

Spring 2021

## **HUMA 5770 Field Research: Theory and Practice**

### **Descriptions:**

In this course we explore theories, methods, and techniques in ethnographic field research. The current discussions on writing ethnography and textural representation are also covered in the course. Students are required to start their field research projects at the beginning of semester. The experiences and problems of students' fieldwork will be examined in the seminar.

### **Learning outcomes after completion of the course:**

- Understand the anthropological approach of conducting field research.
- Understand the advantages and limitations of the anthropological field research method.
- Acquire a holistic perspective in conducting field research.
- Master the basic field research techniques.

### **Requirements:**

- All course participants need to submit **a one-page reading response paper** on the required readings of each week **before** the class through email to the course instructor.
- All course participants need to exercise doing field work and **to submit the field notes each week**.

### **Texts:**

Crang, Mike and Cook, Ian

2007 *Doing Ethnographies*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson

2007 *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.): Routledge.

Davies, Charlotte Aull

1999 *Reflexive Ethnography*. London and New York: Routledge.

Whyte, William Foote

1993 *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

### **Seminar Topics, Readings, and Assignments:**

**Week 1 (February 4). Course organization, field work, nature of culture and ethnography**

**Week 2 (February 11). No class, Fieldtrip (TBA).**

**Week 3 (February 18). Choosing a field site; research proposal**

**Assignment due: field notes due on very weekend since week 3.**

### **Readings:**

Burgess, Robert G.

1982 "Approaches to Field Research." In *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 1-11. Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Conaway, Mary Ellen

1986 "The Pretense of the Neutral Researcher." In *Self, Sex, and Gender in Cross-Cultural Fieldwork*, pp. 52-63. Eds. Tony Iarry Whitehead, and Mary Ellen Conaway. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

**Reading Report Due: *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (Hammersley & Martyn and Paul)**

#### **Week 4. (February 25). Participant-observation and Audio-visual recording**

##### **Readings:**

Gans, Herbert J.

1968 "The Participant Observer as a Human Being: Observations on the Personal Aspects of Fieldwork." In *Institutions and the Person: Papers Presented to Evertt C. Hughes*, pp. 300-17. Eds. Howard S. Becker, Blanche Geer, David Riesman, and Robert S. Weiss. Chicago: Aldine. Reprinted in *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 53-61. Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: Allen & Unwin (1982).

Whyte, William Foote.

1994. "Learning to Be a Participant Observer." In his *Participant Observer: An Autobiography*, pp. 67-84. Ithaca: ILR Press.

**Assignment due:** A map of your field site (legends have to be provided). The map should reveal some forms of social relations. A short description of the map has to be provided (not more than a page).

#### **Week 5 (March 4) Field notes**

**Assignment due: Photos of the field and activities.**

##### **Readings:**

Burgess, Robert G.

1982 "Keeping Field Notes." In *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 191-94. Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Ottenberg, Simon

1990 "Thirty Years of Fieldnotes: Changing Relationships to the Text." In *Fieldnotes: The Making of Anthropology*, pp. 139-160. Ed. Roger Sanjek. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

#### **Week 6 (March 11) Interviewing and key informants**

**Assignment due: Short description of the field site.**

##### **Readings:**

Burgess, Robert G.

1982 "The Unstructured Interview as a Conversation." In *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 107-110. Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: George Allen & Unwin.

## **Week 7 (March 18). Life history, oral history and local document (I)**

### **Readings:**

Angrosino, Michael V.

- 2007 "Conducting a Life History Interview." In *Doing Cultural Anthropology: Projects for ethnographic data collection*, pp. 33-62. Ed. Micheal V. Angrosino. Long Grove: Waveland Press.

Burgess, Robert G.

- 1982 "Personal Documents, Oral Sources, and Life Histories." In *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 131-135. Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: George Allen & Unwin.

## **Week 8 (March 25). Life history, oral history and local document (II)**

### **Readings:**

Mandelbaum, David G.

- 1973 "The Study of Life History." *Current Anthropology*. 14.3:177-82, 195-6. Reprinted in *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 146-51. Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Portelli, Alessandro

- 1981 "The Peculiarities of Oral History." *History Workshop Journal*. 12:96-107.

## **Week 9 (April 8). Fieldwork ethic**

### **Readings:**

## **Week 10 (April 15). Strategies of analyses**

### **Readings:**

Geertz, Clifford

- 1973 "Thick Description." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 3-32. New York: Harper and Row.

Pratt, Mary Iouise

- 1986 "Fieldwork in Common Places." In *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, pp. 27-50. Eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Jianxiong, Ma

- 2019 "Beyond the border of disciplines and societies: Insights from fieldwork among the Lahu and the history of *bazi* basins", in Thomas David DuBois and Kiely Jan, *Out of the Archives*, London & New York: Routledge (Forthcoming).

## **Week 11 (April 22) Writing ethnography**

### **Readings:**

Clifford, James

1983 "On Ethnographic Authority." *Representations*, 1.2:118-46.

Marcus, George E., and Dick Cushman

1982 "Ethnographies as Texts." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 11:25-69.

### **Week 12. (April 29 & May 6) Project presentations**

### **III. Course requirements and grading:**

Students are required to attend the seminar, to do presentations, to participate in class discussions, and to join fieldtrips. Assignments and the research paper should be submitted according to the schedule. All the assignments have to be typed and in double spacing.

Documentary:

*Margaret Mead and Samoa: The fake anthropology research unmasked by Derek Freeman*, GN671/S2/M37/1988; 51 mins.