

## Teaching Fieldwork Experience: Experiment, Embodiment, Emotions

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### Abstract

The emotional and sensual dimension of fieldwork, as well as the positionality of the researcher are often debated and considered crucial in anthropology. We assume that “good ethnography” includes sensory and bodily fieldwork experience. But how do we address these issues in teaching? How can we teach students to notice, analyse and make sense of their bodily experiences? How do we encourage the awareness of positionality? What practical steps can we take in designing suitable learning experiences that address these points? In this paper, we share our experience of teaching adapted courses that provide students with fieldwork encounters, where the significance of embodied knowledge can be explored, and their ethnographic awareness cultivated. Basing our analysis on the undergraduate Ethnographic Lab and Ethnographic Methods courses taught at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Warsaw, we argue that it is important to put students in uncomfortable or unusual fieldwork and teaching situations, forcing them out of their comfort zone so that they experience fieldwork encounters both emotionally and bodily. Recordings of these encounters and the bodily reactions of themselves and others constitute a core part of the data to be gathered, which prevents students from focusing solely on narratives and discourses.

**Keywords:** ethnography, fieldwork, emotions, bodily experience, positionality, teaching.

### Introduction

The significance of emotional and sensual dimensions of fieldwork, as well as of the positionality of the researcher, are often debated in anthropology. A broad body of literature engages with the bodily, emotional, and sensual aspects of fieldwork (eg. Okely 2007; Okely, Callaway 1992; Csordas 1994). We share certain assumptions held about what a good fieldworker is: namely, a researcher well immersed in the field, locally connected, who participates in the daily life of his/her participants, helps with daily chores and pays attention to reciprocity and ethical issues emerging during fieldwork. For us, “good ethnography” is experiential ethnography, though we are aware not all anthropologists share this assumption.

In our endeavour to make “good ethnographers” out of our BA students we aim to help them understand the significance of embodied knowledge and cultivate bodily and emotional awareness. These aspects of fieldwork are often overlooked in teaching and assumed to only come from practice. Anthropologists like to refer in their writings to bodily experiences and acquisition of embodied knowledge, deriving examples from their past experiences (Okely 2007). But is this area restricted to “experienced fieldworkers”, who have learned, usually over time, to relate to their bodily experiences, and to analyse emotions, their own as well as those of their interlocutors? BA students are just starting their journey in anthropology, and they have limited time to develop these skills. In this paper we ask the following questions: (1) How can we teach students to notice, analyse, and make sense of their bodily experiences, and to identify what to look for and where? (2) How do we encourage awareness of positionality, in particular the impact of their gender, age, and class on the process of acquiring knowledge in the field and later (re)presenting this knowledge in writing? (3) What practical steps can we take to design suitable learning experiences that address these two points?

In this paper, we address the challenges and difficulties the students face at the beginning of their research activities by proposing possible solutions developed by us and our colleagues. We will provide examples from our own teaching experience, as well as examples of teaching and carrying out fieldwork, both with students and by students alone. We argue that in order to teach BA students to do fieldwork we need to encourage them to refocus their attention from “collecting information”, to being with people: they have to immerse themselves in the lives/worlds of those researched, together with their emotions, prejudices, bodies, and gendered spaces of

those encounters. To do so, they need to move out of their comfort zone and acquire their own experience of fieldwork encounters, both emotionally and bodily.

The paper is based on our teaching experiences running both Ethnographic Methods classes and Ethnographic Labs. It reflects on our attempt to introduce sensorial aspect of fieldwork to an Ethnographic Methods class in 2017 and compares experiences with Ethnographic Lab sessions. Karolina began teaching Ethnographic Labs in 2006 and ran the program for three years. Iwona, began teaching Ethnographic Labs in 2009, running three courses before going on to teach an Ethnographic Methods course from 2015. The experiences of other Lab teachers have also been taken into account.<sup>1</sup> However, the views we present here are our own and it is worth noting that not all our colleagues at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology share the same views on fieldwork, and they can have different evaluation strategies.

