



ANTH801

Research Methods in Anthropology

S1 Evening 2016

Dept of Anthropology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
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W6A 602
4-6pm Tuesdays

Credit points
4

Prerequisites
Admission to MGlobalHlthDevStud or GradCertGlobalHlthDevStud or MAppAnth or PGDipAppAnth or MDevCult or PGDipDevCult or PGCertDevCult or MSocEntre or PGCertSocEntre or 4cp in ANTH units at 800 level

Corequisites

Co-badged status
co-badged with ANTH751

Unit description
This unit introduces methodological strategies used in community research. Quantitative strategies, such as questionnaire and survey methods, will be compared with qualitative ones, such as participant observation. The epistemological and ethical dimensions of methodology, and the effects of political imperatives on the conduct of research will be discussed. It includes four weeks of community-based research.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Develop skills in qualitative research, ethnographic writing, and oral presentation
- Understand the processes of a human research ethics application
- Learn about current topics and debates in human research ethics
- Design, implement, and write up their own research project

Relate their experiences and observations to research problems and ethical dilemmas which emerge in key ethnographic texts

Reflect upon the selection of "informants" and field sites and how they shape both methodologies and research outcomes

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Seminar Participation</u>	10%	Weekly
<u>Human Research Ethics Training</u>	0%	Tuesday, 15 March
<u>Research Proposal</u>	10%	Thursday, 31 March
<u>Semi-structured Interview 10%</u>	10%	Tuesday, 5 April
<u>Ethnographic Journal</u>	10%	Friday, 29 April
<u>Research Paper</u>	20%	Wednesday, 18 May
<u>Oral Presentations</u>	10%	Weeks 11 and 12
<u>Revised Research Paper</u>	30%	Friday, 17 June

Seminar Participation

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **10%**

Seminar Preparation and Participation: 10%

Much of the work involved in exploring the material covered by this course is expected to take place during the seminars. Weekly seminars offer a chance to discuss the readings, engage with peers about research questions, and deepen your knowledge of course materials. Seminars allow the chance to express your own opinions, listen to the viewpoints of peers and educators, and either confirm or challenge the main ideas of the course material.

Each week, all students should have read the required readings and be ready to discuss them. The readings are gathered from a wide range of disciplinary approaches - if you have any difficulty understanding these basic materials please let the course convenor know so they can be discussed in greater detail. These articles must be read carefully and it is expected that you will reflect a sound understanding of these approaches in the written work you submit.

A. Preparation - Weekly reading summaries

Due: At the end of class EACH WEEK

Seminar preparation involves a couple of hours of reading each week. To facilitate tutorial discussion, you are required to bring along a short typed summary of the readings (**you often have to do two of them per week**) as well as one or two open-ended questions based on the reading material. This is an opportunity to develop skills in comprehension, communication skills, and guiding group discussion. **The summary and questions for each article should be up to 200 words.**

The format of each summary is simple but specific and you must address the following criteria:

- Your summary must be **double-spaced**, a reasonable font (e.g. **Times, Helvetica, Calibri, Arial**) and in **12 point font**.
- **Stick to the word limits.** Providing a meaningful summary of a reading in such a small word limit is challenging, but offers an opportunity to develop a really important set of skills that will make it easier to grasp some of the complex concepts in the course.
- **Here is a short guide to writing the summary and open-ended question:**
 - i. **What is it about?** (write **one succinct sentence** capturing the reading's overall theme – **around 10-25 words**).
 - ii. **How do they do it?** (i.e. provide a brief description of methodology – **around 30-50 words** - how did the author get the information? How did they put together and present this information? Was it qualitative/quantitative/comparative, was it based on textual research/observation/participation etc?).
 - iii. **What are the conclusions?** (provide a brief comment on the significance of the reading – **around 50-100 words** – especially looking at its location within scholarly debate - How does the article arrive at the core argument? How does it push our understanding of the subject further? What is the point of reading it?)
 - iii. **Further questions?** (write one or two questions that open the space for discussion about key points in the article, gaps in the knowledge, new research questions raised. Avoid "yes/no" questions, try to open the space for people to share opinions without trying to lead interlocutors, and work towards creating a safe and receptive environment where people feel comfortable to share thoughts and reflections.

