

## **Course Number: INTL 406 Field Studies**

## **Course Title: Ethnographic Field Methods: Field Notes**

### ***Instructor:***

Mr Scott Burnett, US tel 1800 655 3415 (outside the US +64 3 5467667),  
scott@pacificdiscovery.org. Program Director, Pacific Discovery, PO Box 899, Nelson, New Zealand

Supported by: Dr Katharine McKinnon, +61-2-9850 8385 kmckinno@els.mq.edu.au  
Department of Human Geography, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

### ***Course Administrator:***

Dr. Kathie Carpenter, 541 346 3898, kathiec@oregon.uoregon.edu  
Department of International Studies, PLC 356, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403

### ***1. Course description:***

This course is an introduction to the practice of writing and interpreting field notes. The course will focus on auto-ethnographic approaches in parallel with topics and issues covered in “Introduction to South-East Asia: International Travel and Globalisation”. To provide a focus point for students an essay question has been assigned on whether the experience of travel study may foster cosmopolitan identities.

### ***2. Course objectives:***

1. To introduce ethnographic research methods, particularly the use of a field diary.
2. To introduce auto-ethnographic methodologies and reflexive learning.
3. To practice the multiple skills needed to conduct field-based research. Students will combine reading, writing, critical analysis, discussion, interviews, observation and auto-ethnographic reflection towards an original research essay.
4. At the end of the course, students will be asked to consider if and how their participation has altered their perspectives of themselves (as Americans) and their relationship with Southeast Asia. Has the travel study experience brought them closer to feeling like 'global citizens'?

### **3. Course outline:**

#### **Prior to Travel**

##### **Readings:**

- Chapter 1 “Fieldnotes in Ethnographic research” and Chapter 2 “In the Field” from Emerson et al. (1995), *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*
- “The Possibility of Cosmopolitanism” from Tomlinson. (1999), *Globalization and Culture*

#### **During Travel**

**1. Make regular entries in the field diary** summing up events and issues of the day, reflecting on your own interpretations and responses, and what you feel you are learning. Following the guidelines presented by Emerson et al, use the diary to record in as much rich detail as possible conversations, observations or events around issues relevant to both INTL406 travel study courses.

**2. Send weekly emails** to your instructor, summarising three key field diary entries from the previous week. ([scott@pacificdiscovery.org](mailto:scott@pacificdiscovery.org))

- Emails should be kept short. Each of the three summaries should only be one or two sentences long.
- The regular emails are also an opportunity to ask questions or seek feedback from your instructor – make the most of it!

**3. Prepare for the essay by**

- reading Chapter 6 “Processing Fieldnotes” from Emerson et al
- regularly revisiting the other course readings
- considering the short essay question in light of your ongoing experiences.

**4. Essay: Due at the end of study travel, Bangkok, Thailand**

##### Question:

Reflect on your travel study experience. What do you think of Tomlinson’s vision of cosmopolitanism? Does travel study foster a more cosmopolitan perspective? Use at least 3 key moments or experiences that you recorded in your field notes to illustrate your argument.

Email this essay to [scott@pacificdiscovery.org](mailto:scott@pacificdiscovery.org)

#### **Instructions for obtaining the course readings**

Students must access the readings on the Pacific Discovery website Refer to <http://www.pacificdiscovery.org/student-programs-semester-summer-gap-year/credit-information-UO.aspx#readings> and print the readings out **prior to departure**. Students should make sure they bring these readings with them to Bangkok as they will need

to refer to them during travel study.

## **Instructions for completing the essays**

The essay should be written to the standard of any university essay. If you are unsure of how to write an essay consult an essay writing guide before you begin the course (I recommend *Essay writing for students* by Clanchy and Ballard). According to Clanchy and Ballard, the basic requirements for a university level essay are that it:

- Be clearly focused on the set topic and deal fully with its central concerns;
- Be the result of wide and critical reading;
- Present a reasoned (and structured and coherent) argument;
- Be competently presented (with appropriate style and referencing).

In addition to these criteria your instructor will be looking for evidence that you have incorporated material from your field diary in your discussion.

Make use of all the course readings in your essay. Particularly consult Emerson on how to 'write up' field notes, and Tomlinson on cosmopolitanism.

The essay must be approximately 1000 words, typed, and submitted by email to your course instructor: [scott@pacificdiscovery.org](mailto:scott@pacificdiscovery.org)

## **4. Methods of instruction:**

Readings on ethnographic field notes will provide background to the skills required for ethnographic fieldwork, supported by ongoing discussions with facilitators and instructors on field note methods. Ongoing reflections and notes entered in the field diary will facilitate auto-ethnographic and experiential learning.

## **5. Course requirements:**

### **1. Prior to travel**

- Complete assigned readings

### **2. During Travel**

- Make regular entries in a field diary about your experiences, and issues and reflections relevant to the course.
- Send weekly emails to the course instructor summarising three key observations, experiences, or events recorded in your field diary.
- Complete a 1000 word essay on the assigned question.

## **6. Evaluation:**

### **1. Field diary (40%)**

The trip diary will be kept during the journey with your responses to the weekly questions, and reflections on your experiences. Your course facilitator will check that you have been making regular entries. Summaries of three key observations, experiences, or events should be emailed to the course instructor on a weekly basis for evaluation and feedback.

### **2. Essay (60%)**

A 1000 word essay based on entries in your field diary. Email the essay to your instructor before the trip ends in Bangkok, Thailand.

### **3. Compulsory Readings**

Complete the set readings prior to and during travel.

### **4. Grading**

INTL 406 is graded 'pass / no pass'. If you require a letter grade for your university, please contact us - we can arrange enrolment under a different course number - you must do this before enrolling.

## **7. Texts and references:**

Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz and Linda Shaw. (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tomlinson, John. (1999). *Globalization and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.