

Difficult Settings: Preparing for fieldwork



SYLLABUS

VU Amsterdam Summer School

3 July - 14 July 2023



Any general questions for the Summer School support team? Contact amsterdamsummerschool@vu.nl.

Course Details

Title	Difficult settings: Preparing for fieldwork challenges
Coordinator(s)	Fiona Shan
Other lecturers	Fiona Shan , Dr. Marina de Regt, Dr. Luisa Schneider, Ying Shen, Peiyao Zhang (Utrecht University European Research Center on Migration and Ethnic Relations)
Study credits	3
Form(s) of tuition	On campus, lectures, workshops, guest lectures, practical sessions and an additional 15 hours of self-study
Approximate contact hours	45
Approximate self-study hours	10

Teaching staff (in order of appearance)

Fiona Shan

Dr. Luisa Schneider

Ying Shen

Peiyao Zhang

Dr. Marina de Regt

Peiyao Zhang

Course description

In this summer course, the lecturers speak about difficulties and concerns that they have encountered in their field research. This course can bring to light the gap between textbook theories and methods in practice. It focuses on two qualitative research methods: in-depth interview and field observation through scenario-based training. The lectures and seminars address awkward and worrisome situations, sometimes risky, and include scenarios for young researchers to cope with. The researchers' personal involvement and their influences in the field will be discussed thoroughly. In addition, the course provides participants the opportunity to share their own fieldwork plans with peers and to discuss their expected challenges in the field. Moreover, the course provides opportunities for participants to receive advice regarding potential problems and anticipated difficulties in their fieldwork.

Learning objectives

- To provide researchers a broader impression and view of doing fieldwork, especially in difficult environments and situations
- To understand the complex everyday realities, including opportunities and difficulties, of doing fieldwork
- To provide researchers insights and tools in terms of how to cope with unexpected problems under difficult conditions
- To improve researchers' abilities to reflect on one's positionality, relationships, and interactions with people in the field
- To enhance the capability of carrying out qualitative research in practice
- To be able to write an explicit fieldwork planning

Assignments and Grading

- Class participation & self-study (40%)

- Middle-course reflections of what you've learned and inspired, and questions for later sessions (20%)

- Final writing assignment (40%): a complete research methodology design with explicit fieldwork planning (2000 words)

Provisional reading list

To be announced

Course Schedule

Session 1, 3 July Monday, 10-1pm

Session 2, 4 July Tuesday, 9:30-12:30pm

Session 3, 6 July Thursday, 9:30-12:30pm

Session 4, 7 July Friday, 9-12pm

Session 5, 11 July Tuesday, 9:30-12:30pm

Session 6, 12 July Wednesday, 9-12pm

Session 7, 13 July Thursday, 9:30-12:30pm

