

## **FIELD RESEARCH: THEORY AND PRACTICE (HUMA 5770)**

Fall 2019

Division of Humanities, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Rm. 5508, Wednesday 9:00 - 11:50

### **Instructor:**

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Office Hours: Wednesday 14:30-16:00 & Thursday 15:00-16:30 (and by appointment)

### **Descriptions:**

In this seminar, we explore theories, methods, and techniques in ethnographic field research. Students are required to conduct their field research projects and which should be started soon when the semester begins. The experiences, problems and difficulties of students' fieldwork will be examined in the seminar. The discussions on writing ethnography and textual representation are also covered in the course.

### **Intended learning outcomes:**

- Understand the anthropological approaches in field research.
- Develop an appreciation of the diversity of human societies and understand the meanings of different cultural and social practices.
- Acquire a holistic perspective in understanding human society.
- Master the basic field research techniques.

### **I. Readings and references:**

Burgess, Robert G.

1982 *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Collier, John, Jr. and Collier, Malcolm

1986 *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Crane, Julia G. and Michael V. Angrosino

1992 *Field Projects in Anthropology: A Student Handbook*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press.

Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson

1995 *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Routledge.

Haviland, William A.

2002 *Cultural Anthropology* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Jackson, Bruce

1987 *Fieldwork*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Keesing, Roger M. and Andrew J. Strathern

1998 *Cultural Anthropology: A Contemporary Perspective*. Australia: Thomson/Wadsworth.

Watson, James L. and Rubie S. Watson

2004 *Village Life in Hong Kong: Politics, Gender, and Ritual in the New Territories*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press. (中譯本：華琛、華若璧，2011，《鄉土香港：新界的政治、性別及禮儀》，張婉麗、盛思維譯。香港：中文大學出版社。)

Whyte, William Foote

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

Wolcott, Harry F.

2005 *The Art of Fieldwork* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

## II. SEMINAR TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Week 1 (Sept 4) Course organization; fieldwork

Week 2 (Sept 11) Culture and society; ethnography

### Readings:

Haviland. Ch. 2.

Keesing & Strathern. Ch. 1 & 2.

李亦園

1999 《田野圖像：我的人類學研究生涯》，濟南市：山東畫報出版社，頁1-126。

費孝通

1996 〈社會調查自白〉，《學術自述與反思：費孝通學術文集》，北京：三聯書店，頁1-84。

Geertz, Clifford

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

Liu, Tik-sang and Siu-woo Cheung

1998 "Reference Community: Anthropological Experience of Research, Teaching and Friendship in Tai-O, Hong Kong." In *On the South China Track: Perspectives on Anthropological Research and Teaching*, pp. 225-244. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

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 3 (Sept 18) Choosing a field site; research proposal

**Assignment due:** A description of your field site (not more than 2 pages)

### 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 Larry Whitehead, and Mary Ellen Conaway. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Jackson. Ch. 1-4.

Hammersley and Atkinson. Ch. 3.

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 Lawless, Vinson H. Sutlive, Jr., and Mario D. Zamora. New York: Gordon and Breach.

Pzeworski, Adam and Frank Salomon

1998 *The Art of Writing Proposals*. Social Science Research Council  
(<http://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/7A9CB4F4-815F-DE11-BD80-001CC477EC70/>).

Wolcott. Ch. 1-3.

#### Week 4 (Sept 25) Audio-visual recording

**Assignment due:** A research proposal (not more than 5 pages). Aspects to be covered in the proposal: the nature of the research, the significance of the research, the research methodology, and the research schedule.

#### Readings:

Asch, Timothy

1992 "The Ethics of Ethnographic Film-Making." In *Film as Ethnography*. Eds. Peter Lan Crawford and David Turton, pp. 196-202. Manchester: Manchester University 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 and Collier. Ch. 1, 2, 11, & 12.

#### Week 5 (Oct 2) Participant-observation

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

**Action:** Submit a title of an ethnography which the student plans to review.

#### 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.

Collier and Collier. Ch. 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7.

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).

Hammersley and Atkinson. Ch. 4.

Whyte, William Foote

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

Wolcott. Ch. 4-6.

#### Week 6 (Oct 9) Field notes

##### 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. 257-87. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.

#### Week 7 (Oct 16) Interviewing and key informants

**Assignment due:** Five photos of the field and activities (size: 4R). The photos should reveal some forms of social relations. Write a short description for each photo (not more than 50 words)

##### 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..

Collier and Collier. Ch. 8 & 9.

