

# **S0104 Methods in Social and Historical Studies**

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## **Course Description**

Ethnography is a research method consisting of observation techniques to produce knowledge about societies and cultures. It provides a vast space for the researcher to gather observation and experience in the field—however, the spaciousness of the field of experience and proximity to the observed cause countless accidents. As a result, transforming ethnographic observation into academic knowledge based on the researcher's subjective experience also necessitates a series of reflections and self-reflection. In this course, we will get to know ethnography by discussing several ethnographers' experiences instead of studying ethnography as a method from above. This reverse view will provide the opportunity for students who are curious and prone to field studies to anticipate the problems they may encounter. Therefore, the course aims to get familiar with ethnography through ethnographers' gazes and discuss the methodological problems involved in ethnography. In this way, students will become familiar with this method and have the experience to read the social science literature based on ethnographic research.

## **Requirements**

### **Academic Integrity**

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

### **Attendance**

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPRING 2022:** Some students may need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

### **Assessment**

The course assessment consists of basically attendance, participation, and engagement in the discussions and activities. See also “Grade Breakdown.”

### **Assignments**

Students will keep a diary throughout the semester. We will talk about the subjects of the diaries and what to do with them in the class. Students will write a midterm (2000-2500 words, deadline: 18 March 2022) and a final essay (3000-3500 words, deadline: 13 May 2022) on their chosen topics.

### **Policy on Late Submission of Papers**

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors’ office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Seminar Grade: Attendance, participation, engagement with the activities and reading list.

Seminar Grade: 30%

Diary 10%

Short/draft essay: 30%

Final essay: 30%

## **Schedule**

**Course times: Fri 14:00-17:15**

### **Week 1**

Introduction

What is a research?

What is a methodology?

Who is a researcher?

Why do researchers and their readers need a methodology?

Discussing about diary writing

### **Week 2**

Ethnography as

a method for researching, writing, narrating and/or

a way of life, of seeing, of listening to...

Willis, Paul, and Mats Trondman. "Manifesto for ethnography." *Ethnography* 1, no. 1 (2000): 5-16.

Shah, Alpa. "Ethnography? Participant observation, a potentially revolutionary praxis." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 7, no. 1 (2017): 45-59.

### **Week 3**

Ethnographer

Who is an ethnographer? What does distinguish an ethnographer from any person living in any social/cultural environment in an engaged manner?

Pels, Peter, and Oscar Salemink. "Introduction: Five theses on ethnography as colonial practice." (1994): 1-34.

### **Week 3**

Sources of ethnographer: Reflection and selfreflection

Rudolph, Lloyd I. "Self as Other: Amar Singh's Diary as Reflexive 'Native' Ethnography." *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 1 (1997): 143-175.

### **Week 4**

The field

Remember the Prime Directive of Star Trek: Do not interfere... What if the research itself is an interference to the field? What if a place, a context becomes a field only when a researcher interferes?

John van Maanen, *Fieldwork, culture, and ethnography*, in *Tales of the Field On Writing Ethnography*, University of Chicago Press, 2011

### **Week 5**

## Engagement

Another word from Star Trek: Engage. What does it mean in the field?

Urla, Jacqueline, and Justin Helepololei. "The ethnography of resistance then and now: On thickness and activist engagement in the twenty-first century." *History and Anthropology* 25, no. 4 (2014): 431-451.

Bosco, Maria Concetta Lo. "Feelings in the Field: The Emotional Labour of the Ethnographer." *Anthropology in Action* 28, no. 2 (2021): 8-17.

## Week 6

### Objectivation

Ethnographer is not a prophet. S/he has to be vulnerable, too. How?

Bourdieu, Pierre. "Participant objectivation." *Journal of the royal anthropological institute* 9, no. 2 (2003): 281-294.

Behar, Ruth. "Folklore and the search for home (American Folklore Society presidential invited plenary address, October 2008)." *Journal of American Folklore* 122, no. 485 (2009): 251-266.

## Week 7

How do observations turn into findings?

Kleine, Michael. "Beyond triangulation: ethnography, writing, and rhetoric." *Journal of Advanced Composition* (1990): 117-125.

## Week 8

Curious case of Bronislaw Malinowski: Ethnographer as a pissed of alien

Firth, Raymond, second Introduction to the Malinowski's Diary, in A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term, Routledge, 2020

Geertz, Clifford. "Under the mosquito net." *The New York Review of Books* 4 (1967): 14.

Symmons-Symonolewicz, Konstantin. "The Ethnographer and His Savages: An Intellectual History of Malinowski's Diary," *The Polish Review* (1982): 92-98.

## Week 9

Gender of ethnography

Stacey, Judith. "Can there be a feminist ethnography?." In *Women's studies international forum*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 21-27. Pergamon, 1988.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Can there be a feminist ethnography?." *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 5, no. 1 (1990): 7-27.

## Week 10

## Queering (in) ethnography

Adjepong, Anima. "Invading ethnography: A queer of color reflexive practice." *Ethnography* 20, no. 1 (2019): 27-46.

### **Week 11**

Ethnography vs theory

Hammersley, Martyn. "What's wrong with ethnography? The myth of theoretical description." *Sociology* 24, no. 4 (1990): 597-615.

Banfield, Grant, "What's Really Wrong with Ethnography?" *International Education Journal* 4, no. 4 (2004): 53-63.

### **Week 12**

Accident and essence

Parvez, Z. Fareen. "The sorrow of parting: Ethnographic depth and the role of emotions." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 47, no. 4 (2018): 454-483.

### **Week 13**

A little provocation for the future: Ethnographising the colonizers

Laurens, Sylvain. "Is a Participant Objectivation of Elites and Symbolic Power Possible?." *Researching Elites and Power* 16 (2020): 253.

Ho, Karen. "'Studying up' Wall Street: Reflections on theory and methodology." In *Researching Amongst Elites*, pp. 45-64. Routledge, 2016.

### **Week 14**

What remains

Reflections on the course and our experience

p.s. Most of the articles listed above are from open-source digital archives. Please inform me if you cannot find any of them.