



## CIEE Beijing, China

<b>Course title:</b>	Field Research Methods
<b>Course number:</b>	ANTH 3001 BJCH / SOCI 3001 BJCH
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Sustainable Development
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>U.S. Semester Credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Spring 2020

### **Course Description**

This course introduces students to social research methodologies, using everyday life in the Chinese society as research material. Students “go out” –often beyond the Minzu University campus—to look at and analyze material items (houses, markets, shopping malls, clothing, etc.), individual behaviors and performances (meals, ceremonies, games, etc.), as well as ideas and arrangements that exist in Chinese minds. They will have the chance to choose a research site in Beijing, conduct observations, use field-notes, take pictures, videotape, and conduct informal talks with individual subjects. The interpretation of empirical data will allow students to pursue greater understandings of significant Chinese social processes and behaviors. Moreover, acquired data and analysis may inform others of findings that originate educational, social, or economic innovation. Skills of observation and analysis learned in this course will be relevant in the future for those students who are interested in various forms of research including anthropology, social work, education, journalism, consulting, and marketing.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Design, direct field research projects, and identify relevant research projects in China;
- Analyze ethnographic data to test ideas and/or discover significant behaviors in the current Chinese society;
- Recognize the benefits and challenges of using ethnographic methods;
- Demonstrate awareness of the complex roles, limitations, and responsibilities of the “researcher” in an ethnographic study.

### **Course Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course, however previous experience in the social sciences is beneficial.

### **Methods of Instruction**

The format of instruction is a combination of lectures, ethnographic exercises, and discussion. Be prepared to participate because dialogue and informed debates are highly encouraged! During the semester, the instructor will also announce talks, conferences, workshops, or documentaries related to the main topics of the course.

### **Assessment and Final Grade**



Assessment and final grade will be scored based upon 2 ethnographic exercises, two presentations, and final research project in addition to class participation. The grading distribution for the course is as follows:

1. Ethnographic exercises (x 2)	30%
2. Research proposal presentation	15%
3. Peer-review of research proposal presentation	5%
4. Final research project (oral presentation and essay)	25%
5. Possible extra credit	(up to 5%)
6. Class participation	25%

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Ethnographic exercises (2x, 15% each time= 30% of Final Grade)**

An ‘Ethnographic exercise’ requires you to actually “go out” from your dorm and class to conduct ethnographic research on a topic that you can choose at a later date. The instructor will provide sites for the fieldwork but also welcomes students to propose their own topics. You will choose one research site where to observe significant social processes that should meet three criteria:

- You should be able to conduct research locally;
- The research site should be publicly accessible and safe;
- You should use various ethnographic methods studied in the course (observation, informal talks, pictures and videotape).

The research sites provided by the instructor might include volunteer work to teach ESL, observe a legal trial in a court, and observe and interview churchgoers on the Easter holiday. Other possible sites can be IKEA Beijing, a McDonald’s, a hospital, a matchmaking zone in a park, etc.

This empirical data will be used to prepare an oral presentation of 25-30 minutes. You are welcomed to be creative in how you lead the presentation as long as you are able to engage the group in discussion and analysis. If you are unsure how to prepare, then talk to me about your ideas in advance. However, before presenting your ethnographic research, be sure that:

- The introduction highlights the significance of the topic;
- The literature review surveys the major aspects of the topic;
- The research questions are clear and concise;
- The methodology section details the way how you gather, analyze, and represent the data citing sources to support your approach.

After finishing your presentation, you’ll need to turn in a short outline (4-5 pages double-spaced pages with 12-point font) or PowerPoint that clearly shows the structure of your presentation.

The evaluation will be based on: 1) rigor of your methods; 2) insight of your analysis; 3) citation of relevant course readings as well as academic papers/web pages related to the topic; 4) clear organization of your presentation; 5) ability to create a constructive discussion with the audience. This



last criterion is essential. Don't give a monologue, but think ahead about how to engage your classmates in discussion.

