

# Stories in the Field

## Methods in Creative Ethnographic Journaling

*a thematic unit of the  
Off the Beaten Track field school 2019  
[www.anthropologyfieldschool.org](http://www.anthropologyfieldschool.org)*

### **General Information**

As ethnographers, the ambiguity of fieldwork may simultaneously be one of the most frustrating and productive spaces for generating knowledge. We constantly ask ourselves questions regarding how to talk about our experiences, how to take notes on those experiences, and perhaps even more how to write "good" reflections. When we work to engage with our observations in new ways, answers and insights become clearer than when we attempt to "do" fieldwork and reflection in the "right" way. This thematic unit, which can be tailored to fit any project, provides an opportunity to observe and reflect on the field through creative forms.

The aim of this project is to present participants with methods to creatively reimagine their field notes and experiences through brief writing experiments. This is achieved through a focus on storytelling - the stories our informants tell, the stories of interactions and observations in the field, and the stories of our own reflections present in notes and journals. Each module serves as a vehicle for further interpretation and unexpected insight. Students may participate in one or all of the modules depending on their own interests and field methods. It is the ultimate aim of the project that participants will finish with a better understanding of how to make our ethnographic fieldwork and writing personal, innovative and story-driven.

### **Goals**

- Learn to creatively engage with your myriad experiences and thoughts while in the field both as a way to practice ethnographic observation and self-reflection.
- Explore ways to rethink field notes, journaling and the writing process in such a way as to produce more interesting material for ethnographer and audience.

- Expand your notion of what might "count" as productive fieldwork or ethnography.
- Learn to share experience with others through a focus on storytelling rather than pressure to impress with "results".

### **Directed at**

Everyone with a genuine interest in creatively thinking about fieldwork and ethnography is welcome to apply. No particular experience is strictly needed, but an enthusiasm for personal engagement is encouraged. In order to be a part of this project, please request the application form for the Off the Beaten Track program on our website. Please note that it is mandatory to contact the leading researcher beforehand concerning your research ideas.

### **Leading researcher**

Hannah Howard (Boston University)  
[hghoward@bu.edu](mailto:hghoward@bu.edu)

### **Program director**

Sam Janssen  
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### **Program Cost**

3.250 euros  
Discounts and scholarships are available.

### **Application & information**

[www.anthropologyfieldschool.org](http://www.anthropologyfieldschool.org)

