



## Challenges in Contemporary Fieldwork Workshop

SPS Third-term Workshop 2019-2020

Dates: 27 May 09:00-11:00; 13:00-3:00  
28 May 10:30-12:00; 13:30-3:00  
29 May 10:30-12:00; 13.30-3:00

Location: This workshop will take place through zoom: <https://eui-eu.zoom.us/j/94201313615?>

This workshop carries 10 credits

[Register for this workshop](#)

[Organising administrative assistant: Maureen Lechleitner](#)

Instructor: Dr. Caitlin Procter (RSCAS)

The impact that research in the field can take on the health and wellbeing of those conducting fieldwork has led to [concern](#) over university preparedness for fieldwork. In the wake of several high profile cases of [detainment, torture, and death](#) of doctoral students at European universities, this workshop is designed to provide students conducting fieldwork with the tools they need to navigate complex research challenges. This three-day workshop is about doing qualitative research in complex settings, and the kinds of challenges that can arise during fieldwork in relation to safety and risk, ethics, gender, health and mental health.

Rather than only providing a space for researchers to share their experiences, this workshop aims to fundamentally improve the ways in which conventional qualitative methods are taught, with a focus on situating these methods in the kinds of challenging environments in which they might be used. This will include practical exercises on the use of qualitative research methods in complex settings, such as gaining access to research participants in contexts of violence; safety and risk in doing interviews with members of armed groups or individuals engaged in street violence or crime; and conducting focus groups on sensitive subjects, or with individuals who do not usually engage with institutions or institutional processes.

However, challenges in contemporary fieldwork are not limited to so-called 'difficult' or 'extreme' settings, and both researchers and their interlocutors are vulnerable to numerous challenges regardless of where they work. The workshop will therefore also include a broader, and more holistic training on how researchers can better protect themselves before, during and after conducting fieldwork on in complex settings, including in elite institutions. In addition, this workshop will also provide a space for pre- and post-field researchers to connect, network, and learn from each other. Part of each session will involve working in smaller groups of both pre- and post-field students responding to particular hypothetical fieldwork situations.

## **Course Preparation**

All students should think through and be prepared to speak briefly to the following questions during the workshop:

\*for students who are pre-fieldwork\*

- What are the ethical challenges that might emerge during your fieldwork?
- What are the risks you might face during your fieldwork? What risks does your fieldwork pose to your research participants?
- How will your gender, ethnicity and class impact your fieldwork?
- How do you plan to take care of your health and mental health during fieldwork?

\*for students who are currently doing fieldwork, or are post-fieldwork\*

- What were the ethical challenges that you faced during your fieldwork? Can you give one example of how you navigated these challenges?
- What were risk you faced during your fieldwork that you had not prepared for? What risks did your fieldwork pose to your research participants? Can you give one example of how you mitigated these risks?
- How did your gender, ethnicity and class impact your fieldwork?
- What did you do to take care of your health and mental health during fieldwork?

## **Course Outline**

### **Day One**

#### **Session 1: “The ethics of fieldwork preparedness”**

Lake, M., & Parkinson, S. E. 2017. “The Ethics of Fieldwork Preparedness.” *Political Violence at a Glance*. [Link]

#### **Session 2: Practicalities and challenges of doing remote fieldwork during COVID-19**

Duquette-Ruty, L. 2020. Conducting Social Science Research During Crisis Wayne State University.

Jowett, A. 2020. Carrying Out Qualitative Research During Lockdown: Practical and Ethical Considerations. Coventry University.

### **Day Two**

#### **Session 3: Ethical decisions in the field**

Cronin-Furman, K., & Lake, M. 2018. “Ethics Abroad: Fieldwork in Fragile and Violent Contexts.” *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 51(3), 607-614. [PDF]

Callaway, E. 2017. "South Africa's San People Issue Ethics Code to Scientists." *Nature News* 543(7646): 475. [Link].

#### **Session 4: Safety and risk during fieldwork**

Peter, M., & Strazzari, F. 2017. 'Securitisation of research: fieldwork under new restrictions in Darfur and Mali.' *Third World Quarterly*, 38(7): 1531-1550. [Link]

Clark, I & Grant, A. 2015, 'Sexuality and danger in the field: Starting an uncomfortable conversation', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford: Special issue on Sexual Harassment in the Field*, vol. 7, no. 1, p. 1-14.

