

ANTH 112 Introduction to Socio-Cultural Anthropology
Winter 2019

I acknowledge that St FX is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

Jan. 15, 17. How do anthropologists do research?

READ: *Perspectives*: Katie Nelson, "Doing Fieldwork: Methods in Cultural Anthropology"

Nathan, Rebekah. 2005. "Understanding Student Culture." *Anthropology News* 46(7): 17-18.

NOTE: Do plagiarism assignment on Moodle

METHODS

Origins of fieldwork: from the armchair, to the verandah to the field

- Malinowski in the Trobriand Islands, ca. 1915-1918

- some examples: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhCruPBvSjQ>

Ethical considerations:

MUST:- get informed consent

- protect those being studied from risk

- respect privacy and dignity

- Tricouncil ethical guidelines (again)

(http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2/TCPS_2_FINAL_Web.pdf)

- think about accountability, who benefits

- collaborative research?

- implications of studying "up" and studying "down"

- behaviour in the field: relations with the people

- difficult ethical issues in fieldwork: (example:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2Q3-OHyeUA>)

Stages in developing research:

- state the problem/develop a proposal

- engaged research, "action research," or detached academic research?

● Vincent: research on livelihood in a peasant community (comunidad campesina) in Peru

● Nelson: contested identity in Brazil; undocumented Mexican college students in Minneapolis

● Nathan: research on patterns of life and study among students at "AnyU", USA

- get funding - might the research be affected by who funds it?

- choose a site/sites in multi-sited research

- e.g. Vincent: "Allpachico," Peru; Nelson in Minneapolis and Veracruz; Nathan at "AnyU"

- get ethical review board approval

- get to the field

- may involve travel, visas, authorization, health, language

- choose field site

- get informed consent ** (in what cases might you not want to do this?)
- develop rapport
- reflexivity: factors affecting fieldwork, such as class, race, gender, age, etc.
- culture shock
- violence in the field
- ethnocentrism vs. romanticism
- gather data (see below)
- analyze it (see below)
- write it up (see below)

Methods of gathering data

- quantitative and qualitative;
- participant observation *
- interviews: closed, open-ended
- time allocation studies
- life histories
- genealogies, kin diagrams
- cyberspace
- questionnaires or surveys
- secondary sources, eg. other writings, archives
- other representations
- we often use multiple methods and coordinate with a team of researchers
- triangulation

Recording culture:

- field notes (<http://people.stfx.ca/svincent/fieldwork/fieldwork2007ppnotesnoname2.htm>), voice recorders, photography, [videos](#), etc.

Data analysis:

- applying theory
- coding and sifting through data to look for key themes
- analysing quantitative data

Presenting conclusions:

- choice of structure (essay, book, video, etc.)
- choice of style (realistic or reflexive writing)
- ethnographic authority?
- polyvocality
- emic or etic perspective
- objectivity?
- protecting privacy, safety of research participants
- what form to ensure accessibility?

ANTH 112 Thinking about anthropological research topics, ethics and methods.

Form groups of four to six.

Answer the following questions. Imagine you are an anthropologist who has to come up with a research project.

- A. If you were the researcher, would you want to study “at home” in your own society, or in another society? Why? Your answers to the rest of the questions will reflect your choice of home or away fieldwork.
- B. What research question will you pursue?
- C. What concerns might your research subjects have about your study?
- D. Are there more or fewer ethical concerns if the research subjects are from the same society as the anthropologist?
- E. What is the first thing you should?
- F. What methods will you use to pursue this topic? (E.g. participant observation, interviews, video, life histories, etc.)
- G. Where will you publish this research? In academic journals? In popular media venues? Where the research took place or elsewhere?