



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2023

6,323: Spring Project: Practicing Social Ethnography

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (35%)

Examination time: term time

Decentral - examination paper written at home (in groups - all given the same grades) (65%)

Examination time: term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[6.323.1.00 Spring Project: Practicing Social Ethnography](#) -- Englisch -- [Boanada Fuchs Vanessa](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

There are no pre-requisites for enrolment. Students taking social ethnography typically show strong interest in qualitative research in the social and political sciences, as well as on-the-ground research work.

Learning objectives

Students enrolled in this course should be able to:

- Understand the relationship between theory and method in ethnography
- Become equipped to design ethnographic research projects
- Make informed decisions concerning strategies for fieldwork
- Select appropriate methods adapted to the subject-matter and fieldwork area
- Develop personal/professional skills to implement the research project in a responsible and ethical way

Course content

Social Ethnography could be defined as a the craft of carrying out social research about the daily lives of people/groups/entities by making use of different fieldwork techniques that, on the one hand, approximate or make sense of the strange/exotic/unknown and, on the other, distance or put into question the common-place/familiar/known.

The Spring Project "Practicing Social Ethnography" gives students an introduction to seminal works in this field and highlights its applications for current research in the social sciences, organizational studies, public and international affairs.

The course invites students to: (i) collectively discuss classic and contemporary ethnographic works, (ii) design, prepare for, and execute research projects in small groups based on ethnographic methods, (iii) carry out fieldwork, (iv) analyze data and write academic papers.

While conducting their projects, students select and present their own preferred research topics and, together with the course instructor, evaluate the scope and feasibility of the project, fine-tuning its design, question, and selection of methods for the applied "on-the-ground" research phase. In this process, students are exposed to and connect longstanding epistemological questions to present day debates about the encounter with the difference (and self-reflection), the stranger viewpoint, and the do-no-harm principle in research interventions.

The goal is to engage students with the epistemological, political and ethical aspects of applied social ethnography, considering its applicability to the field of international affairs and the study of current societal challenges.



Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course is structured in three parts:

It kicks off with synchronous online meetings for a general introduction to social ethnography and debates about its applicability to current affairs.

Then, in small groups, students select and present the research topics which they want to develop into projects using social ethnographic lenses. The topics are discussed and fine-tuned between peers and the course instructor. Students engage in exercises connected to research design, question definition, and method selection and, depending on the suitability to each project, may include conversations about fieldwork selection (time, place, voices), interviews, life-stories, visual aids, archival work, participant observation, virtual fieldwork, and multi-sited studies.

Finally, the groups carry out their project based on fieldwork, and present the final research results to their peers, being invited to reflect on and learn from each other's works, while being graded by the course instructor based on the adequacy of the research design/methods in relation to the chosen topic and scope of research previously defined, as well as understanding and *maîtrise* of social ethnographic tools.

Course literature

The final course literature will be communicated by the course instructor on StudyNet and may vary from group to group, following the specific needs of the chosen research topic and project.

A sample non-exhaustive bibliographic list may be found below:

