



Social and Cultural Anthropology (MSc)

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen - M Social and Cultural Anthropology - 2017-2018

The Master's in Social and Cultural Anthropology provides theoretical concepts and research skills for analyzing the social and cultural complexity of human communities, like local neighbourhoods, various kinds of organizations or transnational networks of migrants in the context of a globalizing world. The theoretical training is focused on the idea and concept of human security, which is critically unpacked and used as a prism. By doing so students discover the physical and existential dimensions of human security, and their interaction. A core principle of the programme is the interdependency between social transformations and the meaning that people give to these changes. The programme offers two profiles. The Development and Social Transformations profile focuses on poverty, sustainable development and politics; the Constructing Identities and Notions of Belonging profile addresses issues of nationality, ethnicity, gender and religion. Research skills are extensively trained by designing and implementing a three months qualitative field research and linking the findings with theoretical perspectives in the final Master's thesis.

Over the past years the Master's in SCA has proven to be highly successful, in terms of the quality assessment by the accreditation organisation for higher education in the Netherlands, NVAO; in terms of success rate of students; and by intake of students. Graduates find jobs in a large variety of positions and fields.

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Master Social and Cultural Anthropology

Vakken:

Naam	Periode	Credits	Code
Field Research	Periode 3+4	18.0	S_FR
Field Research Design	Periode 1+2	12.0	S_FRD
Master's Thesis in Social and Cultural Anthropology	Ac. Jaar (september)	18.0	S_MTsca
Theoretical Orientation on Mobility 1	Periode 1	6.0	S_TOM1
Theoretical Orientation on Mobility 2	Periode 2	6.0	S_TOM2

Field Research

Vakcode	S_FR ()
Periode	Periode 3+4
Credits	18.0
Voertaal	Engels
Faculteit	Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen
Coördinator	dr. L.A. Brouwer
Examinator	dr. L.A. Brouwer
Lesmethode(n)	Hoorcollege
Niveau	500

Doel vak

Students gain experience with doing anthropological field research, which will form the empirical base of their Master's thesis.

Inhoud vak

Anthropologists distinguish themselves from other social scientists by using ethnography as the most important method of data collection. During their field research, students collect the empirical data for their Master's thesis. They experiment with various ethnographic research techniques such as participant observation, unstructured interviewing, visual methods, and elicitation. Being away from their 'normal', daily lives and environments, students also gain knowledge of and experience with different life- and communication styles, ways of dealing with local authorities and bureaucracies, culture shock, moral dilemmas, etc. During their field research, students frequently report back to their supervisors, keep meticulous records of their experiences in the form of research notes and a field diary. A strict deadline for the return is maintained, in order to make a collective start with the final phase in the Master's program: the writing up during which students write their Master's thesis.

Onderwijsvorm

Practical.

Toetsvorm

Field research report

Literatuur

None

Vereiste voorkennis

Students can only participate in this course after passing Theoretical Orientation on Mobility part 1 (S_TOM1) , and after participating in Theoretical Orientation on Mobility part 2 (S_TOM2) and Field Research Design (S_FRD).

Doelgroep

Students in the Master's in Social and Cultural Anthropology.

Overige informatie

Completion of the field research and of a field report is a requirement for participation in the course Master's Thesis in Social and Cultural Anthropology.

Field Research Design

Vakcode	S_FRD ()
Periode	Periode 1+2
Credits	12.0
Voertaal	Engels
Faculteit	Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen
Coördinator	dr. G. Sinatti
Examinator	dr. G. Sinatti
Docent(en)	prof. dr. M.P.J. van de Port, dr. G. Sinatti
Lesmethode(n)	Werkgroep, Hoorcollege
Niveau	400

Doel vak

During this course, students develop their own research topic in relation to the anthropology of mobility, diversity and development as central themes of the Master's program. They also receive practical training to enhance their knowledge and skills in qualitative data collecting methods and prepare methodological assignments. By the end of the course, they will have written a full-fledged research plan and made practical arrangements ahead of conducting field research.

Inhoud vak

During the first part of this course and building on the theoretical basis gained in the parallel course Theoretical Orientation on Mobility Part 1, students select a theme and topic for their individual research project, a geographical region, and conduct literature-based research. The course facilitates the process of selecting a research subject through weekly assignments, in-class exercises, peer review and (group) discussions that support students in developing their ideas and learning from/inspiring each other. In order to optimize results students are encouraged to participate in or link up with research projects and themes of staff members. At the end of the first part of the course, students' progress is assessed through so-called explorative paper

(6,000 words).