Enria, L. 2018. 'Elective affinities: fragility and injustice in the field'. *The New Ethnographer* [https://www.thenewethnographer.org/the-new-ethnographer/2018/04/25/elective-affinities-fragility-and-injustice-in-the-field]

#### **Day Three**

#### **Session 5: Positionality in fieldwork**

Henderson, Frances B. 2009. "'We Thought You Would Be White': Race and Gender in Fieldwork." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42 (2): 291-4.

Yacob-Haliso, O. 2018. 'Intersectionalities and Access in Fieldwork in Postconflict Liberia: Motherland, Motherhood, and Minefields.' *African Affairs*, 118(470): 168-181. [Link]

#### **Session 6: Health and mental health during and after fieldwork**

Pollard, A. 2009. 'Field of screams: difficulty and ethnographic fieldwork'. *Anthropology Matters* 11(2): 1-24.

Vieth, R. 2018. 'Dis/ability to do fieldwork'. *The New Ethnographer* [https://www.thenewethnographer.org/the-new-ethnographer/2018/10/04/dis-ability-to-do-fieldwork]

#### **Assignment**

An essay on the ethical challenges connected to your doctoral research project; and how you plan to/have mitigated these challenges. 2,000 – 3,000 words. Deadline Thursday June 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Additional Resources**

The New Ethnographer: [www.thenewethnographer.org](http://www.thenewethnographer.org)

Advancing Research on Conflict: [www.advancingresearchonconflict.com](http://www.advancingresearchonconflict.com)

#MeToo Anthropology: [www.metooanthro.org](http://www.metooanthro.org)

## **Further reading**

- Abidin, C. & de Seta, G. (eds.) (2020) Special issue: Doing Digital Ethnography: Messages from the Field. *Journal of Digital Social Research*, 2(1). [[Link](#)]
- Baele, S. J. et al. (2018). “The Ethics of Security Research: An Ethics Framework for Contemporary Security Studies.” *International Studies Perspectives*, 19(2), 105–127. [[Link](#)]
- Baird, A. (2018). ‘Dancing with danger: ethnographic safety, male bravado and gang research in Colombia.’ *Qualitative Research* 18(3): 342-360. [[Link](#)]
- Basini, H. (2016). ‘Doing No Harm’: Methodological and Ethical Challenges of Working with Women Associated with Fighting Forces/Ex-combatants in Liberia.’ In A. Wibben (Ed.), *Researching War: Feminist Methods, ethics and politics* (pp.163-184). Oxon & New York: Routledge. [[Link](#)]
- Berry, MJ, Chávez Argüelles, C, Cordis, S, Ihmoud, S & Velásquez Estrada, E 2017, ‘[Towards a fugitive anthropology: Gender, race, and violence in the field](#)’, *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 537-565.
- Caliandro, A. (2018) Digital methods for ethnography: Analytical concepts for ethnographers exploring social media environments *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* Vol. 47, Issue 5 , pp. 551-578.
- Calvey, D. (2018). ‘The Everyday World of Bouncers: A Rehabilitated Role for Covert Ethnography.’ *Qualitative Research* 19(3): 247-262. [[Link](#)]
- Calvey, D. (2017). *Covert Research: The Art, Politics and Ethics of Undercover Fieldwork*. London: Sage. [[Link](#)]
- Cancian, M. F., & Fabbe, K. E. (2019). “Informal Institutions and Survey Research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.” *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 52(3), 485–489. [[Link](#)]
- Chamboredon Hélène, Pavis Fabienne, Surdez Muriel, Willemez Laurent. S'imposer aux imposants. A propos de quelques obstacles rencontrés par des sociologues débutants dans la pratique et l'usage de l'entretien. In: Genèses, 16, 1994. Territoires urbains contestés. pp. 114-132; [doi : <https://doi.org/10.3406/genes.1994.1251>]
- Clark, I & Grant, A 2015, ‘[Sexuality and danger in the field: Starting an uncomfortable conversation](#)’, *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford: Special issue on Sexual Harassment in the Field*, vol. 7, no. 1, p. 1-14.
- Clancy, Kathryn B. H., Robin G. Nelson, Julianne N. Rutherford, and Katie Hinde 2014 “Survey of Academic Field Experiences (SAFE): Trainees Report Harassment and Assault.” *PLoS ONE* 9, no. 7. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172>.
- Curtis, D. A. (2019). “What Is Our Research For? Responsibility, Humility and the Production of Knowledge about Burundi.” *Africa Spectrum*, 54(1), 4-21. [[PDF](#)]
- Desposato, S. (Ed.). (2016). *Ethics and Experiments: Problems and Solutions for Social Scientists and Policy Professionals*. London & New York: Routledge. [[Link](#)]

