

Spring 2019

HUMA 5770 Field Research: Theory and Practice

Course instructor: Ma Jianxiong

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Time & Venue: Room 2126D, Tuesday, 19:00-21:50

Office: Room 3340

Office Hours: Wednesday, 15:00-18:00

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 (3rd 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.

Shostak, Marjorie,

1981 *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*, New York: Vintage Books.

2000 *Return to Nisa*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Seminar Topics, Readings, and Assignments:

Week 1 (February 12). Course organization, field work, nature of culture and ethnography

Assignment: Review an ethnography and write an analysis of how the field data was collected, being used and presented in the ethnography. The first reading report is due **on February 26**.

Readings:

Haviland. Ch. 2.

Ortner, Sherry B.

1984 "Theories in Anthropology since the Sixties", in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.26, No.1, pp. 126-166.

Geertz, Clifford

1973 "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Watson, James L. and Rubie S. Watson

2004 "Fieldwork in the Hong Kong New Territories (1969-1997)." In *Village life in Hong Kong: Politics, Gender, and Ritual in the New Territories*, pp. 3-18. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.

Week 2 (February 19). No class, Fieldtrip (TBA).

Week 3 (February 26). 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.

Keyes, Charles F.

1983 "The Observer Observed: Changing Identities of Ethnographer in a Northern Thai Village." In *Fieldwork: The Human Experience*, pp. 169-194. Eds. Robert Iawless, Vinson H. Sutlive, Jr., and Mario D. Zamora. New York: Gordon and Breach.

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

Week 4. (March 5). Participant-observation and Audio-visual recording

Readings:

Becker, Howard S. and Blanche Geer

1960 "Participant Observation: The Analysis of Qualitative Field Data." In *Human Organization Research: Field Relations and Techniques*. Reprinted in *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 239-50. Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: George Allen & Unwin.

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).

Frankenberg, Ronald

- 1963 "Participant Observers." *New Society*, 7:22-23. Reprinted in *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 50-52. Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: George 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.

Banks, Marcus

- 1998 "Visual Anthropology: Image, Object and Interpretation." In *Image-based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*. Ed. Jon Prosser, pp. 9-23. London: Falmer Press.

Collier, John, Jr. and Collier, Malcolm

- 1986 *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. Ch. 1, 2, 11, & 12.

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 12) 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.

Werner, Oswald, and G. Mark Schoepfle

- 1987 *Systematic Fieldwork*, Vol. 1, pp. 257-287. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.

Reading Report Due: *Street Corner Society* (Whyte)

Week 6 (March 19) 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.

Termblay, Marc-Adelard

1957 "The Key Informant Technique: A Non-Ethnographic Application." *American Anthropologist*. 59.4:688-701. Reprinted In *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 98-104. Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: George Allen & Unwin (1982).

Whyte, William Foote

1960 "Interviewing in Field Research." In *Human Organization Research: Field Relations and Techniques*, pp. 352-74. Eds. R.N. Adams and J.J. Preiss. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press. Reprinted in *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 111-122. Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: George Allen & Unwin (1982).

Week 7 (March 26). 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.

Grele, Ronald J.

1985 "Movement Without Aim: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History." In *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History*, pp. 126-154. Ed. Ronald J. Crele. 2nd rev. ed. Chicago: Precedent.

Week 8 (April 2). 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.

Watson, I.C.

1985 "The Life History as a Subjective Document." In *Interpreting Live Histories*, pp. 30-57. Eds. Lawrence C. Watson and Maria-Barbara Watson-Franke. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Week 9 (April 9). Fieldwork ethic

Assignment due: Oral history report.

Readings:

American Anthropological Association

1986 "Statements on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibility."
(<http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/ethstmnt.htm>)

1998 "Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association."
(<http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>)

Jarvie, I.C.

1969 "The Problem of Ethical Integrity in Participant Observation." *Current Anthropology*.
10.5:505-508. Reprinted in *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 68-72.
Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: George Allen & Unwin (1982).

Joralemon, Donald

1990 "The Selling of the Shaman and the Problem of Informant Legitimacy." in
Shamanism: Critical Concepts in Sociology, vol. III, pp. 3-16. Ed. Andrei A. Znamenski.
London & New York: Routledge Curzon.

Thorne, Barrie

1980 "You Still Takin' Notes?' Fieldwork and Problems of Informed Consent." *Social Problem*.
27.3:284-97.

Wax, Murray I.

1980 "Paradoxes of 'Consent' to the Practices of Fieldwork." *Social Problems*. 27.3:272-83.

Reading Report Due: *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman & Return to Nisa* (Shostak)

Week 10 (April 16). Strategies of analyses

Readings:

Geertz, Clifford

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

1983 "From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding." In
Local Knowledge, pp. 55-70. New York: Basic Books.

Pratt, Mary Louise

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 30) Writing ethnography

Readings:

- Clifford, James
1983 "On Ethnographic Authority." *Representations*, 1.2:118-46.
- Crapanzano, Vincent
1977 "On the Writing of Ethnography." *Dialectical Anthropology*. 2:69-73.
- Marcus, George E., and Dick Cushman
1982 "Ethnographies as Texts." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 11:25-69.
- Throop, C. Jason & M. Murphy, Keith
2002 "Bourdieu and Phenomenology: A Critical Assessment." *Anthropological Theory*, 2.2:185-207.
- Rabinow, Paul
1986 "Representations are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology." In *Writing Culture: The Poetics of Ethnography*, pp. 234-261. Eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Week 12. (May 7) Project presentations

The research paper is due on May 20, 2019.

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.

Grading Scheme:

Assignments	
Class attendance, presentations, response papers	20 points
Short description of the field site and research proposal	5
Map of the field site	5
Photos of the field and activities	5
Oral history report	5
Review of ethnographies	10
Field notes and journals	10
Research paper	<u>40</u>
Total:	<u>100 points</u>
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Documentary:

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