During the second part of the course, students are guided in developing an analytical research question, informed by their previous and continuing literature search and supported by further thematic specialization in the parallel course Theoretical Orientation on Mobility Part 2. As their research project becomes more defined, students also become acquainted with doing ethnography. This is achieved through hands-on assignments in which methods are applied in practice. They are trained in qualitative data collection methods such as open interviews and participant observation; they take part in intensive workshops on writing field notes and on visual/digital research methods; they are also sensitized to ethical and reflexive issues in doing fieldwork. In this period, students also arrange practicalities for their field research.

By the end of the course students will have written a research plan (8,000 words) containing a well-argued research problem; a critical discussion of relevant literature about the selected theme and region; an operationalization of the research question; a short description of the intended research methods; a brief reflection on research ethics pertaining to the intended research; a small report of practical preparations for the fieldwork. The plan is integrated with an annotated bibliography on the topic and geographic area consisting of twenty-five titles (five titles can be used from the course Theoretical Orientation on Mobility).

Onderwijsvorm

Practical

Toetsvorm

The final grade is based on the explorative paper (30%) and the research plan (70%). A 'fail' for the explorative paper may be compensated. All methodological assignments for the course also need to be assessed with a pass.

Literatuur

Sunstein, B.S. & Chiseri-Strater, E. (2012). *FieldWorking. Reading and Writing Research*. 4th edition. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's [the 2007 edition is accepted as well]. Available at VU bookshop at € 30).

Additional elective literature depending on topic of research and theoretical approach.

Aanbevolen voorkennis

Students also need to participate in the parallel course Theoretical Orientation on Mobility (S_TOM). Completion of this course is an entry requirement for Field Research.

Doelgroep

Obligatory course for students in the Master's in Social and Cultural Anthropology.

Intekenprocedure

In this course you can not enroll yourself for the tutorials, but you will be assigned by the course coordinator. You will find to which tutorial you are assigned in your personal schedule in VUnet. Note: You do have to register for the course, with the remaining corresponding parts!

Overige informatie

Students also need to participate in the parallel course Theoretical Orientation on Mobility (S_TOM). Completion of this course is an entry requirement for Field Research.

Master's Thesis in Social and Cultural Anthropology

Vakcode	S_MTsca ()
Periode	Ac. Jaar (september)
Credits	18.0
Voertaal	Engels
Faculteit	Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen
Coördinator	dr. Y. Saramifar
Examinator	dr. Y. Saramifar
Lesmethode(n)	Werkgroep, Practicum
Niveau	600

Doel vak

Students end the Master's program by writing a Master's thesis.

Inhoud vak

During the last three months of the Master's program (April-June), students write up their Master's thesis, in which analyze their empirical data and link it up with anthropological theory. Throughout this period students receive supervision from their individual supervisors. Besides that, they participate in thesis writing seminars, also called Graduate seminars (GS). Graduate seminars are workshops and lectures that guide them through the writing process of their their thesis, till the day of submission of their finalized version. GS will complement the supervision that you receive from your supervisor(s) and will assist you in incorporating their views during your writing process.

Onderwijsvorm

tutorial

Toetsvorm

Master's thesis (100%).

Attendance and participation in the graduate seminar is mandatory. In all parts a pass must be achieved.

Literatuur

Writing for Academic Success, Second Edition, by Gail Craswell and Megan Poore (text book)

Revisiting the boundaries between ethnography and fiction, by Didier Fassin

Anthropology as irony and philosophy, or the knots in simple ethnographic projects

By Michael Carrithers

That's enough about ethnography! By Tim Ingold

Thinking through fieldwork by Judith Okely

Aanbevolen voorkennis

Doelgroep

Students in the Master Social and Cultural Anthropology.

Theoretical Orientation on Mobility 1

Vakcode	S_TOM1 ()
Periode	Periode 1
Credits	6.0
Voertaal	Engels
Faculteit	Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen
Coördinator	dr. F. Colombijn
Examinator	dr. F. Colombijn
Docent(en)	dr. F. Colombijn
Lesmethode(n)	Hoorcollege, Studiegroep
Niveau	400

Doel vak

The principal objective of this course is that students learn how to frame the research question of the upcoming individual research projects theoretically with the help of anthropological concepts centring around the key terms 'mobility', 'diversity', and 'development'.