- Desposato, S. 2014a. "Ethical Challenges and Some Solutions for Field Experiments." San Diego: University of California. Available at <http://www.desposato.org/ethicsfieldexperiments.pdf>.
- Desposato, Scott.. 2014b. "Ethics and Research in Comparative Politics." *The Monkey Cage: The Washington Post* (blog). November 3. Available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/11/03/ethics-and-research-in-comparative-politics>.
- Driscoll, J., & Schuster, C. (2018). 'Spies Like Us.' *Ethnography* 19(3): 411-430. [Link]
- Eriksson Baaz, M., & Utas, M. (2019). Exploring the Backstage: Methodological and Ethical Issues Surrounding the Role of Research Brokers in Insecure Zones. *Civil Wars*, 21(2), 157–178. [Link]
- Evans, A.. (2017). Tinder as a methodological tool. *Allegra Laboratory*. Retrieved from: <http://allegralaboratory.net/tinder-as-a-methodological-tool/>.
- Franzke, Aline shakti, Bechmann, Anja, Zimmer, Michael, Ess, Charles and the Association of Internet Researchers (2020). *Internet Research: Ethical Guidelines 3.0*. Available at: <https://aoir.org/reports/ethics3.pdf>
- Fujii, L.A. (2018). *Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach*. New York & London: Routledge. [Link]
- Fujii, L.A. (2015). "Five Stories of Accidental Ethnography: Turning Unplanned Moments in the Field into Data." *Qualitative Research* 15 (4): 525–39. [Link].
- Giglietto, Fabio, Luca Rossi & Davide Bennato (2012) The open laboratory. Limits and possibilities of using Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube as a research data resource. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, 30: 3-4, 145-159
- Grimm, J. J., Koehler, K., Lust, E. M., Saliba, I., & Schierenbeck, I. (2020). *Safer Field Research in the Social Sciences: A Guide to Human and Digital Security in Hostile Environments*. SAGE Publications Ltd. [Link].
- Habib, R. R. (2019). "Ethical, methodological, and contextual challenges in research in conflict settings: The case of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon." *Conflict and Health*, 13(1), 29. [Link]
- Henrion, E., and Thorley, L.. (2019). "Ethical Standards Rapid Literature Review: Final Report." Research Communications and Uptake. London: Department for International Development. [Link]
- Hine, C. (2000). *Virtual ethnography*. London, UK: Sage.
- \_\_\_\_\_(ed.) (2005). *Virtual methods: issues in social research on the Internet*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- \_\_\_\_\_(2015). *Ethnography for the Internet: embedded, embodied and everyday*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (2017). 'Ethnography and the Internet: Taking Account of Emerging Technological Landscapes'. *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*. 10,3, pp. 315-329.
- Humphreys, M. (2014). "How to make field experiments more ethical." *Washington Post*. November 2, 2014. [Link]
- Kloß, ST 2017, 'Sexual(ized) harassment and ethnographic fieldwork: A silenced aspect of social research', *Ethnography*, vol. 18, no. 3, p. 396-414.
- Krishnan, S 2015, '[Dispatches from a 'rogue' ethnographer: exploring homophobia and queer visibility](#)', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford: Special issue on Sexual Harassment in the Field*, vol. 7, no. 1, p. 64-79.
- Kozinets, R. (2019). *Netnography: The essential guide to social media research*. Sage publications
- Laurens, S. « "Pourquoi" et "comment" poser les questions qui fâchent ? ». Réflexions sur les dilemmes récurrents que posent les entretiens avec des « imposants », *Genèses* 2007/4 (n° 69), p. 112-127. [DOI 10.3917/gen.069.0112]
- Markham, A. N.; Tiidenberg, K., & Herman, A. (2018). "Ethics as Methods: Doing Ethics in the Era of Big Data Research—Introduction." *Social Media + Society* 4(3): 1-9. [PDF]
- Markham, A. N. (2012). Fabrication as ethical practice: Qualitative inquiry in ambiguous internet contexts. *Information, Communication and Society*. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2011.641993>
- Middleton, T. and Cons, J. 2014. 'Coming to terms: reinserting research assistants in ethnography's past and present'. *Ethnography* 15(3): 279-290.
- Navarro, Tami, Bianca Williams, and Attiya Ahmad 2013 "Sitting at the Kitchen Table: Fieldnotes from Women of Color in Anthropology." *Cultural Anthropology* 28, no. 3: 443–63. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cuan.12013>.
- Nelson, RG, Rutherford, N, Hinde, K & Clancy, KBH 2017, 'Signalling safety: Characterizing fieldwork experiences and their implications for career trajectories', *American Anthropologist*, vol. 119, no. 4, pp. 710-722.
- Osorio, J. (2014). "Numbers Under Fire: The Challenges of Gathering Quantitative Data in Highly Violent Settings." *Drugs, Security, and Democracy Program. DSD Working Papers on Research Security No. 6*. New York: Social Science Research Council. [PDF].
- Pachirat, T. "Working Undercover in a Slaughterhouse: An Interview with Timothy Pachirat" *Medium*. [Link].
- Pandey, A 2009, 'Unwelcome and unwelcoming encounters' in P Ghassem-Fachandi (ed.) *Violence: Ethnographic encounters*, Berg, Oxford, pp. 135-144.
- Pinçon Michel, Pinçon-Charlot Monique. Pratiques d'enquête dans l'aristocratie et la grande bourgeoisie : distance sociale et conditions spécifiques de l'entretien semi-directif. In: *Genèses*, 3, 1991. La construction du syndicalisme. pp. 120-133; [doi : <https://doi.org/10.3406/genes.1991.1050> [https://www.persee.fr/doc/genes\\_1155-3219\\_1991\\_num\\_3\\_1\\_1050](https://www.persee.fr/doc/genes_1155-3219_1991_num_3_1_1050)]
- Pollard, A. (2009) Field of screams: difficulty and ethnographic fieldwork. *Anthropology Matters* 11(2): 1-24.