### **Introducing methods of ethnographic fieldwork**

There are multiple books on how to prepare and conduct research, whom to approach first in a community and whom to avoid, or how to formulate good questions (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007; Russel 2006). While these are all very instructive for the purpose of teaching – particularly when combined with illustrations from our own field anecdotes – they do not, for the most part, address the practical aspects of the bodily and sensorial dimensions of fieldwork. This observation made us introduce an experimental element in the Ethnographic Methods class in 2017 to address this problem. We tested it across four academic years, slightly modifying the module. Currently, the Ethnographic Methods class is an obligatory 30 hours class for the 1st semester of the 1st year BA students, usually aged 19-21. During the first 20 hours of the class, the students learn about participant observation, unstructured interviews, recording, asking questions. They must also make mid-semester observational trip to a bazaar/an open-air market. The main emphasis of the trip is placed on writing “good field notes” - that is, notes that convey emotions and bodily reactions of both the researchers and their research partners. Field notes should be taken on a regular basis and prepared soon after the encounter; they can take the form of a written diary, pictures, photos, or other forms of expression. The students have their first attempt at writing field notes after the mid-semester visit to the outdoor markets. The field notes they write are later read and individually discussed with the teacher, who asks additional questions about what else could have possibly been included. During the Ethnographic Methods class, students also acquire basic theoretical knowledge of a phenomenological approach to anthropology, particularly the pre-textual processes of building anthropological knowledge, like perceiving, noting, listening and sensing.<sup>2</sup>

After this preparation, by the end of the semester, the students (in groups of two or three) are instructed to find a group or community that fascinates them, one they have been curious about, or maybe even a bit afraid of. They are encouraged to pick groups that might challenge their world views: for example, if they never understood right-wing groups, or if they did not feel at ease with left-wing activists, they should go and talk to them. It was pedagogically important to us that student pushed themselves “out of their comfort zone” but did not put themselves in harm’s way.

Students prepare questions in groups and present them in class, prior to setting off to the field to conduct in-depth ethnographic interviews (either recorded or not), and complete a participant observation of their chosen community. Those in groups of three have to conduct two interviews and complete one participant observation or one interview and two participant observations.<sup>3</sup> Apart from asking questions on the chosen topic, they are told to pay attention to bodily reactions and emotions – not only those of the people they talk to, but also their own – and record the moments that came as a surprise to them, moments when they realized or understood something about the world of the person they were talking to. Conducting online interviews is not, therefore, presented as a viable option. We share an assumption (that may not be as popular among our colleagues) that you cannot conduct ‘good online ethnography’ with no prior experience of being in the field. Here an exception was made in the times of a pandemic – the students decided for themselves if they would prefer to conduct either an outdoor interview with young people (for epidemiological reasons), or an online video interview. The majority chose the first option, sometimes ending up indoors due to the insistence of the research participants.

The main goal of this exercise is to encourage the students to encounter people who may have different epistemologies, who may understand the world differently because of their class, gender, ethnicity, age, social, or urban vs rural differences. To protect research participants, the students were discouraged from looking for groups or people that were vulnerable or underprivileged.<sup>4</sup> If some students however, insisted on doing so, they received additional in-person instructions.

In Warsaw, most anthropology students come from a middle-class, urban background, and are ethnically and racially homogeneous (that is, White/Caucasian and Polish, with rare exceptions). Encountering difference was intended to impel students to reflect on their own positionality and possible biases. Also, we hoped such encounters would trigger the students to reflect on their emotions and bodily reactions, especially if they found the encountered opinions distasteful, or if it put them in uncomfortable or unfamiliar situations. Transforming our Ethnographic Methods class in this way did raise several concerns.

