ANTH5020  
Anthropological Field Methods  
Fall 2019

Time: Thursday, 6:30 - 9:15 pm  
Venue: NAH11  
Lecturer: Dr. Ju-chen Chen 陳如珍 (juchen@cuhk.edu.hk)  
Office hour: Tuesday, 2:00 - 3:00 pm

Course Description:

How do anthropologists conduct research? What distinguishes as anthropological research from other kinds of research? How do field methods shape anthropological knowledge production? How does the writing process frame and redefine a project? What are the strength and limitation of anthropological field research? Anthropological fieldwork starts from one’s desire to know an unfamiliar world out there and is made possible by one’s determination to step out of your comfort zone. This course is designed to introduce you to anthropology through learning about its research methods. You will read texts on anthropological research methods, fieldworkers’ reflections on their experience and also 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 the use of 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 ethnography.

Readings:
This course uses various articles and book chapters. All required materials are available on Blackboard.

However, we will read several chapters from the following books. You are encouraged to acquire a copy for your reference.


Requirement and Assessment:
This seminar course is discussion intensive. You are expected to finish all required readings (marked with an asterisk *) beforehand and participate actively in class discussion.

Class participation 10%
In class methods exercises and short writing assignments 50%
Final report or research proposal 40%

Participation 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 and actively engaged in the discussion.

Methods Exercise and Short Writing Assignments: We will conduct multiple methods-related exercises in class and do short writing assignments. These exercises aim at helping you get hands-on research experience and also to prepare you for your final report or research proposal. Details will be further explained in class.

Final Report or Research Proposal: By the end of the course, you can choose to write a final paper or submit a research proposal. 1) Final report: Choose a methods-related topic you are interested in and write a critical reflection paper about it. (World limits: 2500 words in English and 5000 words in Chinese). 2) 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 3000 words in English and 6000 words in Chinese). Due: 6 Dec.

*Formats and other requirements: 1) Please use double-spaced, font size 12 or larger, and standard margins. 2) All writings (except for those done in class) must be submitted to VeriGuide (https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.jspx). An assignment without a signed declaration from VeriGuide will not be graded.
*Extra reminder about essay writing:* A good essay is a concise one with a clear thesis or argument. It shows your curiosity, creativity, and organizational skills. As long as it is succinct, the length of it is not a top concern.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 01 (Sep. 5): Introduction: Anthropologists and their Knowledge Production**
Syllabus and course overview
No reading due

**Week 02 (Sep. 12): History, Fieldwork, and Ethnography**


**Film/Video:** *An anthropological introduction to YouTube.* Presentation at the Library of Congress, June 23rd, 2008 by Michael Welsh

**Week 03 (Sep. 19): “The Real Life of An Anthropologist in the Field”**

**Exercise 1: Problem definition**

**Week 04 (Sep. 26): From Idea To Project**
Exercise 2: Problem definition (editing and revision)

Week 05 (Oct. 3): Participant Observation I: Rapport

Exercise 3: Participant observation plan (4 weeks)

Week 06 (Oct. 10): Participant Observation: Collecting and Reflecting

Exercise 4: Fieldnote writing and editing

Week 07 (Oct. 17): Interview
Exercise 5: Unstructured and semi-structured interview

Week 08 (Oct. 24): Visual Materials: Senses and Representation

Week 09 (Oct. 31): Ethics
Shay, Christopher 2009 “Should Anthropologists Go to War?” Time December 13., http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1947095,00.html

Exercise 6: Assess AAA case studies of ethical dilemmas (http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ch3.htm)

* Reflection of participant observation plan (exercise 3)  due in class

Week 10 (Nov. 7): No class. Graduation Day.

Week 11 (Nov. 14): Gender


**Week 12 (Nov. 21): Writing-up**


Golstein, Daniel (n.d.) Grant Proposal, Fieldnotes, and The Spectacular City.


**Week 13 (Nov. 28): Wrap Up: The Impacts and Limits of Anthropological Methods**


* Final Report or Research Proposal due on 6 December at NAH407

**Policies**

**Late Submission:** Late submission will suffer a fraction of a grade per day. For example, an A will become an A-.

**Academic Honesty:** You are required to cite properly (guidelines: [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/tstyle.doc](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/tstyle.doc)) and please refer to the university website ([http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academic honesty/index.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academic honesty/index.htm) and [http://](http://)
www.ilc.cuhk.edu.hk/english/resource/referencing_avoidingplagiarism1.pdf) to avoid plagiarism.

**Laptop Policy:** Please do not use mobile phones, laptops, or tablets in class. Browsing websites, checking social media, and texting or answering phone calls distract not only you but your classmates and me! Research has also shown that taking notes by hands is much better than on your laptop. See: https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/08/note-taking-low-tech-often-best

**Recording:** No (video and audio) recording is permitted in this class. Please pay proper respect to your classmates and me. We would all like to ensure a space of free and open discussion of ideas. If you have any needs for recording, please consult me first.