

CET Syllabus of Record



Program: UW in India

Course Title: Directed Field Study

Course Code: VR/DIRR 399

Total Hours: 80

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: May be cross-listed with discipline relevant to area of study

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description

The Directed Field Study (DFS) component serves as the centerpiece of the program curriculum, allowing students to customize their focus according to their academic interests and complete a formal research project that can contribute to their future academic and professional goals.

Research is conducted under close academic supervision, with guidance from local subject area experts and training in research methods and ethics. Students complete a formal research proposal, bibliography, and 20-page final paper, presenting their work to peers and program faculty at a final seminar. Throughout the semester, students also meet with their supervising faculty and subject area experts individually and in small groups.

Objectives

Through this course, students gain real field-based research skills, and create a high-quality academic product that they can leverage in their future academic and professional careers, while also gaining deep, nuanced understanding of a facet of their host context.

Students learn to:

- Formulate a viable research question
- Map out a strategy for answering it in a formal research proposal
- Implement that strategy, and modify it as needed
- Ensure that the research is sensitively and ethically conducted with regard to human subjects
- Develop a bibliography to inform and support the research, with guidance and input from subject area experts and the DFS faculty
- Process and analyze the results of their research
- Structure a 20-page paper to effectively convey their findings
- Present their findings in a presentation to peers

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Course Requirements

Students are expected to be academically motivated and self-directed, with a willingness to take direction from subject area experts and DFS faculty. They are expected to bring a clear sense of their own academic interests and a willingness to adjust their expectations according to what is possible and appropriate within the local context and semester-length timeframe.

Most of all, however, students are asked to bring a sense of joy and adventure to their work—this course is not only to train students in conducting high-quality field-based research, it is also to instill in them a love of it. The UW in India program has produced generations of some of the brightest scholars on South Asia, and much of this can be credited to the student-driven field-based research for which this program is known.

Specifically, students are expected to attend all class meetings and appointments with subject area experts, complete both required and supplementary reading, and complete all writing assignments. Students must meet the minimum required amount of hours in active research in the field, but are encouraged to spend as much time in the field as possible! Be sure to choose a topic you love. It can, and should, be the defining element of your experience.

Requirements are as follows:

- Weekly meetings with DFS faculty and/or subject area experts, as scheduled or required
- Completion of reading and writing assignments
- Preparation for class discussion
- At least two hours weekly of reading and literature review associated with your topic, beyond reading assignments required of the group
- At least three hours weekly of active field research. (Again, you are encouraged to choose something you love, and to spend as much time as you can at it!)
- A 3-5 page formal research proposal including: abstract, bibliography, timeline, Human Subjects Research statement and IRB approval if applicable.
- Journal/field log as assigned
- Mid-term report on progress
- 20-25 page final research paper
- Presentation of research to faculty and peers in final seminar

Methods of Evaluation

Student performance is graded on the following criteria:

Academic preparation	20%
Research proposal	20%
Journal/Field Log	20%
Mid-term progress report	20%
Final research paper.....	20%

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Primary Texts

Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon, eds., *Women Writing Culture*, University of California Press 1996.

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, University of Chicago Press 2008.

Elizabeth Campbell, *Doing Ethnography Today: Theories, Methods, Exercises*. Wiley-Blackwell 2014.

James Clifford and George Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, University of California Press 2010.

Marlene de Laine, *Fieldwork, Participation and Practice: Ethics and Dilemmas in Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications 2000.

Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Friezt, and Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, University of Chicago Press 2011.

Julian Murchison, *Ethnography Essentials: Designing, Conducting, and Presenting Your Research*, Jossey-Bass 2010.

Robert Weiss, *Learning From Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*, Free Press 1995.

Supplementary Texts

In addition to the below selections of assigned reading for class meetings, students develop a bibliography tailored to their research topic in consultation with their DFS professor and subject area expert.

Berremen, Gerald D., "Ethnography: Method and Product," *Methodology and Fieldwork*, pp. 157-190, Vinay Kumar Srivastava, ed., Oxford University Press 2004.

Bernard S. Cohn, "The Pasts of an Indian Village," *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, pp. 88-99, Oxford University Press 1998.

Julia G. Crane and Michael V. Angrosino, "Introduction," "Beginning Fieldwork," *Field Projects in Anthropology: A Student Handbook*, pp. 1-22, Waveland Press 1992.

Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt, "What is Participant Observation?" "Learning to be a Participant Observer," *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, AltaMira Press 2010.

Louis Dumont, "History of Ideas," *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications*, pp. 21-32, University of Chicago Press 1981.

Diana L. Eck, "Introduction," *Banaras: City of Light*, pp. xiii-42, Penguin Books India, 1983.