Each student should fully participate in class discussions and will take turns leading discussion of the week's readings. **All students are expected to actively participate in class discussion.** Your ability to do good social research (among living human beings!!) requires you to be able to actively engage in and lead discussions in a social setting. As such, each student will be expected to lead small parts of the discussion from week to week.

Your research projects will also be incorporated into ongoing class discussion. Between weeks five and ten, we'll have a quick debriefing where you will report on the progress of your research project and talk through any interesting findings, difficulties, or successes you're encountering. We will all learn from watching each other muddle through an ethnographic research project, from the planning to the implementation to writing up.

Verbal contributions to class discussions that are valued are remarks that engage thoughtfully with the readings and with the theoretical issues raised by the methods you are trialling in your ongoing research projects. You must engage respectfully with your peers. Do not mock anyone's contributions in seminar. If you don't understand or agree with something someone says, ask them to clarify, or explain respectfully why you disagree. Everyone should feel free to speak up in class. Please do not drown out quieter voices, interrupt, or otherwise dominate seminar discussion.

If you are having trouble speaking up in class discussion, please come to speak with the unit convenor privately and together we can strategise ways to facilitate your contribution to the seminars.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop skills in qualitative research, ethnographic writing, and oral presentation
- Understand the processes of a human research ethics application
- Learn about current topics and debates in human research ethics
- Relate their experiences and observations to research problems and ethical dilemmas which emerge in key ethnographic texts
- Reflect upon the selection of "informants" and field sites and how they shape both methodologies and research outcomes

Human Research Ethics Training

Due: **Tuesday, 15 March**

Weighting: **0%**

Ethics quiz

Compulsory

Due: Wednesday 15 March in class

Students will take the online ethics module for social science research developed by Wynn, Mason, and Everett (http://www.mq.edu.au/ethics_training/) and the online quiz at the end of the module.

Details: The online ethics module should be done as homework in the second week of the class. Upon completion of the quiz, **print the certificate of completion** and **bring to class** to turn it in. The module takes about 3-4 hours to complete. Warning: start the quiz well in advance because if you fail any section of the quiz, it will not allow you to proceed to the next section of the quiz until 24 hours have passed, so it's not a good thing to do at the last minute.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand the processes of a human research ethics application
- Learn about current topics and debates in human research ethics

Research Proposal

Due: **Thursday, 31 March**

Weighting: **10%**

Research Proposal 10%

Due: 31 Mar (Turnitin)

Research proposals will be original project designs for ethnographic research projects. Your research proposal should be a formal description of the ongoing project of ethnographic description that you are engaged in for this class.

Undertake a literary search for your chosen topic. Identify a minimum of 6-8 academic texts of high quality, which all cover relevant aspects of the topic (the texts should be suitable for comparison).

Websites that are not explicitly part of the social science discourse do not count as references. **Wikipedia is NOT an appropriate source and may not be used!**

The proposal should include the following sections:

Proposal title: provide a short descriptive title of no more than 20 words.

Abstract: This should be a short summary of the project, maximum 100 words.

Background: A paragraph or two discussing the academic literature in order to set up the research question. What inspired you to research this topic? What other researchers have tackled this issue? What have they said about the topic? What are the points of difference between theorists? How is your project similar to, or different from, those of other researchers?

Aims: What will this research concretely demonstrate or accomplish? What are your study objectives and key research questions?

Methods: This should include a detailed discussions of research methods, rationales for choice of methods, approach to fieldwork, and reference to key sections of background readings as they are relevant to methodology and analysis.

Significance: What is the significance of this project? What new insight will it shed on the research question? How will your research outcomes have an impact?