- Rodríguez, Clelia. 2017. "How Academia Uses Poverty, Oppression, and Pain for Intellectual Masturbation." *RaceBaitR*, April 6. Available at <http://racebaitr.com/2017/04/06/how-academia-uses-poverty-oppression>.
- Sluka, J. A. (2018). "Too Dangerous for Fieldwork? The Challenge of Institutional Risk-Management in Primary Research on Conflict, Violence and 'Terrorism.'" *Contemporary Social Science* 0(0): 1–17. [[Link](#)]
- Stewart, B. 2017. "Twitter as Method: Using Twitter as a Tool to Conduct Research." In *SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research*, edited by Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Haase, 251–265. London: Sage.
- Tiidenberg K. (2018) Research Ethics, Vulnerability, and Trust on the Internet. In: Hunsinger J., Klastrup L., Allen M. (eds) *Second International Handbook of Internet Research*. Springer, Dordrecht
- Thaler, K. (2019). "Reflexivity and Temporality in Researching Violent Settings: Problems with the Replicability and Transparency Regime." *Geopolitics* 0(0): 1–27. [[Link](#)].
- Van Baalen, S. (2018). "Google Wants to Know Your Location": The Ethical Challenges of Fieldwork in the Digital Age.' *Research Ethics*, 14(2): 1-17. [[PDF](#)]
- Walton, S. (2018) Remote ethnography, virtual presence: Exploring digital-visual methods for anthropological research on the web. In (Costa, C. and Condie, J., Eds.) *Doing research in and on the digital: Research methods across fields of inquiry*. Oxford, UK : Routledge.