

SEMESTER-VII
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
Category I
B.A. (H) Sociology

Discipline Specific Core (DSC) 19
Field and Fieldwork

DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC CORE COURSE -19 (DSC-19) : Field and Fieldwork

CREDIT DISTRIBUTION, ELIGIBILITY AND PRE-REQUISITES OF THE COURSE

Course title & Code	Credits	Credit distribution of the course			Eligibility criteria	Pre-requisite of the course (if any)
		Lecture	Tutorial	Practical/ Practice		
DSC 19 Field and Fieldwork	4	3	1	0	12th Class Pass	Nil

Learning Objectives:

1. Prepare students to conduct independent ethnography-based research by equipping them with essential theoretical and methodological tools.
2. Develop a strong understanding of the ethnographic approach and its relevance in contemporary research.
3. Engage with key ethical, practical, and theoretical debates surrounding ethnographic fieldwork.
4. Integrate hands-on research activities into the learning process to reinforce conceptual understanding and methodological application.
5. Foster skills which will contribute to **SDG 4 – Quality Education**.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyse contemporary social realities using an ethnographic lens.
2. Apply relevant sociological concepts and theories to examine and interpret social structures, interactions, and cultural practices.

3. Navigate ethical and practical challenges in fieldwork, demonstrating awareness of responsible research practices.
4. Conduct independent ethnographic research, employing appropriate methodologies and analytical frameworks and prepare ground work for fourth year dissertation project.
5. Demonstrate critical thinking, contextual knowledge, and research skills for responsible knowledge production in pursuit of **SDG 4 – Quality Education**.

SYLLABUS OF DSC:

Unit I: Fieldwork: Histories and Foundations (12 Hours)

This unit examines the historical development of ethnographic fieldwork, from its foundational methodologies to contemporary developments.

- a. Histories of Fieldwork
- b. Foundations of Fieldwork

Unit II: Fieldwork: Experiences and Practices (12 Hours)

This unit addresses key critiques related to the issues around representation and power in field research.

- a. Experiences
- b. Practices

Unit III: Reflexivity & Positionality (9 Hours)

This unit examines how questions of identity, subjectivity and gender relations shape ethnographic practice and knowledge production. Additionally, it highlights the significance of reflexivity in fieldwork.

- a. On Reflexivity
- b. Positionality in Fieldwork.

Unit IV: Writing Ethnography and Representing the Field (12 Hours)

This unit examines the process of documenting and transforming fieldwork observations into ethnographic texts. It focuses on different writing strategies and the role of interpretation in ethnographic writing.

- a. Description, Translation and Interpretation
- b. Representation

Practical Component: NIL

Essential/Recommended Readings:

Unit I. Fieldwork: Histories and Foundations

a. Histories of Fieldwork

Malinowski, B. (1922). Subject, method and scope. In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, New York, 2–25.

Godina, V. V. (2003). Anthropological Fieldwork at the Beginning of the 21st century: Crisis and Location of Knowledge. *Anthropos*, 98(2), 473–487.

b. Foundations of Fieldwork

Jarvie, I. C. (1967). On Theories of Fieldwork and the Scientific Character of Social Anthropology. *Philosophy of Science*, 34(3), 223–242. The University of Chicago Press.

Atkinson, P. (2006). Why do fieldwork? *Sociologisk Forskning*, 43(2), 128–134.

Van der Geest, S. (2017). The freedom of anthropological fieldwork. *Etnofoor*, 29(1), 101–112.

Unit II: Fieldwork: Experiences and Practices

a. Experiences

Madan, T.N. and A. Beteille (1975). Encounter and Experience: Personal Accounts of Field work. New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House. Ch. 2, 7 and 11.

M.N. Srinivas, A.M. Shah, and E.A. Ramaswamy ed. (2004). *The Fieldworker and the Field Problems and Challenges in Sociological Investigation*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Pp. 19-28, 38-57, 184-199.

b. Practices

Clifford, J., & Marcus, G. E. (Eds.). (1986). *Writing culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography: A School of American Research Advanced Seminar*. University of California Press. Introduction: Partial truths, 1–26.

Narayan, K. (1993). How Native is a “Native” Anthropologist? *American Anthropologist*, 95(3), 671–686.