### **Research proposal presentation (15% of Final Grade)**

Students present a research proposal (30 minutes) of any topic of their own interest within the ethnographic field, either focusing on China or using China as a comparative reference. It is highly advisable for students to discuss their ideas with the instructor as early as possible (approx. Week 5).

You are welcomed to be creative in how you lead the presentation as long as you are organized, concise, and give the audience a generic outline including:

- Introduction (What is it that you want to know or understand? How did you get interested in the topic? Cite relevant literature on this topic, or demonstrates the lack of attention to the topic. Describe how you think this study will be useful);
- Research method (Identify your research method, such as ethnographic field study, single case study. Describes your research procedures: long interviews, observation, etc.);
- Suppositions and hypotheses (Disclose the anticipated findings, your hypotheses and your hunches);
- Reference and mini-bibliography.

After finishing your presentation, you'll need to turn in a short outline (4-5 pages double-spaced pages with 12-point font) or PPT that clearly shows the structure of your presentation.

The evaluation will be based on: 1) rigor of your methods; 2) insight of your analysis; 3) citation of relevant course readings as well as academic papers/web pages related to the topic; 4) clear organization of your presentation; 5) ability to create a constructive discussion with the audience. This last criterion is essential. Don't give a monologue, but think ahead about how to engage your classmates in discussion.

### **Peer-review of research proposal presentation (5% of Final Grade)**

A "peer-review section" (60 minutes) will follow the research proposal presentation in which students and the instructor will discuss with the author-student. The debate will follow these guidelines: identification of a good research site; availability of collecting data; description of your methodology; your critical synthesis; comments or suggestions that can help you to move this paper along towards the final draft.

### **Final research project [oral presentation and essay] (25% of Final Grade)**

Students in class present their final research project (40 minutes) based on the research proposal submitted previously. The oral presentation aims to share and discuss with the class the results of your research and reflection on the topic. You are welcomed to be creative in how you lead the presentation as long as you are organized and clear. The presentation should follow this outline:



- Start with a challenging introduction;
- Describe your research site;
- Discuss research access and methodological challenges;
- Define your observation;
- End with conclusions and implications.

Please find ways to integrate thought and concepts encountered in your readings during the course into your final research project. The presentation will be peer-reviewed by the class with close oversight by the instructor (please see above for details).

As part of the final research project, students are required to submit within a week after the presentation a short essay (10-15 pages double-spaced pages with 12-point font). It has to synthesize the knowledge you have gained from your research and evaluate methods you used. I expect BOTH a hard copy and an email attachment (in .doc format) for submission.

The evaluation will be based on: 1) rigor of your methods; 2) insight of your analysis; 3) citation of relevant course readings as well as academic papers/web pages related to the topic; 4) clear organization of your presentation; 5) ability to create a constructive discussion with the audience. This last criterion is essential. Don't give a monologue, but think ahead about how to engage your classmates in discussion.

#### **Extra Credit (adding up to 5% to final grade)**

Students during the semester will have several opportunities to obtain extra credits that can be added to the final grade. Opportunities are:

- Reviewing an ethnographic monograph about China (i.e. Dru Gladney, 1988, *Ethnic Identity in China: The Making of a Muslim Minority Nationality*; Pun Ngai, 2005, *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace*; Fei Xiaotong, 2010, *Peasant Life in China. A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley*)
- Watching and analyzing ethnographic documentaries related to China.

You need to write an essay of 3-4 pages (double-spaced) about it and present it to other students. Generally speaking, you will need to connect the book you read or the documentary you watched with us in-class topics, such as the benefits and challenges of using specific ethnographic methods.

This assignment can be completed any time before the end of Week 13. Please talk with me about your idea in advance because I must approve it.