Ethics: How does your project comply with human research ethics principles? Include a short note to demonstrate how you have thought about the ethical dimensions of your research project. Please note that your ethnographic fieldwork is limited to unobtrusive observation and phenomenological self reflection.

Proposed timeline: What is your plan for completion? Please carefully consider your timeline for fieldwork so that you can submit your ethnographic journal by 29 April and research paper by 18 May.

Budget: Ethnographic fieldwork can be conducted on a shoe-string budget, but is obviously greatly enhanced when actual research funding is available. In the absence of a research grant, please be sensible about the costs of your project and make sure that you propose an

affordable project that you can self-manage. Include items such as travel by public transport, activity costs, notepad, writing equipment, special attire, etc.

References: Please look up the essay writing guidelines on the Anthropology homepage for citation and referencing guidelines (you should use in-text citations and Harvard-style referencing). Make sure all pages are numbered, your student ID number, and a word count appears on your proposal.

Please submit an electronic copy of the paper to the turnitin box in iLearn.

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Semi-structured Interview 10%

Due: **Tuesday, 5 April**

Weighting: **10%**

Semi-structured interview

Due: in class 5 April

Develop a list of ten open-ended questions as though you are going to conduct an interview for your research project. Your interview questions must be typed, **double-spaced**, use a reasonable font (e.g. **Times, Helvetica, Calibri, Arial**), and be **12 point**. Please also include a second blank page with lines so that you can rewrite any questions that you would like to fix during class. Please make sure that both pages are numbered and have your student ID number up the top.

Bring your open-ended questions to class. During class, we will break up into groups and you will have an opportunity to conduct a mock-interview with a classmate. Depending on how your interview goes, you may choose to revise some or all of your questions. Please submit both your original and revised questions at the end of class.

Please note that these interviews will not be part of your research project. This exercise serves only to help you think about how to ask open-ended questions and to develop skills in constructing a semi-structured interview.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop skills in qualitative research, ethnographic writing, and oral presentation

Ethnographic Journal

Due: **Friday, 29 April**

Weighting: **10%**

Ethnographic Journal: 10%

Due: April 29 (Turnitin)

Write, write, write, write, write! From the third week of class (after students have completed the online ethics module), students will engage in a small-scale ethnographic research project and keep a journal that documents your observations and reflections in a series of dated fieldnotes. Each student will keep a 'field journal' that documents your own experiences ethnographically in a series of dated fieldnotes. You should collate completed writing assignments, including observational logs, research diary entries, sketches, diagrams, and other useful data related to the on-going project. The ethnographic field journal is due after semester break.

Even before you have a research project, you should start writing your decision making process in the journal. The key is to get you into the habit of writing journal entries and field notes and to connect you with the reflexive process of fieldwork. **The journal is a participant-observation record of your own experiences**, but you should also document the advantages and disadvantages of your research methods. **From the beginning of this project, you will be expected to adhere to the highest ethical standards of research, data collection, and data storage.**

On successful completion you will be able to:

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Research Paper

Due: **Wednesday, 18 May**

Weighting: **20%**

Research Paper ("Mini-Ethnography"): 20% (2000 words)

Due: May 18 (Turnitin)

Students will write a short ethnography **loosely** in the style of an anthropologist we have read in this unit. Building upon your research proposal, drawing upon your ethnographic journal, and referencing academic texts, you should describe the goals of the project, the methods employed, and what you discovered during the course of your research. Your essay should engage strongly with strictly no less than ten academic texts of high quality, from the social sciences and/or humanities (books, journal articles – the texts should be suitable for comparison). Websites that are not explicitly part of the social science discourse do not count as references. **Wikipedia is**

NOT an appropriate source and may not be used!

Your paper must present your research in a way that maintains academic integrity whilst also engaging the reader with your ethnographic material. You must connect your material to larger processes, using sound theoretical foundations and consistent and measured analysis. However, there is no self evident logical progression between method and writing. The ethnographer's theoretical approach and stylistic writing decisions radically shape the presentation of ethnographic data.

