

Arts-based Ethnography

KF-4XX

Included in Study

- Master's Programme in Fine Arts

Recommended pre-requisites

It is generally recommended that the students know how to produce some type of artistic or multimedial work (visual media, performance, sound), since the technical aspects of this will not be a major focus.

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will

- have a comprehensive understanding of site-specific research approaches that draw both on ethnographic and artistic dimensions
- have an understanding of ethical dimensions of site-specific artistic practice and research, including questions of participation and representation
- have an understanding of site-specificity in arts and research both on phenomenological, social, institutional and discursive levels
- have acquired methodological skills to engage various contexts through innovative research approaches
- be able to carry out multi-dimensional fieldwork and documentation, and produce research reports that contain both academic and artistic dimensions
- be able to raise relevant and innovative research questions, and thereby gain a voice within academic and artistic discourse

Course contents

The course *Arts-based Ethnography* intends to provide students with experience with and skills to undertake innovative and critical research that approaches site-specificity from two angles: First, through exploring current developments in ethnography, or the methodological tradition of explorative research through engaging with local sites and communities. Second, through employing perspectives and methods from site-specific artistic practice to this research. This combination of research and artistic practice places this course in the realm of artistic research, yet with a narrowed-down focus on site-specificity both in terms of methodology and field.

The course focuses on individual and artistic engagement with concrete sites or social contexts as a source of participatory and multi-modal knowledge production. The resulting student works will contain both artistic and research qualities, and aim to speak to and engage audiences both within and outside academic and artistic realms.

Central topics

- Principles of artistic, practice-led research: traditions, developments and methodological approaches

- Current developments in ethnographic research: sensory, participatory and critical dimension of fieldwork and outcome
- Site-specific artistic practices; phenomenological, institutional and discursive dimensions
- Developing an explorative practice through art and research
- Multi-dimensional fieldwork and research output

Teaching methods and workload

The course will take place through 3 phases:

1. Introduction and preparation, where the student prepares a practical fieldwork and is also introduced to the course topics through readings, lectures and group discussion.
2. Fieldwork, where the student engages in a local site, and shares experiences and reflections with supervisors and fellow students
3. Follow-up, analysis of data and generation of an arts-based research report through exhibition, performance or similar, along with a written text

Phase 1 and 3 will mainly be carried out as an online course with digital communication, through sharing of student works and progress (blog or similar), video lectures, online group discussions, and individual supervision. There will also be one initial gathering before the fieldwork. Phase 2 of the course is planned to be offered as a summer fieldwork gathering in the island of Lesbos, Greece, in collaboration with Metochi study centre. Other alternatives may be offered depending on financing.

Supervision will be offered through all phases of preparation, fieldwork and follow-up, and will focus on relevant issues and research questions, methodological and theoretical approaches, ethics, scope and presentation of the individual student research project. Supervision will be given individually and in groups, depending on what is most relevant for the students and their projects.

The estimated student workload for this course is 400 hours.

Evaluation

The course evaluation will be conducted in accordance with UiA's standard procedure as set out in the Quality Assurance System.

Examination requirements

Attendance in fieldwork and other gatherings is mandatory. All work assignments must be passed before the final examination can take place. An overview of the assignments and workload will be presented at the start of the course.

Assessment methods and criteria

- 1) A final individual presentation of the student research in form of an exhibition or performance will include artistic presentation, documentation, and a short text (approx. 2500 words) demonstrating the student's process, research question(s) and understanding of the context engaged.
- 2) An individual oral examination follows the presentation, based on the submitted text and exhibited work.

Assessed on the basis of pass/fail.

Other Information

The students cover expenses for materials and travel to Lesvos. The students may also need to cover some fieldwork transportation costs (depending on their choice of project) and are generally responsible for the logistics needed to carry out their individual projects during the fieldwork phase.

Highly motivated and self-driven students are necessitated in this course, and the applicants are required to include a letter of motivation with their application commenting on why they apply, with a preliminary sketch of the project they would like to carry out in Lesvos (max 1000 words).

Offered as Single Standing Module

Yes

Credit reduction

KF-403 with 15 credits

Language of instruction

Course language will be English. Supervision will also be offered in Norwegian, and student submissions can either be in English or Norwegian.

Literature

- Coles, Alex (Ed.) (2000). *Site-specificity: The ethnographic turn* (Vol. 4). London: Black Dog.
- Cox, Rupert A., Irving, Andrew, & Wright, Christopher (Eds.). (2016). *Beyond text? : Critical practices and sensory anthropology*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Culhane, Dara, & Elliott, Denielle. (2017). *A different kind of ethnography: Imaginative practices and creative methodologies*. North York, Ont: University of Toronto Press.
- Foster, Hal. (1996). The artist as ethnographer? In G. Marcus & F. Myers (Eds.), *The traffic in culture. Refiguring art and anthropology* (pp. 302-309). Berkeley, LA and London: University of California Press.
- Kwon, Miwon. (2002). *One place after another: Site-specific art and locational identity*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Pink, Sarah. (2009). *Doing sensory ethnography*. Los Angeles: Sage.

In addition, there will be a compendium of relevant articles and resources