Basic Information

Course Title: ‘Methodology of Field Studies in Ethnology’
Lecturers: Assoc. Prof. Yelis Erolova, PhD; Assoc. Prof. Mila Maeva, PhD
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Total Teaching Hours: 30

Annotation

The course aims to introduce doctoral students to the main theoretical, methodological, and practice-oriented aspects of fieldwork in ethnology and related humanities and social sciences. The entire process of fieldwork – from the identification of the research problem and the selection of the site, subject, and field, to the analysis and interpretation of empirical material with written and visual content – is delineated.
The lecture modules focus on key conceptual approaches in qualitative research methods and basic techniques for data collection, including in-depth and biographical interviews, focus group discussions, firsthand and participant observation, self-reflection, netnography, and photo and video documentation. Preparation and organization of fieldwork, data analysis methods, and contemporary research ethics standards are also extensively discussed.
Particular attention is paid to case studies drawn from field research among diverse ethnocultural and social communities in rural and urban settings, both in known and unknown societies, in the context of everyday life, festive practices, intercultural interactions, and situations of disaster and crisis. Finally, the course emphasizes the relationship between the researcher and the communities under investigation, focusing on communication skills, informed consent, data protection, and the ethical principles of working with sensitive information.

Course content

Module 1. Theoretical Frameworks and Conceptual Approaches in Field Research.

Module 2. Development and Application of Qualitative Research Methods.

Module 3. Preparation and Organization of Fieldwork.

Module 4. Methods for Empirical Data Analysis and Interpretation.

Module 5. Contemporary Ethical Standards in Fieldwork.

Teaching and assessment methods

Teaching method: Lectures (in-person and distance learning). The course is available in both Bulgarian and English.
Assessment method: Written assignment.

Competencies acquired as a result of training

1. Competence in autonomous planning and implementation of research projects requiring field studies.

2. Enhancement of comprehensive theoretical and practical preparation for identifying and critically applying qualitative methods in field research.
3. Development of advanced and in-depth knowledge and skills in summarizing, analyzing, and classifying empirical data.
4. Understanding and application of contemporary ethical standards for conducting fieldwork within communities and interaction with interlocutors/respondents.
5. Acquisition of research skills in an interdisciplinary and intercultural academic setting.

Literature:

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Additional information

The course is targeted at doctoral students in ethnology, cultural anthropology, sociology, psychology, and other fields within the humanities and social sciences.