In order to reach this objective, students review anthropological texts, recognize 'mobility' as an omnipresent aspect of human lives, and discriminate between the multifarious forms of 'mobility' discerned in the literature. Students connect 'mobility' with various forms of social diversity, and development (in this course restricted to personal development through migration). Furthermore, students generate possible research topics that are into line with the term mobility, diversity and development, and appraise the potentials and limitations of assorted theoretical concepts applied to topical issues. They also learn to compose a clear and creative, theoretically grounded, oral or written argument incorporating the terms mobility, diversity or development.

As an additional objective, students can explain what is distinctively anthropological about their own argument, taking people's own interpretations of the world and cultural diversity as starting point of the analysis and assessing the unequal agency various actors have to make the world in accordance with their own ideas and beliefs.

Finally, students develop their critical and curious aptitude, that is, an eagerness to question both accepted, scientific explanations and prevalent assumptions about phenomena that have been defined as 'societal problems' by some actors.

Inhoud vak

The content of this course is aligned with the research programme of the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, titled 'Mobilities, Belonging and Beliefs: Confronting Global Inequalities and Insecurities' (MOBB). We take up mobility in the broadest sense of the word as a conditioning and disciplining, but also a productive and enabling process. Mobility is about migration and exchange taking place on both a local and a global scale; it can lead to transnational lives and hybridization. The research programme is also about social mobility,

life course mobility, and mobilities in terms of shifting societal stratification patterns. Concrete themes of this course could be, for instance: the flow of aspiring migrants, tourists, refugees, or popstars; the propagation of ideologies such as Human Rights and Islamic fundamentalism; the spread of contagious disease; and the circulation of iconic images, songs, brands, and goods. We will talk about routes and borders, car culture and flânerie, slow food and speed.

Mobility and inequality have a mutual impact. Multi-layered mobility processes make that some agents are better equipped to profit from the global movement of people, goods, technologies, and ideas than others. Some groups of people are forcibly uprooted and others, conversely, get involuntarily stuck. Nonetheless, also less-powerful people analyse, navigate, create, adapt, resist, avoid, plan, hope, duck, help, and so forth. Mobility lays bare the resilience and inventiveness of people confronted with a continuously changing world.

When so much is in motion, the question to whom one belongs becomes pertinent. Developing a sense of belonging inevitably rests on principles of inclusion and exclusion. Ethnicity, nationalism, and gender, through processes of (de)connecting are all manifestations of the twin processes of inclusion and exclusion. Processes of inclusion and exclusion can be reframed as questions about social cohesion and individuality.

Furthermore, regardless of the outcome of the question whether one tends to profit or to lose from these global movements, most persons will face new insecurities emanating from this mix of diversity, inequality, questions of belonging, and the challenge of understanding a world that seems in constant flux. Mobility, in short, is a crucial condition in which people shape their life worlds, confronting inequalities and uncertainties.

Onderwijsvorm

Lectures and tutorials.

Toetsvorm

Three written assignments (30% each), a correction of the first essay (5%), and a group presentation (5%). Attendance at and active participation in all lectures and tutorials is compulsory.

Literatuur

The list of readings will be announced on Canvas.

Doelgroep

Students of the Master in Social and Cultural Anthropology.

This course is also open as an elective course for students in the Master Educatie in de mens- en maatschappijwetenschappen and the Educatieve masteropleiding Leraar Voorbereidend Hoger Onderwijs in de zaakvakken

Intekenprocedure

You do have to register for the course, but you cannot enroll yourself for the tutorials; you will be assigned to a work group by the course coordinator.

Overige informatie

TOM-1 is taught simultaneously with the course Field Research Design (FRD), in which students learn methodological skills and develop their

individual research plans. TOM-1 helps to give the research plans a theoretical foundation and the readings of TOM-1 form potential material for the research plans and later the Master theses of the students.

TOM-1 will be followed by TOM-2, in which students can choose between three specializations (for details, see the course description of TOM-2):

- Mobility and diversity
- Development and sustainability
- City, space and politics

During TOM-1 students make a choice for one of these three specializations of TOM-2 and in FRD they will seek to develop their research plan into the direction of one of these three specializations.

