberation*. Faye V. Harrison, ed. Arlington, VA: Association of Black Anthropologist, American Anthropological Association.
 - Film: *The Secrets of the Tribe*
 - Assignment 1: Access AAA Handbook on Ethical Issues in Anthropology.

Section II: Conducting Ethnographic Fieldwork

- **Week 6 (Feb 14): Preparing for research**
 - Bernard, H. R. (2011) "Ch.3: Preparing for Research." In *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Pp. 54-81.
- **Week 7 (Feb 21): Problematique**
 - Booth, Wayne C. et. al. 1995. "Asking Questions, Finding Answers." In *The Craft of Research*, 29-47. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 - Instruction of the Wenner-Gren Foundation
 - Assignment 2: Draft your research questions (in-class exercise) & submit it by Feb 27.
- **Week 8 (Feb 28): Conducting research: Entering your field**

- Johnson, Jeffrey C., Christine Avenarius, and Jack Weatherford. 2006. "The Active Participant-Observer: Applying Social Role Analysis to Participant Observation." *Field Methods* 18 (2): 111–34.
- Kawulich, Barbara B. 2011. "Gatekeeping: An Ongoing Adventure in Research." *Field Methods* 23 (1): 57–76.
- **Week 9 (Mar 7): Conducting research: Observing**
 - Bernard. 2011. Chapter 12 Participant Observation. In *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Pp. 256-290.
 - DeWalt, Kathleen and Billie R. DeWalt. 2011. "Doing Participant Observation: Becoming a Participant." In *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, 2nd edition, 41-66. Lanham: AltaMira Press.
 - Sterk, Claire. 2000. "Tricking and tripping: fieldwork on prostitution in the era of AIDS." In *Annual Editions: Anthropology 07/08* (2006). McGraw-Hill.
 - Assignment 3: Participant observation plan (in-class exercise) & submit it by Mar 13
- **Week 10 (Mar 14): Conducting research: Asking**
 - Bernard, H. Russell. 2011. "Chapter 8: Interviewing I: Unstructured and Semistructured." In *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 5th edition, 171-202. Lanham: AltaMira Press.
 - Assignment 4: Interview practice (in-class exercise)
- **Week 11: (Mar 21) Conducting research: Using Images**
 - El Guindi, Fadwa. 2014. "Visual Anthropology." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, Second Edition. Bernard, H. Russell, and Clarence C. Gravlee, eds. 414-436, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
 - Hinthorne, Lauren Leigh. 2012. "A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words: Using the Visual Interpretation Narrative Exercise to Elicit Non-Elite Perceptions of Democracy." *Field Methods* 24 (3): 348–64.
 - Assignment 5: Image(s) mini-presentation (in-class exercise)

Section III: Analysis & Writing-up

- **Week 12: (Mar 28): Data Analysis**
 - Bernard, H. Russell. 2006. "Field Notes: How to take them, code them, manage them." In *Research methods in anthropology: qualitative and quantitative approaches*, 387-412. Lanham: AltaMira Press
 - DeCuir-Gunby, Jessica T., Patricia L. Marshall, and Allison W. McCulloch. 2011. "Developing and Using a Codebook for the Analysis of Interview Data: An Example from a Professional Development Research Project." *Field Methods* 23 (2): 136–55.
- **Week 13 (Apr 4): Ethnographic analysis and writing: From field notes to an ethnography**
 - Emerson, R. M., R. I. Fretz, et al. (1995) *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Pp. 39-107 & 169-210. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. (Selections)
 - Assignment 6: Fieldnote writing and editing (interview and participant observation notes) (in-class exercise)
- **Week 14 (Apr 11): Why Ethnography Matters**
 - Fassin, Didier. 2013. "Why Ethnography Matters: On Anthropology and its Publics." *Cultural Anthropology* 28, no. 4: 621–46.

- **Week 15 (Apr 18): Wrapping up**
 - No readings

Course Policies:

- **Penalties for late work:** All assignments are due on the scheduled day and time. No extensions will be given except under extraordinary circumstances. One-third of a letter grade will be deducted for each day an assignment is submitted late.
- **Class Culture:** Classes are a safe atmosphere where ideas can be discussed and different opinions respected.
- **Academic Integrity:** The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on academic honesty, and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on academic dishonesty. Any such offence will lead to disciplinary action including possibly termination of studies at the University. Students should know how to properly use source material and how to avoid plagiarism. Detailed guidelines and examples for the acknowledgement of sources can be found on the University's website at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academicintegrity/>. All papers must be submitted through VeriGuide.
- **Writing Assistance:** For additional help on your writing, consult the expert staff of the English Language Teaching Unit (ELT). ELT's Peer Tutoring Scheme offers informal opportunities for CUHK undergraduates and postgraduates to consult trained Peer Tutors on English speaking and writing (<https://eltu.cuhk.edu.hk/pts/>).

Grade descriptors are as follows for the assessment of this course:

Grade	Overall course
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
A-	Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
B	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
C	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
D	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.