During seminars, we will be discussing various stylistic choices in writing ethnography. How do they describe and analyse? How is description linked with method? What are the rhetorical techniques that they use to persuade the reader of the validity of their analysis or method? What political and ethical positions lie behind the writing decisions they make?

The paper should include the following information:

- a strategic sample of your primary ethnographic material thoughtfully extracted from your field notes.
- a discussion of the academic literature relating to your research question and findings. (What other researchers have tackled this issue? What have they said about the topic? What are the points of difference between theorists? How is your project similar to, or different from, those of other researchers?).
- an explanation of research methods, rationales for choice of methods, background readings on the research questions as they are relevant to methodology.
 - What did you discover?
 - What is the significance of this project? What new insight will it shed on the research question?

When you are writing your paper, make sure the text links ethnography with theory. Simply making declarative statements is not enough. Present evidence from your own empirical research and from the academic literature). An author must always keep in mind that he/she has to convince the reader of his/her point of view: argue, show and prove.

Critically interrogate your assumptions. How did you arrive at them? Could there be other positions? Actively search other positions? Explain the different arguments and compare them. What do you conclude from the comparison?

You will get feedback on the quality of your paper. You will use this feedback to reflect on and then develop your revised submission.

Submit a polished piece of work – the key is to get you connected with the academic process of review and revision. When academics submit to a journal, they do not send in an unfinished draft, but these manuscripts (no matter how good they are!!) still require revision based on the comments of the peer review process. **DO NOT TREAT THIS AS A DRAFT PAPER!**

Timely feedback will be provided to students in the format of peer-review for an academic journal.

Make sure all pages are numbered, your student ID number and a word count appears on your paper.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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Oral Presentations

Due: **Weeks 11 and 12**

Weighting: **10%**

Oral Presentations

Due: May 31 or June 7 (in class)

During the last two weeks of the semester, you will present your research findings in class. Presentation software will not be part of this assessment. You are expected to engage the audience through the description, explanation and discussion of your research project. You are presenting an ethnographic synthesis that combines data and theory through the medium of analysis. Since this class is centred on methodology, I expect you to reflect on and discuss your process of observation, methodological challenges, things you might do differently next time, etc. Students will be allocated a short amount of time after their presentation to respond to questions from their peers. (Questions from fellow students will form part of the participation mark for this unit).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop skills in qualitative research, ethnographic writing, and oral presentation
- Relate their experiences and observations to research problems and ethical dilemmas which emerge in key ethnographic texts

Revised Research Paper

Due: **Friday, 17 June**

Weighting: **30%**

Revised Research Paper

Due: 17 June (Turnitin)

Taking into consideration the feedback and comments provided on your research paper, you will develop a full essay. Your revised paper must present your research in a way that maintains

academic integrity whilst also engaging the reader with your ethnographic material. You must connect your material to larger processes, using sound theoretical foundations and consistent and measured analysis. However, there is no self evident logical progression between method and writing. The ethnographer's theoretical approach and stylistic writing decisions radically shape the presentation of ethnographic data.

Similar to the process of submission for publication in a journal or edited volume, your revised paper must include an **EPILOGUE** (200 to 500 words) reflecting on how you have **USED THE FEEDBACK** you received for your research paper to improve on the revised essay. How did you use the feedback to improve your academic writing?

In the final essay you should use **15 to 20** academic references from the social sciences and/or humanities (books, journal articles). Websites that are not explicitly part of the social science discourse do not count as references. **Wikipedia is NOT an appropriate source and may not be used!**

Make sure all pages are numbered, your student ID number and a word count appears on your essay.