#### **Class participation (25% of Final Grade)**

Your participation in the course is partially measured by your presence in class on a consistent basis. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before every lecture. Incorporating your learning from the reading is expected in your final research project. Physical attendance alone does not help students earn the full 25%. This portion of your grade takes into account:



- Offering comments and posing questions. Each week, bring at least one question about the assigned readings that you would like the entire class to discuss. Show that you have read and thought about assigned readings, relating them to previous weeks and to the course's larger theme. Actively discuss and respond to the readings and also to your classmates' and instructor's interpretations.
- Citing specific passages of the reading assignments. As you are reading, take notes on central themes, details you think you need to know, and questions that come to mind. Bring your notes and assigned readings (either books, printouts, or e-versions) to class each week, and be prepared to mention the page numbers of passages that particularly interest you.
- Three (3) pop quizzes on the weekly reading assignment, each counting 2% of the final grade. The quizzes are to check whether you have read the main concepts, ideas, or important cases that are covered in the articles or book excerpts. They will be very short and can be answered in less than 10 minutes in written form.
- Leading class discussion on two (2) articles of your own choice, each counting 5 % of the final grade. The instructor will indicate articles or book excerpts more suitable for student-led discussion in the course schedule. Each student will select 2 readings and prepare a 20-25 minute discussion on each reading for the whole class. When leading the discussion, you will begin with a brief introduction/summary of the reading, offer a short statement of your own comment or assessment, then propose questions and coordinate the discussion.
- Attendance and punctuality. It is essential that you attend each weekly session; there is no way to make up or recreate our discussions. Being punctual, including returning from breaks on time, shows respect to your classmates and instructor. As per CIEE academic policy I must deduct points: you will lose 2% for every unexcused absence, and 1% every time you are late.
- Late papers are deducted 5% if they are 1 day late. Every subsequent day we will deduct an additional 1% from the assignment grade. Or you may use the \*jolly coupon\* to receive a 24-hour extension for papers. You may also choose to use the coupon for one free absence from class.
- Respect others in the classroom: Please do not work on your presentations, readings, homework, Chinese homework, diaries, emails, Skype, WeChat etc. in the classroom during class. This is very distracting to those who are presenting (including your teacher), and is incredibly rude. This will affect your participation grade, 2% subtracted each time.
- According to the University of Colorado Boulder's useful standards: "Plagiarism is defined as the use of another's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgment. Examples of plagiarism include: failing to use quotation marks when directly quoting from a source; failing to document distinctive ideas from a source; fabricating or





Recommend:

Mingxin Liu. 2003. "A Historical Overview on Anthropology in China." *Anthropologist* 5(4), pp. 217-223.

Braybrooke, George. 1980. "Ethnology in China." *Current Anthropology* 21 (2), pp. 264-266.

View:

"Please Vote for Me!" (2007, 49 mins)

**Week 4**  
Date

**The Relationships with Our 'Subjects'**

Critical role of researcher and informants.

Read:

Samovar, Larry A. et al., "Accepting Differences and Appreciating Similarities: A Point of View." pp. 240-272.

Miner, Horace. 1956. "Body Rituals in Nacirema," 503-507.

Discussant: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommend:

Pieke, Frank. 1986. "Social Science Fieldwork in the PRC: Implications of the Mosher Affairs." pp. 32-37.

View:

"The Blood of Yingzhou District" (Yang & Lennon, 2006; 2007 Academy Award, 40 mins).

**Week 5**  
Date

**Planning an Ethnographic Study**

Qualitative research design. Sampling people and processes, sites and times.

Read:

Lindlof, Thomas R. and Taylor, Bryan C. 2001. "Design I: Planning" and "Design II: Getting In.", pp. 61-105.



Fei Xiaotong, 2010, "Preface, Chapter 1 & 2," *Peasant Life in China. A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley*, pp. xiii-xx, 1-24.

Discussant: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommend:

Croll, Elisabeth. 2006. "New Research Trends in Anthropology /Sociology of China." *China aktuell* 3, pp. 90-97.

**Week 6**

Date

**Locating our Work**

Site access and related concerns.

Read:

LeCompte, Margaret D., Schensul, Jean J. and Shensul, Stephen L. "Entering the Field." pp. 69-89.

Pun Ngai. 2005. "Introduction," *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace*, pp. 1-22. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Discussant: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommend:

Lang, Graeme & Ragvald, Lars. 2005. "Grasping the Revolution: Fieldwork on Religion in China.", pp. 219-233.

