

**The University of Hong Kong  
Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences**

**IHSS6004: Selected Topics on Inter-Asian Connections  
Research in Sociocultural Anthropology: Design and Methods**

**Course teacher: Prof. Helen Siu  
Semester: Semester 2, 2013-2014**

The seminar focuses on designing ethnographic research. It also reflects on the nature of anthropology as a fieldwork-oriented discipline, and addresses concerns on ethnographic authority and local knowledge. Basic issues to explore are: multiple field-sites, power and voice in national and transnational contexts, mass culture and media competition for interpretive authority, ethical dilemmas and practical strategies in a time of transition. The seminar takes students through the process of identifying relevant issues and designing research projects. It familiarizes them with the manifold challenges of a reflexive disciplinary identity and methodology.

Students are expected to each write a short think piece on possible field topics by mid-term, conduct an oral presentation outlining particular research design and literature review, and finish a research proposal by the end of the semester. Participation in class is essential.

**Recommended texts:**

Rabinow, Paul. Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco (U of California Press 1977)

Robben, Antonius C.G.M. and Jeffrey Sluka (eds). Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader (Blackwell Publishing, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2011)

Sanjek, Roger (ed.). Fieldnotes: The Making of Anthropology (Cornell U Press 1990)

Other readings (\*) are available in digital form.

### **Course Readings**

#### **1. Introduction: The nature of Anthropology**

Robben and Sluka 2011, Chs 1,2,3

\* Jack Goody, "Towards a Room with a View: A Personal Account of Contributions to Local Knowledge, Theory, and Research in Fieldwork and Comparative Studies "Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol. 20, (1991), pp. 1-23

#### **2. Fieldwork Identity**

Robben and Sluka 2011, Chs. 4, 5, 7

Jackson, Jean. 1990. "I am a Fieldnote," in Sanjek, pp.

Clifford, James. 1990 "Notes on (Field) notes," in Sanjek, 47-70 (for reference)

#### **3. What is a Site?**

Robben and Sluka 2011, Chs. 24, 25, 26, 27

\* Cresswell, Tim. "Working with place," in Place: A Short Introduction, Blackwell, 2004, pp. 81-123

\*Marcus, George. "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography," in Ethnography through Thick and Thin, Princeton U Press 1998, pp. 79-104

Siu, Helen. "The Cultural Landscape of luxury housing in south China: a regional history," in Locating China: Space, place and popular culture, ed. Jing Wang (Routledge 2005), pp. 72-93 (for reference)

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. "The Production of Locality," in Modernity at Large, 178-199 (for reference)

Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson. 1997 "Discipline and Practice: 'The Field' as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology," in Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science, University of California Press 1997, p. 1-46 (for reference)

#### **4. Voices in ethnography**

Sanjek 1990, "The Secret Life of Fieldnotes," pp. 187-270

\*Clifford, James. 1983. "On ethnographic authority," Representations 1/2: 118-46

\*Geertz, Clifford. 1983. "Slide Show: Evans-Pritchard's African Transparencies," Raritan 3/2: 62-80

Halstead, Narmala. 2006. "Others In and Of the Field: Anthropology and Knowledgeable Persons," in Critical Journeys: The Making of Anthropologists, eds. Geert De Neve and Maya

Unnithan-Kumar, Ashgate, pp. 47-66 (for reference).

Narayan, Kirin. 1997. "How Native is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" in Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life, eds. Louise Lamphere, Helena Ragon'e, and Patricia Zavella, Routledge, pp. 23-41 (for reference)

Kendall, Laura. 1998 "Who Speaks for Korean Shamans When Shamans Speak of the Nation?" in Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States, ed. Dru C. Gladney, Stanford U Press, pp. 55-72 (for reference)

Keesing, Roger M. 1985 "Kwaio women speak: the micropolitics of autobiography in a Solomon Island society," American anthropologist 87/1:27-39 (for reference)

## 5. Voices in Fiction and the Archives

\*Davis, Natalie Zemon. 1987 "Bloodshed and the Woman's Voice," in her Fiction in the archives : pardon tales and their tellers in sixteenth-century France (Stanford University Press), 77-110

\*Mills, Sara. 1991 "Mary Kingsley: Travels in West Africa (1897)," in Mills, Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism (London: Routledge, pp. 153-174)

\*Siu, Helen and Liu Zhiwei. 2006. "Lineage, Market, Pirate and Dan," in Empire at the Margins: Frontier, Empire and Ethnicity in Early Modern China, eds. Pamela Crossley, Helen Siu, Donald Sutton (U. of California Press), pp. 285-310

\*Hull, Matthew. 2008. "Ruled by records: The expropriation of land and the misappropriation of lists in Islamabad," American Ethnologist, Vol 35, No 4, pp. 501-518

## 6. The "Other" Talks Back

Robben and Sluka, Chs. 11, 12, 13, 14

Sanjek. "Fieldnote and others," in Sanjek, pp. 324-340

Smith, Robert. "'Hearing Voices, Joining the Chorus: Appropriating Someone Else's Fieldnotes," in Sanjek, pp. 356-370

## 7. Playing with Media Events

\*Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. "Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket," in Modernity at Large, pp. 89-113

\*Kelly, William. 2000. "Caught in the Spin Cycle: An Anthropological Observer at the Site of Japanese Professional Baseball," in Susan O. Long (ed.) Moving Targets: Ethnographies of Self and Community in Japan (Cornell East Asian Paper Series)

\*"Japanese Hip-Hop and the Globalization of Popular Culture," in Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City, eds. George Gmelch and Walter P. Zenner (Fourth Edition, 2001 Waveland Press), pp. 372-388

## **8. Practical Lessons: Interviews, fieldnotes**

\*Briggs, Charles L. 1986. "Introduction," in Learning how to ask: A sociolinguistic appraisal of the role of the interview in social science research (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 1-38

Sanjek, Roger. 1990 "A vocabulary for fieldnotes", in Sanjek, 92-121

## **9. Reflexive Ethnography**

Robben and Sluka, chs. 32, 33, 34

\*De Neve, Geert. 2006. "Hidden Reflexivity: Assistants, Informants and the Creation of Anthropological Knowledge," in De Neve and Unnithan-Kumar, pp. 67-89

Marcus, George. "On Ideologies of Reflexivity in Contemporary Efforts to Remake the Human Sciences," Ethnography through Thick and Thin, pp. 181-202 (for reference)

Geertz, Clifford. 1995 After the Fact (U. of Chicago Press) (for reference)

## **10. Fieldwork Dangers, Dilemmas and Ethics**

Robben and Sluka 2011, chs. 19, 20, 22, 23

\*Handler, Richard 1998 "Studying Mainstream and Minorities in North America: Some Epistemological and Ethical Dilemmas," in Making Majorities, ed. by Dru Gladney, pp. 249-263

Norstrom, Carolyn. "War on the Frontline," in Robben and Sluka 2007, ch. 17 (for reference)

## **Research proposals**

Weeks 11, 12.

## **13. Summary**