Hammersley and Atkinson. Ch. 5.

Jackson. Ch. 7-8.

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 8 (Oct 23) Life history, oral history, and local documents

**Assignment due:** The 1<sup>st</sup> set of field notes and journals.

#### Readings:

Burgess, Robert G.

- 1982 "Personal Documents, Oral Sources, and Life Histories." In *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, pp. 107-110. Ed. Robert G. Burgess. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Crapanzano, Vincent

- 1977 "The life History in Anthropological Fieldwork." *Anthropological Humanism Quarterly*, 2:3-6.

Faure, David, Bernard H.K. Luk, and Alice Ngai-ha Lun Ng

- 1984 "The Hong Kong Region According to Historical Inscriptions." In *From Village to City*, pp. 43-54. Eds. David Faure, James Hayes, and Alan Birch. Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong.

Grele, Ronald J.

- 1985 "Movement Without Aim: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History." In *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History*, pp. 126-55. Ed. Ronald J. Crele. 2nd rev. ed. Chicago: Precedent.

Hammersley and Atkinson. Ch. 6.

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 (Oct 30) Fieldwork ethic

**Assignment due:** An oral history report (more than 3 pages) and a kinship diagram.

**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>)

Hammersley and Atkinson, Ch. 10.

Jackson. Ch. 16.

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." *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 46.2: 105-118.

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.

**Week 10 & 11 (Nov 6 & 13) Strategies of Analyses**

**Assignment due:** Review of an ethnography

**Readings:**

Barth, Fredrik

1956 "Ecologic Relationships of Ethnic Groups in Swat, North Pakistan." *American Anthropologist*, 58:  
1079-1089.

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.

Hammersley, Martin, and Paul Atkinson. Ch. 1.

Harris, Marvin

1974 "Mother Cow." In *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches: The Riddle of Culture*, pp. 6-27. New York:  
Vintage Books.

1980 "Theoretical Principles of Cultural Materialism." In *Cultural Materialism: The Struggle for a Science of Culture*, pp. 46-76. New York: Vintage 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.

Faure, David and Helen Siu

- 1995 "Introduction" and "Conclusion." In *Down to Earth: The Territorial Bond in South China*. Eds. Helen Siu and David Faure, pp. 1-20 & 209-224. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Rawski, Evelyn

- 1988 "A Historian's Approach to Chinese Death Ritual." In *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, pp. 203-227. Eds. James Watson and Evelyn Rawski. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Watson, James

- 1988 "The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence, and the Primacy of Performance." In *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, pp. 203-227. Eds. James Watson and Evelyn Rawski. Berkeley: University of California Press.

#### Week 12 (Nov 20) Writing ethnography

**Assignment due:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> set field notes and journals

#### 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.

Rabinow, Paul

- 1986 "Representations are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology." In *Writing Culture: The Poetics of Ethnography*, pp. 234-61. Eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Wolcott. Ch. 7-9 & 10-11.

#### Week 13 (Nov 27) Project presentations

**The research paper is due on Dec 13, 2019.**

#### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

In this course, students are required to attend the seminar, to do presentations, to participate in class discussions, and to join fieldtrips (some optional fieldtrips will be arranged). Students are expected to read the assigned materials and participate in class discussions. Students take turns to prepare outlines of the reading materials.

Students are required to conduct their own ethnographic research projects and submit the assignments according to the course schedule. All the assignments have to be typed. Students are required to keep a

journal of their field research activities. The journal has to be submitted twice in the semester. These reports and assignments will become the core of the students' field research papers.

Students are required to review an ethnography and write an analysis of how the field data was collected, being used and presented in the ethnography. The chosen ethnography has to be approved by the instructor. The review should have not more than 5 pages.

**Grading scheme:**

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Due dates</u>	<u>Points</u>
Class attendance, presentations and discussions		60
Short description of the field site	Sept 18	5
Research proposal	Sept 25	10
Map of the field site	Oct 2	5
Photos of the field and activities	Oct 16	10
1 <sup>st</sup> field notes and journals	Oct 23	10
Oral history report	Oct 30	10
Review of an ethnography	Nov 6	20
2 <sup>nd</sup> field notes and journals	Nov 13	10
Research paper	Dec 13	60
	Total:	<u>200</u>