- Abu-Lughod, L. (2008) *Writing women's worlds: Bedouin stories*. Univ of California Press.
- Asad, T. (Ed.). (1973). *Anthropology & the colonial encounter* (Vol. 6). London: Ithaca Press.
- Adler, P. A., & Adler, P. (2007). The demedicalization of self-injury: From psychopathology to sociological deviance. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 36(5), 537-570.
- Burawoy, M. (1998). The extended case method. *Sociological theory*, 16(1), 4-33.
- Burawoy, M. (2003). Revisits: An outline of a theory of reflexive ethnography. *American sociological review*, 645-679.
- Clifford, J. (1984). Introduction: Partial Truths. In *Writing Culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1984, pp. 1-26.
- Clifford, J. (2003). On ethnographic authority. *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief*.
- Comaroff, J., & Comaroff, J. (2019). *Ethnography and the historical imagination*. Routledge.
- Descola, P. (2013). *Beyond nature and culture*. University of Chicago Press.
- Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (2019). Ethnography. Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/science/ethnography>. Access date, December 02, 2020.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press.
- Ferguson, J., & Gupta, A. (2002). Spatializing states: toward an ethnography of neoliberal governmentality. *American ethnologist*, 29(4), 981-1002.
- George, S. (2005). *When women come first: Gender and class in transnational migration*. Univ of California Press.
- Hannerz, U. (2003). Being there... and there... and there! Reflections on multi-site ethnography. *Ethnography*, 4(2), 201-216.
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist studies*, 14(3), 575-599.
- Hine, C. (2008). Virtual ethnography: Modes, varieties, affordances. *The SAGE handbook of online research methods*, 257-270.
- Humphreys, L. (1975). *Tearoom trade, enlarged edition: Impersonal sex in public places*. Transaction Publishers.
- Ingold, T. (2014). That's enough about ethnography!. *Hau: journal of ethnographic theory*, 4(1), 383-395.
- Iphofen, R. (2013). Research ethics in ethnography/anthropology. *European Commission*.
- Lewis, D., & Mosse, D. (Eds.). (2006). *Development brokers and translators: The ethnography of aid and agencies*. Kumarian Press.
- Malinowski, B. (2014). *Argonauts of the western Pacific*. Routledge.
- Mead, M. (1995). Visual anthropology in a discipline of words. *Principles of visual anthropology*, 3, 3-12.
- Miller, R. L. (1999). *Researching life stories and family histories*. Sage.
- Morin, E. (1966). L'interview dans les sciences sociales et à la radio-télévision. *Communications*, 7(1), 59-73.
- Rodgers, D. (2007). Joining the gang and becoming a broder: The violence of ethnography in contemporary Nicaragua. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 26(4), 444-461.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. sage.
- Scheper-Hughes, N. (2004). Parts unknown: Undercover ethnography of the organs-trafficking underworld. *Ethnography*, 5(1), 29-73.



- Small, M. L. (2009). How many cases do I need? On science and the logic of case selection in field-based research. *Ethnography, 10*(1), 5-38.
- Watson, T. J. (2011). Ethnography, reality, and truth: the vital need for studies of 'how things work' in organizations and management. *Journal of Management studies, 48*(1), 202-217.
- Williksen, S. (2009). Moods behind the silences. *Ethnography, 10*(1), 115-127.

Additional course information

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Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/2)

Examination time and form

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (35%)

Examination time: term time

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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Nature of examination

analog

Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

2. Examination sub part (2/2)

Examination time and form

Decentral - examination paper written at home (in groups - all given the same grades) (65%)

Examination time: term time

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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Nature of examination

analog



Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Examination content

Students will be evaluated according to their performance at two different stages during the course:

35% of the grade is a group work presentation (all given the same grades) focused on the choice of research topic, design and preliminary selection of methods.

65% of the grade corresponds to a collectively written paper (all given the same grade) resulting from the fieldwork carried out by the different groups. Papers are graded by the course instructor based on the adequacy of the research design/methods in relation to the chosen topic and scope of research previously defined by each group as well as their understanding and maîtrise of the ethnographic process.

Active participation during class discussions is encouraged. Participation assists the lecturer to evaluate knowledge of the mandatory readings and positioning in relation to debates. Participation is not graded but may be used to round grades accordingly when necessary.

Examination relevant literature

The following literature is supplementary/voluntary. The complete list of mandatory readings will be made available according to each groups' chosen research topic during the course.

- Abu-Lughod, L. (2008) *Writing women's worlds: Bedouin stories*. Univ of California Press.
- Asad, T. (Ed.). (1973). *Anthropology & the colonial encounter* (Vol. 6). London: Ithaca Press.
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- Mead, M. (1995). Visual anthropology in a discipline of words. *Principles of visual anthropology*, 3, 3-12.
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- Morin, E. (1966). L'interview dans les sciences sociales et à la radio-télévision. *Communications*, 7(1), 59-73.
- Rodgers, D. (2007). Joining the gang and becoming a broder: The violence of ethnography in contemporary Nicaragua. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 26(4), 444-461.



- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. sage.
- Scheper-Hughes, N. (2004). Parts unknown: Undercover ethnography of the organs-trafficking underworld. *Ethnography, 5*(1), 29-73.
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- Williksen, S. (2009). Moods behind the silences. *Ethnography, 10*(1), 115-127.

Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 12 are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 26 January 2023);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 20 March 2023);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 20 March 2023);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before the end of the de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 10 April 2023).