

Political Ethnography (K001255)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 6.0

Study time 180 h

Course offerings in academic year 2024-2025

A (semester 1)

English

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2024-2025

Büscher, Karen

PS05

lecturer-in-charge

Suykens, Bert

PS05

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2024-2025

[Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences\(main subject Communication Studies\)](#)

crdts

offering

6

A

[Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences\(main subject Political Sciences\)](#)

6

A

[Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences\(main subject Sociology\)](#)

6

A

[Bachelor of Science in Political Science](#)

6

A

[Exchange Programme in Political and Social Sciences](#)

6

A

[Linking Course Master of Science in Conflict and Development Studies](#)

6

A

[Preparatory Course Master of Science in Conflict and Development Studies](#)

6

A

[Preparatory Course Master of Science in Sociology](#)

6

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Ethnography, politics, methodology, fieldwork

Position of the course

This is an introductory course to Political Ethnography. Through a series of lectures, practical exercises and case-studies, ethnography will be presented to the students as not only a scientific research and data collection method, but also an epistemology and a way of social and political engagement.

This course introduces students to ethnography as an analytical and epistemological lens, methodological tool to investigate political processes and a political engagement. Through a series of lectures, practical exercises and case-studies, students will learn how to approach political concepts such as the state, governance, nationalism, conflict and democracy in an ethnographic way.

Contents

The course is built on three clusters

CLUSTER 1 : General introduction to ethnography, its history in anthropology and sociology, its application in political science, its entanglement with questions of power.

CLUSTER 2 : In a second part, students will be introduced to a number of practical ethnographic research tools (participatory observation, digital ethnography).

CLUSTER 3 : In a third part, a number of political concepts (such as the state, political violence, nationalism, exile, policy-making) will be analysed in class, comparing a 'classic' political science approach to an ethnographic approach. These classes start from specific ethnographic case-studies, and can be based in

invited expert's presentations.

To familiarize students with ethnographic writing and reading, students will have to prepare for class by reading 1 mandatory reading in the form of an ethnographic text.

Students will learn how to integrate ethnographic research methods into their research design for the BA research paper.

Finally, through an individual ethnographic observation exercise, students will also learn to apply the ethnographic research method themselves and analyse the data that they collect during this exercise.

Initial competences

Attention for Erasmus: This course is part of the interuniversity Bachelor of Social Sciences program and for that reason is not open to students of other programs, and it is therefore only accessible to incoming Erasmus/Exchange students at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, and, with the permission of the lecturer.

Final competences

- 1 LO 7: possesses the methodological knowledge and practical skills of data selection and data processing that prevail within the domains of the social sciences.
- 2 LO 16: can report, independently, on his/her research in both oral and written form.
- 3 Has awareness of the social role and function of social scientists.
- 4 LO 5: knows and can explain the multilayered and complex character of social, political and media-related facts and phenomena.
- 5 LO 15: can, with limited supervision, perform the necessary methodological steps (data selection, processing and management, and analysis) to answer a research question on a social sciences research topic.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

- Lecture
 - Seminar
 - Individual practical exercise: 4 hours of participatory observation
- Lectures will provide the necessary background for the discussion about (recent) analysis and case studies during the seminar.

Study material

None

References

- Schatz, E. (Ed.). (2013). Political ethnography: What immersion contributes to the study of power. University of Chicago Press.
- Pachirat, T. (2017). Among wolves: Ethnography and the immersive study of power. Routledge.

Course content-related study coaching

Specific questions can be asked to the Lecturer(s) either before or just after the lectures.

Assessment moments

end-of-term assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

The final grade is composed based on the following categories:

- Written Exam determines 100% of the final mark.
- One question in the exam consists of the reporting of the student's individual observation exercise.
Besides basic knowledge, the exam assesses the capacity to make an informed and analytical argument on the processes discussed during the course. The individual work will assess the capacity of the student to process scientific material individually and to develop critical questions about the material. The participation assesses the role taken during discussions during the lectures and the seminar.
One question in the exam consists of the reporting of the student's individual observation exercise.

Calculation of the examination mark

Exam on 20 points.

Facilities for Working Students

Ad hoc. To be agreed on with the Lecturer-in-Charge.