Format: For all assignments, please see the writing guidelines on the Anthropology homepage for citation and referencing guidelines (**you should use in-text citations and Harvard-style referencing**).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop skills in qualitative research, ethnographic writing, and oral presentation
- Design, implement, and write up their own research project
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- Reflect upon the selection of "informants" and field sites and how they shape both methodologies and research outcomes

Delivery and Resources

In order to become a competent ethnographer, one must develop technical, observational, and analytical skills as well as knowledge about ethnographies; in other words, one must *practice* ethnographic research in order to really understand how anthropologists create and use ethnographic knowledge. For this reason, the unit is a **workshop** taking the form of a **seminar** where we can get together and discuss others', and your own, ethnographic practices. Even though the lecturer will deliver some material, the unit is emphatically **not a lecture course** because students necessarily must participate actively to develop their skills.

Unit Schedule

Abbreviated Outline of Weekly Topics (and due dates)

Week	Date	Topic
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1	1 Mar	Introduction: course overview
2	8 Mar	Choosing a field site and developing research questions
3	15 Mar	Ethical Codes and Ethical Dilemmas in Fieldwork 15 Mar: Human Research Ethics Training Certificates due in class
4	22 Mar	Participant Observation
5	29 Mar	Taking Field Notes 31 March: Research Proposals due (Turnitin)
6	5 Apr	Interviewing 5 April: Semi-structured interviews due in class
Mid-semester Recess (11 April – 22 April)		
7	26 Apr	Fieldwork in the Context of Globalisation 29 Apr: Ethnographic Journals Due (Turnitin)
8	3 May	Informants, Hosts, and Field Relationships
9	10 May	Multispecies Ethnography
10	17 May	Writing Ethnography 18 May: Research Paper Due (Turnitin)
11	24 May	Ethnography and the politics of writing and representation Guest Lecture with Dr Monica Dalidowicz
12	31 May	Oral Presentations
13	7 Jun	Oral Presentations 14 June: Revised Research Paper Due (Turnitin)

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#).

The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand the processes of a human research ethics application
- Learn about current topics and debates in human research ethics
- Reflect upon the selection of "informants" and field sites and how they shape both methodologies and research outcomes

Assessment tasks

- Seminar Participation
- Human Research Ethics Training
- Ethnographic Journal
- Revised Research Paper

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop skills in qualitative research, ethnographic writing, and oral presentation
- Design, implement, and write up their own research project
- Relate their experiences and observations to research problems and ethical dilemmas which emerge in key ethnographic texts
- Reflect upon the selection of "informants" and field sites and how they shape both methodologies and research outcomes

Assessment tasks

- Seminar Participation
- Research Proposal

- Semi-structured Interview 10%
- Ethnographic Journal
- Research Paper
- Oral Presentations
- Revised Research Paper

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop skills in qualitative research, ethnographic writing, and oral presentation
- Design, implement, and write up their own research project
- Relate their experiences and observations to research problems and ethical dilemmas which emerge in key ethnographic texts
- Reflect upon the selection of "informants" and field sites and how they shape both methodologies and research outcomes

Assessment tasks

- Seminar Participation
- Human Research Ethics Training
- Research Proposal
- Ethnographic Journal
- Research Paper
- Oral Presentations
- Revised Research Paper

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop skills in qualitative research, ethnographic writing, and oral presentation
- Learn about current topics and debates in human research ethics
- Design, implement, and write up their own research project
- Relate their experiences and observations to research problems and ethical dilemmas which emerge in key ethnographic texts
- Reflect upon the selection of "informants" and field sites and how they shape both methodologies and research outcomes

Assessment tasks

- Seminar Participation
- Research Proposal
- Ethnographic Journal
- Research Paper
- Revised Research Paper

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Develop skills in qualitative research, ethnographic writing, and oral presentation

Assessment tasks

- Seminar Participation
- Research Proposal
- Semi-structured Interview 10%
- Research Paper
- Oral Presentations
- Revised Research Paper

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able

to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand the processes of a human research ethics application
- Learn about current topics and debates in human research ethics
- Reflect upon the selection of "informants" and field sites and how they shape both methodologies and research outcomes

Assessment tasks

- Seminar Participation
- Human Research Ethics Training
- Revised Research Paper

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
25/02/2016	updated to date