Theoretical Orientation on Mobility 2

Vakcode	S_TOM2 ()
Periode	Periode 2
Credits	6.0
Voertaal	Engels
Faculteit	Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen
Coördinator	dr. E.W. Bal
Docent(en)	prof. dr. J.T. Sunier, prof. dr. D. Dalakoglou
Lesmethode(n)	Studiegroep
Niveau	500

Doel vak

As the main objective of this course, students develop further their skills of framing a research question theoretically, including making a well-informed assessment of the potentials and limitations of assorted theoretical concepts applied to topical issues.

Students integrate theoretical concepts of this course into their respective research plans in the making (simultaneously written in the course Field Research Design). In order to integrate insights from this course as closely as possible with their research plan, students choose between one of three specialisations of TOM-2.

Students deepen their skill of composing a clear and creative, theoretically grounded, oral or written argument. They sharpen their presentation skills and learn to cooperate in small teams when they take responsibility for giving a full lecture.

Finally, students expand their critical and curious attitude, that is, an eagerness to question both accepted, scientific explanations and prevalent assumptions about phenomena that by some actors have been defined as 'societal problems'.

Inhoud vak

The content of this course is aligned with the research programme of the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, titled 'Mobilities, Belonging and Beliefs: Confronting Global Inequalities and Insecurities' (MOBB). We take up mobility in the broadest sense of the word as a conditioning and disciplining, but also a productive and enabling process. Mobility is about migration and exchange taking place on both a

local and a global scale; it can lead to transnational lives and hybridization. The research programme is also about social mobility, life course mobility, and mobilities in terms of shifting societal stratification patterns. In order to enable the students to use as many of the theoretical notions of this course in their research plan, students can choose between three specialisations: Mobility and diversity; Development and sustainability; City, space and politics.

Mobility and diversity

Diversity has become a buzz word lately. It is often considered to be a core characteristic of modern society, and a direct consequence of globalization, mobility and the growth of urban landscapes. Diversity, be it cultural, ethnic, social or political, has been depicted as the key fundamental societal condition. In 2007 Vertovec published 'Super Diversity' in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* to denote contemporary migratory situations in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, but the term diversity has taken on a much more general meaning. During the course, we will discuss the theoretical and societal implications of diversity. We will assess its complexity given the fact that diversity is at once an analytical concept, a preferred characteristic of society, and a practice.

Development and sustainability

Historical events such as colonialism and the development of industrial capitalist economies in Europe led to a current world-system of unequal global distribution of wealth that we often call the split between developed and underdeveloped world. This phenomenon leads to very explicit political, social and economic conditions that dominate the world today. In this specialisation, we approach critically the ideas of development and their historical roots in 19th century and especially in the period after World War II. We analyse and talk about current international development policies and current trends within the development industry, approaching interactions between (inter)national stakeholders and local populations. We approach in reference to development themes such as civil society and State, global commodity chains, NGOs and International Organisations, poverty, industrialisation, urbanisation, family and kinship, religion and globalisation, structural adjustments, fair trade and ethical capitalism, but also about resistance to development, de-growth, Commons or post-development theories, to mention just a few of the issues that we will discuss.

City, space and politics

Starting from Henri Lefebvre's fundamental insight that urban space (or any space for that matter) is not a given, but a social product, we see a whole series of questions opening up: who is in control of a certain space, by what means, for what purpose, who is contesting or resisting the current use of urban space, what do these spaces mean to people, etcetera? The questions evolving around the key issue how urban space is socially produced, is very important, because urban space subsequently has an enormous impact on people's behaviour, offering chances and forcing constraints upon them. When we study urban space from a mobility perspective, topics that are particularly pertinent are, among others: flânerie and automobility, movement in and out of public spaces, making borders and boundaries, forcing people out of dwellings while others fence themselves in in gated communities, social mobility, and creative destruction.

Onderwijsvorm

Lectures and tutorials.

Toetsvorm

Four written individual assignments (80%) and Group presentation (20%).

Literatuur

To be announced in the course manual (see CANVAS).

Vereiste voorkennis

Students who want to take this course must have actively participated in "Theoretical Orientation on Mobility part 1".

Doelgroep

Students in the Master Social and Cultural Anthropology.

This course is also open as an elective course for students in the Master Educatie in de mens- en maatschappijwetenschappen and the Educatieve masteropleiding Leraar Voorbereidend Hoger Onderwijs in de zaakvakken

Intekenprocedure

In this course you can not enroll yourself for the tutorials, but you will be assigned by the course coordinator. Note: You do have to register for the course, including the remaining corresponding parts!