



berlin graduate school  
muslim cultures and societies

### **Ethnographic Fieldwork: Methods, positionality, ethics, and challenges**

Workshop held at Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies, Altensteinstraße 48

#### *Rationale:*

Doing ethnographic fieldwork requires training and preparation. This workshop aims to provide a venue for first year and second year doctoral fellows who are about to embark on their ethnographic fieldwork to thresh out the issues and challenges of this research approach, to discuss specific methods relevant to their research questions and theoretical orientations, to reflect on their framing and positionality, and to critically think about the ethics of their research. At the end of the workshop it is envisioned that the participants will have a clearer idea of what ethnographic fieldwork entails and how they can deal with the practical aspects of this approach as it applies to their specific research contexts, how important reflexivity and ethical research are, and how they can develop their methods before entering the field.

#### *Date:*

December 12, 2013 (Friday), 13:00-18:00 (break 15:00-15:30)

#### *Preparatory Meeting:*

Preparations and required readings will be communicated via email

#### *Organiser/Mentor:*

Rosa Cordillera Castillo

#### *Participants:*

doctoral students of the BGS MCS (specifically first year and second year students), and students from IAAS HU and FU Ethnologie who might be interested in attending. Maximum of 6 participants.

#### *Format:*

Lecture (inputs from the mentor)

Discussions

Reflections on own projects vis-a-vis the texts and lecture, positionality, ethics, and dilemmas

The readings required deal with very practical matters of doing fieldwork. The workshop will be divided accordingly:

1. Ethnography, field, fieldwork: clarifying the terms
2. Writing fieldnotes
3. Specific methods: ethnographic interviews, narrative analysis, life stories and how these relate to their research questions and theoretical orientations
4. Ethnography after postmodernism
5. Ethics
6. Emotions in the field
7. Positionality and engagement
8. Difficulties of conducting fieldwork

*Readings:*  
To follow

*Instruction for participants:*

1. Submit their research abstract to me by November 10, 2013 so I can comment on them and incorporate them in the discussion and possibly add or suggest readings that might be helpful for the participant.
2. Read all the texts and reflect on them vis-a-vis their own methods, framing, positionality, ethics, anxieties and dilemmas.
3. Write down the following and bring to the workshop for discussion:
  - a. Ethical dilemmas they think they will encounter in the field and how they plan to address these
  - b. Worst-case scenario (e.g. they got deported, were detained, were not given access, got severely ill, etc) they can envision for their fieldwork and how they, their supervisors, the grad school, FU, etc can solve the problem. They will understand this question more fully after they've read the text by Pollard on Field of Screams.

*Credit Points:*  
1 CP

*Application:*

The deadline for application is November 10, 2013 (via e-mail to [office@bgsmcs.fu-berlin.de](mailto:office@bgsmcs.fu-berlin.de)).  
The deadline for submission of research abstract and own reflections is November 17, 2013 (via e-mail to [rosacordillera@gmail.com](mailto:rosacordillera@gmail.com))

*Contact:*

For any queries or questions, please contact:  
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