Unit III. Reflexivity and Positionality

a. On Reflexivity

Aunger, R. (2004). A Crisis in Confidence. In *Reflexive Ethnographic Science* 1–20. AltaMira Press.

b. Positionality in Fieldwork.

Jacobs-Huey, L. (2002). The Natives Are Gazing and Talking Back: Reviewing the Problematics of Positionality, Voice, and Accountability among "Native" Anthropologists *American Anthropologist*, 104(3), 791–804.

Benz, T. (2013). Flanking gestures: Gender and Emotion in Fieldwork. *Sociological Research Online*, 19(2), 15, 1-8.

Unit IV. Writing Ethnography and Representing the Field

a. Description, Translation and Interpretation

Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press. Chapters 2, 3, and 7, pp. 17–65, 169–210.

Asad, T. (1986). The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology, in J. Clifford & G. E. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography: A School of American Research Advanced Seminar*, University of California Press. Pp. 141–164.

Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In *The Interpretation of Cultures* Basic Books, New York. 3–30.

b. Representation

Craig Jeffrey (2010) *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India*, Stanford University Press Stanford, California, Chapter 1, India Waiting, 1-36.

Srinivas, Tulasi. (2018). *The Cow in the Elevator: An Anthropology of Wonder*. Duke University Press, Durham. Chapter 1 Introduction Wonder, Creativity and Ethical Life in Bangalore, 1-32.

List of Tutorial Activities:

Suggestions for integrating hands-on research activities into the learning process to reinforce conceptual understanding and methodological application. These could be used as components for Continuous Assessment.

1. Choose any ethnographic text and describe how the author framed their ethnographic interaction in the context of their setting.
2. First hand observation and description of an ethnographic setting such as the following. (The list is not exhaustive.)

- Shopping in a store
 - Traveling by public transport
 - Having coffee with friends at a cafe
3. Think of a research topic and of possible ethical issues that may arise in that research setting.
4. Writing an Ethnographic Research Proposal
- a) Write a research proposal for a project to be carried out individually. This could be the research project that the student is planning to write in Semester 8. It must include a description of;
- Objective of the study,
 - the conceptual research question,
 - List of methods/techniques researcher intends to use,
 - Bibliography/References of at least 5 readings.
- b) Submit an excerpt from the field notes with a note connecting your observations to the research questions.
- c) Submit the transcription of one field interview. In addition, write a reflective paper on the process of conducting the interview.

Suggested Readings:

Black, S. P. (2017). Anthropological ethics and the communicative affordances of audio-video recorders in ethnographic fieldwork: Transduction as theory. *American Anthropologist*, 119(1), 46–57.

Casey, A. (2016). *Drawn to See: Drawing as an Ethnographic Method*. University of Toronto Press.

Coleman, G. (2010). Ethnographic Approaches to Digital Media. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 39, 1–16.

Ethics guidelines for internet-mediated research. (2017). *The British Psychological Society*. <https://www.bps.org.uk/guideline/ethics-guidelines-internet-mediated-research>

Goffman, E. (1989). On Fieldwork. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 18(2), 123–132.

Gürsel, Z. D. (2017). Visualizing Publics: Digital Crowd Shots and the 2015 Unity Rally in Paris. *Current Anthropology*, 58(S15), 135–148.

Malinowski, B. (1967). *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*. Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Reynolds, P. (2019). *The Uncaring, Intricate World: A Field Diary, Zambezi Valley, 1984–1985*. Duke University Press.

Warren, C. A. B., & Karner, T. X. (2014). *Discovering Qualitative Methods: Ethnography, Interviews, Documents, and Images* (3rd ed.) Oxford.

Chakravarti, Anand. (1975) *Contradiction and Change: Emerging Patterns of Authority in a Rajasthan Village*, Delhi, Oxford University Press.

Shah, A.M. (2002). *Exploring India's Rural Past, A Gujarat Village in the Early Nineteenth Century*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Srinivas, M. N. (ed.) (1966) *India's Villages*. Asia Publishing House. Bombay. Selected Chapters.

Note: Examination scheme and mode shall be as prescribed by the Examination Branch, University of Delhi, from time to time.