**Week 7**

Date

**Field-notes, Interviews, Focus Group...I**

Observational techniques. Field-notes and memo. In-depth interviewing.

Read:

Mack, Natasha et al. 2005. "Participant Observation." pp. 13-27.

Lindlof, Thomas R. and Taylor, Bryan C. 2001. "Eliciting Experience: Interviews." pp. 163-196.

Rofel, Lisa. 1993. "Where Feminism Lies: Field Encounters in China." pp. 33-52.

Discussant: \_\_\_\_\_



**Week 8**  
Date

**Field-notes, Interviews, Focus Group...II**  
Use of pictures, archival and secondary sources as data.

Read:

Sarah Pink. 2007. "Photography in Ethnographic Research." pp. 65-95.

LeCompte, Margaret D., Schensul, Jean J. and Shensul, Stephen L. 1999. "Using Archival and Secondary Data." pp. 201-229.

Rofel, Lisa. 1993. "Where Feminism Lies: Field Encounters in China." pp. 33-52.

Discussant: \_\_\_\_\_

View:

"Manufactured Landscapes" (Baichwal & Mettler, 2006, 35 mins).

**Week 9**  
Date

**Data Analysis**  
Analysis of findings using empirical data.

Read:

LeCompte, Margaret D. and Schensul, Jean J. 1999. "Collecting Ethnographic Data," and "Data Analysis." pp. 127-159.

Bin Liang & Hong Lu. "Conducting Fieldwork in China: Observations on Collecting Primary Data Regarding Crime, Law and Criminal Justice System." pp. 157-172.

Discussant: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 10**  
Date

**Research Proposal Presentation**  
Analysis of findings using empirical data.

**Week 11**  
Date

**Research Proposal Presentation**  
—No Class— (Mid-semester field trip)

**Week 12**  
Date

**Research Proposal Presentation**  
—No Class— (Mid-semester field trip)



**Week 13**

Date

**Ethical Dilemmas**

Ethical issues in the research project.

Read:

LeCompte, Margaret D. and Schensul, Jean J. 1999. "Ethical treatment of research participants and care for human relationships." pp. 183-204.

Svensson, Marina. 2006. "Ethical Dilemmas: Balancing distance with involvement." pp. 262-280.

**Hand in the paper for extra credit.**

**Week 14**

Date

**Ethnography in China II**

Challenges and strategies in conducting fieldwork in China.

Read:

Yeh, Emily. 2006. "'An Open Lhasa Welcomes You': Disciplining the researcher in Tibet." pp. 96-109.

Discussant: \_\_\_\_\_

Caprioni, Elena. "Daily Encounters between Uyghurs and Hans in Xinjiang: Sinicization, Integration or Segregation?." pp. 267-287.

Tsang, W. "Inside story: mind your identity when conducting cross-national research." pp. 511-515.

**Week 15**

Date

**Writing/Editing Week**

—No Class—

**Week 16**

Date

**Final Research project (oral presentation and essay)**

Challenges and strategies in conducting fieldwork in China.

**Week 17**

Date

**Chinese Finals**

—No Class—

**Course Materials**

***Readings and online resources***

Bin Liang & Hong Lu. 2006. "Conducting Fieldwork in China: Observations on Collecting

Primary Data Regarding Crime, Law and Criminal Justice System." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 22, pp. 157-172.

Braybrooke, George. 1980. "Ethnology in China." *Current Anthropology* 21 (2), pp. 264-266.

Spencer E. Cahill et al. 1999. "Meanwhile Backstage: Behavior in Public Bathrooms". In Adler and Adler, Patricia A. and Peter, (eds.) *Sociological Odyssey*, pp. 132-141. Belmont, MA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Caprioni, Elena. 2011. "Daily Encounters between Uyghurs and Hans in Xinjiang: Sinicization, Integration or Segregation?" *Pacific Affairs* 84(2), pp. 267-287.