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Joseph W. Elder, "Caste and World View: The Application of Survey Research Methods," *Methodology and Fieldwork*, pp. 272-287, Vinay Kumar Srivastava, ed., Oxford University Press, 2004.

Sandria B. Freitag, *Culture and Power in Banaras*, University of California Press, 1989.

Khadija Ansari Gupta, "Travails of a Woman Fieldworker: A Small Town in Uttar Pradesh," *The Fieldworker and the Field*, pp. 103-114, M.N. Srinivas, A. M. Shah, and E. A. Ramaswamy, eds., Oxford University Press 2002.

David L. Haberman, "Tree Worship in India," *People Trees: Worship of Trees in Northern India*, pp. 31-58, Oxford University Press 2013.

Edward T. Hall, "Consistency and Life," *Beyond Culture*, pp. 41-55, Anchor Books 1977.

Bradley R. Hertel and Cynthia Ann Humes, "Introduction," *Living Banaras: Hindu Religion in Cultural Context*, pp. 1-17, SUNY Press 1993.

Paul Hocking, ed., *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, De Gruyter Mouton 2003.

Jenny Huberman, *Ambivalent Encounters: Childhood, Tourism, and Social Change in Banaras*, Rutgers University Press 2012.

Nita Kumar, "Introduction," "Physical and Cultural Shocks," "The City as Object," *Friends, Brothers and Informants: Fieldwork Memoirs of Banaras*, pp. 1-47, University of California Press 1992.

Kirin Narayan, "Loincloths and Celibacy," "False Gurus and Gullible Disciples," *Storytellers, Saints and Scoundrels*, pp. 113-159, University of Pennsylvania Press 1989.

Thomas Parkhill, "What's Taking Place: Neighborhood *Ramlilas* in Banaras," *Living Banaras: Hindu Religion in Cultural Context*, pp. 1-17, Bradley R. Hertel and Cynthia Ann Humes, eds., SUNY Press, 1993.

Jonathan Parry, "Giving, Receiving and Bargaining over Gifts," *Death in Banaras*, pp. 119-148, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Anne McKenzie Pearson, "Six Women," *Because It Gives Me Peace of Mind: Ritual Fasts in the Religious Lives of Hindu Women*, SUNY Press 1996.

Christopher Pinney, "Sparks of Contingency: Photography and Anthropology in India," *Methodology and Fieldwork*, Vinay Kumar Srivastava, ed., Oxford University Press, 2004.

Vasanthi Raman, "Walking the Razor's Edge: Narratives of Two Women," *The Warp and the Weft: Community and Gender Identity among Banaras Weavers*, pp. 262-285, Routledge India 2010.

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Roger Sanjek, *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology*, pp. 161-186, Cornell University Press 1990.

Amartya Sen, "Our Culture, Their Culture" and "Indian Traditions and the Western Imagination" in *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity*, pp. 121-160, Picador 2006.

M.N. Srinivas, "Some Thoughts on the Study of One's Own Society," *Social Change and Modern India*, pp. 155-171, University of California Press 1966.

Outline of Course Content

- Week 1** Introduction to Directed Field Study. Overview of Timeline, Assignments, Evaluation. Role of DFS faculty and subject area experts. Choosing a topic. Formulating the research question. Research ethics. Do I need an IRB approval?
- Week 2** Review of past student research. 1:1 meetings with DFS faculty to confirm topic. Beginning to think like an ethnographer. The field log, the journal. Varanasi as field site.
- Week 3** Meetings with subject area expert. Choosing the field site. Preparing the research proposal.
- Week 4** Present research proposal. 1:1 meetings with DFS faculty to discuss and finalize.
- Week 5** Entering the field. The art of asking questions. The art of establishing relationships. Working with a field assistant.
- Week 6** How does one both participate and observe? The location of the self in field-based research. The voice in which you write. Meeting with subject area expert.
- Week 7** What is culture? Us and Them. East and West. India and the U.S. Insiders and outsiders. Confronting, interrogating assumptions, dichotomies, reactions. Developing nuance.
- Week 8** Gender, social stratifications, and boundaries in field research. Feminist, queer, multicultural ethnographies.
- Week 9** The ethnographic eye. *Darshan*. Principles of Visual Anthropology. Meeting with subject area expert.
- Week 10** Encountering roadblocks. Reframing questions. Tweaking and refining the strategy as research moves forward. Midpoint 1:1 with DFS faculty.
- Week 11** Validating your findings: how to know it's 'real'?

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Week 12 Capturing historicity in contemporary fieldwork. Meeting with subject area expert.

Week 13 How to trace a line from prior scholarship to yours. How to translate field experience into 'findings.'

Week 14 Analysis and preparation of research. 1:1 Meeting with DFS faculty.

Week 15 Presentation of research in final seminar