This course introduces students to the theory and practice of participant observation, with a particular focus on using ethnographic research for studying socio-political change in today's Hong Kong. Given current events, students can use this research method to produce timely and engaged scholarship. We begin by reading carefully and critically two examples of ethnography: an urban ethnography in the Chicago School tradition and a comparative ethnography in the extended case method tradition. We will then discuss the methodological and analytical strategies of these two paradigms of ethnographic research. Next, we examine the logic of formulating research questions, sampling, casing, comparison, inter-subjectivity in interviews, concept formation, theoretical construction, ethical and political issues in doing ethnographic fieldwork. Students will choose a field site to conduct preliminary ethnographic fieldwork. For those continuing with the second part of the course in the Spring Semester, we will work together on ethnographic projects related to public sociological issues in Hong Kong. Along with extended immersion in the field, we will learn to code, analyze, conceptualize and theorize from and with the data. The final product of the practicum is a paper that students can submit to professional journals for review and publication.

*All graduate students from any discipline are welcome. No prior background necessary. Students can choose to take this as a standalone course or continue with the sequel in the Spring semester.

**Requirements**

1. Attend all class meetings and participate in discussion (20%)
2. Submit questions (due Tuesday noon) and serve as discussion leader for one week’s readings (20%)
3. Conduct preliminary fieldwork for discussion (10%); 1-page project note (due Sept 24)
4. Research proposal due end of semester (50%) due Dec 10

**Outline of Topics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week One</th>
<th>Public Ethnography: Why, What, How?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week Two</td>
<td>Chicago-School Urban Ethnography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Three</td>
<td>Extended Case Method Ethnography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>The Extended Case Method: Micro-Macro Linkage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Objects and Units of Analysis: Varieties of Ethnography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>Theoretical Sampling and Comparative Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>Ethnographic Interviewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>Power, “Informed Consent” and Reflexivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>Writing, Editing, Analyzing Fieldnotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>Concept Formation and Theory Reconstruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven</td>
<td>“Casing” and Framing Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve</td>
<td>Project-based practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirteen</td>
<td>Project-based practicum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How to enroll?** Non-UST students can look up the details on the UST website: [https://arr.ust.hk/reg/an/pgcourse.htm](https://arr.ust.hk/reg/an/pgcourse.htm) and download the application form to submit to your home institution which will then forward your application for instructor approval. Have questions? Contact: ckl@ust.hk

**About the instructor** Professor C.K. Lee (李靜君) is Chair Professor at the Social Science Division, HKUST. Born and educated in Hong Kong, she obtained her PhD in Sociology at UC Berkeley. She was a faculty at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, before moving to UCLA more than a decade ago. Her research interests include political sociology, protests, labor, development, China, Hong Kong, global and comparative ethnography. She is the author of three award-winning monographs: *Gender and the South China Miracle: Two Worlds of Factory Women* (1998), *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China’s Rustbelt and Sunbelt* (2007), and *The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor and Foreign Investment in Africa* (2017). Her articles have appeared in the *American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, Theory and Society, New Left Review, the China Quarterly,* and *Journal of Asian Studies.* Her most recent co-edited volumes include *The Social Question in the 21st Century: a Global View* (University of California Press, 2019) and *Take Back Our Future: an Eventful Political Sociology of the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement* (Cornell University Press, 2019).

Visit her website for CV and publication downloads: [https://sosc.ust.hk/blog/faculty/prof-ching-kwan-lee/](https://sosc.ust.hk/blog/faculty/prof-ching-kwan-lee/)
General References

Howard Becker's *Writing for Social Scientists* (1986) and *Tricks of the Trade* (1998)


Journals: *Ethnography; Qualitative Sociology; Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*

Readings

**Week One**  
**Ethnography: Why, What, and How?**


**Week Two**  
**Chicago-School Urban Ethnography**


Recommended


- Loic Wacqant, “Scrutinizing the Street: Poverty, Morality and the Pitfalls of

More Examples


**Week Three  Extended Case Method Ethnography**


Recommended:

- Jeffrey J. Sallaz, *The Labor of Luck: Casino Capitalism in the United States and South Africa* (UC Press, 2009)
• Ching Kwan Lee, *Gender and the South China Miracle: Two Worlds of Factory Women* (UC Press, 1998)

• Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent.* (Chicago, 1979)

**Week Four**  
**The Extended Case Method: Micro-Macro Linkages**


• Iddo Tavory and Stefan Timmermans, “Two Cases of Ethnography” *Ethnography* 10(3): 243-263.

Recommended:


**Week Five**  
**Objects and Units of Analysis: Varieties of Ethnography**


Recommended

• Matthew Desmond, “Relational Ethnography” *Theory and Society* 43: 547-579, 2014


**Week Six**  
**Theoretical Sampling and Comparative Analysis**


Recommended


**Week Seven**  Ethnographic Interviewing


**Week Eight**  Power, “Informed Consent,” Reflexivity in Fieldwork


Recommended:


**Week Nine**  Writing, Editing, Analyzing Fieldnotes


- Robert Blauner, "Problems of Editing 'First-Person' Sociology," *Qualitative*
Comments on each others’ fieldnotes

Recommended:

**Week Ten**  
**Concept Formation, Theory Reconstruction**

**Week Eleven**  
**“Casing” and Framing Research**

**Week Twelve**  
**Project Practicum**

**Week Thirteen**  
**Project Practicum**