Croll, Elisabeth. 2006. "New Research Trends in Anthropology /Sociology of China." *China aktuell* 3, pp. 90-97.

Fei Xiaotong, 2010, "Preface, Chapter 1 & 2," *Peasant Life in China. A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley*, pp. xiii-xx, 1-24. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Heimer, Maria and Stig Thogersen. 2006. "Introduction." In Heimer and Thorgensen (eds.). *Doing Fieldwork in China*, pp. 1-23. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Lang, Graeme & Ragvald, Lars. 2005. "Grasping the Revolution: Fieldwork on Religion in China." *Fieldwork in Religion* (1) 3, pp. 219-233.

LeCompte, Margaret D. and Schensul, Jean J. 1999. "Collecting Ethnographic Data," and "Data Analysis." *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research*, pp. 127-159. Oxford: AltaMira Press.

LeCompte, Margaret D. and Schensul, Jean J. 1999. "Ethical treatment of research participants and care for human relationships." *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research*, pp. 183-204. Oxford: AltaMira Press.

LeCompte, Margaret D., Schensul, Jean J. and Shensul, Stephen L. 1999. "Using Archival and Secondary Data." *Essential Ethnographic Methods*, pp. 201-229. Oxford: AltaMira Press.

LeCompte, Margaret D., Schensul, Jean J. and Shensul, Stephen L. 1999. "Entering the Field." *Essential Ethnographic Methods*, pp. 69-89. Oxford: AltaMira Press.

LeCompte, Margaret D. and Schensul, Jean J. 1999. "What Is Ethnography" and "When and Where is Ethnography Used." *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research*, pp. 1-39. Oxford: AltaMira Press.

Lindlof, Thomas R. and Taylor, Bryan C. 2001. "Design I: Planning" and "Design II: Getting In." *Qualitative Communication research methods* (2nd edition), pp. 61-105. Thousand Oaks, Ca:

Sage.

Lindlof, Thomas R. and Taylor, Bryan C. 2001. "Eliciting Experience: Interviews." *Qualitative Communication research methods* (2edition), pp. 163-196. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage.

Mingxin Liu. 2003. "A Historical Overview on Anthropology in China." *Anthropologist* 5(4), pp. 217-223.

Mack, Natasha et al. 2005. "Participant Observation." *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide*, pp. 13-27. Research Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International.

Miner, Horace. 1956. "Body Rituals in Nacirema," *American Anthropologist* 58 (3), pp. 503-507.

Pun Ngai. 2005. "Introduction," *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace*, pp. 1-22. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Matti Nojonen. 2004. "Fieldwork in a Low-Trust (Post) Communist Society." Ed Clark and Snejjina Michailova (eds.). *Fieldwork in Transforming Societies: Understanding Methodology from Experience*, pp. 157-176. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pieke, Frank. 1986. "Social Science Fieldwork in the PRC: Implications of the Mosher Affairs." *China Information*, pp. 32-37.

Pink, Sarah. 2007. "Photography in Ethnographic Research." *Doing Visual Ethnography*, pp. 65-95. London: Sage Publications.

Rofel, Lisa. 1993. "Where Feminism Lies: Field Encounters in China." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 13 (3), pp. 33-52.

Samovar, Larry A. et al. 1998, "Accepting Differences and Appreciating Similarities: A Point of View." *Communication Between Cultures* (third edition), pp. 240-272. CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Svensson, Marina. 2006. "Ethical Dilemmas: Balancing distance with involvement." In Heimer and Thorgensen (eds.). *Doing Fieldwork in China*, pp. 262-280. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Yeh, Emily. 2006. "'An Open Lhasa Welcomes You': Disciplining the researcher in Tibet." In Heimer and Thorgensen (eds.). *Doing Fieldwork in China*, pp. 96-109. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

### **Films and Movies**



Baichwal & Mettler, 2006, "Manufactured Landscapes

BBC, 2006, "Tales from the Jungle, Margaret Mead"

"Please Vote for Me!" 2007, 49 mins)

Yang & Lennon, 2006 "The Blood of Yingzhou District"