We initially worried that the students would fail to approach people or groups outside their “social bubble” (since even some experienced researchers can struggle to do so), and that they would end up interviewing their peers, or people from the same social background – an option we allowed to avoid additional stress for those who felt they were not yet ready. A more serious concern was, how to safeguard students and maintain high ethical standards of fieldwork among those with no prior experience. Basic ethical issues regarding fieldwork encounters and the ethics of representation and anonymization of data, were discussed with students. The students were instructed to inform interlocutors about the purpose of their encounter/interview and ask for consent to record. We also recognised that one of the biggest concerns in such a teaching approach is the safety of both the students and the research participants. Keeping safe, and gendered violence in particular, was thus discussed in class (Kloss 2017), and the students were also told to work in pairs or teams of three.

The results were surprising. The students took the challenge seriously, approaching a diverse collection of people: grave diggers, nuns, pornographic actors, former Jehovah witnesses, members of Christian charismatic movements, Catholic missionaries, members of a Buddhist centre, asexual people, Polish radical right-wing organizations, fortune-tellers, ticket inspectors, former prisoners, Burlesque dancers, Drag performers, football fans, squat dwellers, sex workers, former SB agents<sup>5</sup>, Iraq war veterans, and members of Opus Dei. Around 75% of them arranged meetings through Facebook, the rest through acquaintances or family. Most (60-75%) met in cafes, with the remainder meeting at homes (where safe) or workplaces.

The interviews conducted were of varying quality and reflected students’ inexperience. We observed oversights, such as failure to ask understandable questions, follow an interesting thread or ask prompting questions to get the interlocutor back to the story, as well as difficulties with managing stress and silence. Also, despite learning about the importance of the off-record conversations, they often failed to seize the opportunity to continue their interview off-tape. For example, one group went to a homeless shelter. One of the inhabitants agreed to talk to them and they recorded an interview with him in a seminar room of the organization. When they finished and turned the dictaphone off, the man asked if they wanted to go and have some tea in his room. The students kindly declined, which they later regretted, understanding that they had missed an opportunity for a more embodied observation and potential further disclosure.

When analyzing their mistakes, the students easily pointed out both their own and their interlocutors’ nervousness. They described body cues (“she sat on the brink of the chair; she played with her hair; he tapped his fingers; he avoided eye contact”) and traced the moments where they asked the question that did not feel right (being too intimate, too judgmental, or somehow out of place), or moments when the interlocutor eluded answering their questions.

In academic years 2016/17 and 2017/2018, the students read and discussed texts about embodiment and pre-textual ethnographies (Rakowski, 2006, 2011)<sup>6</sup> before going to “the field”, while in 2018/2019 and 2019/2020, we postponed these readings for “after the field” (as mentioned earlier, the students were instructed to pay attention to bodily elements and already had some knowledge from other classes). There was a noticeable difference in the way the students read and reacted to these readings. In the first two groups, the sensual and emotional aspects mentioned in the readings were discussed, but unsurprisingly, the students predominantly pointed to the field examples from the field-site mentioned in the text, only in some cases sharing their own experiences of travel encounters, or meetings with family members of different social background than their own.

In the latter groups, when the students could draw on their personal experience to understand the text, the discussions were richer, the bodily experiences of the authors were compared with their own field encounters. The students realized that they cannot understand meditation merely by asking its participants what it is and how it feels: that understanding a religious movement will be less likely successful if we only conduct interviews in cafes, without participating in gatherings or ceremonies. Many students came up with ideas on what they could

have done – or would do if they continued the research – in order to get better insight and acquire more sensorial experiences, for example: attend a Jehovah Witness or young Christian movements' prayers and pay attention to the rhythms of the day; help the squatters run the café; go to a football match and pay attention to the stadium dynamics.

Overall, the aim of the Methods class was to encourage students to leave their comfort zone and try to understand a different social reality. By focusing on encounters with individuals and their bodily reactions (rather than only on the chosen topic of the conversation) the students were able to better understand both the role of embodiment in fieldwork and another person's perspective. They realized what it means and how much attention it requires to try to be conscious of another social reality, and how one has to prepare in order to grasp as much of it as possible.

## **Experiences in the Ethnographic Laboratory**

Ethnographic Lab is the most important course during BA studies at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw. It is a 2 year-long obligatory course that aims to give students the possibility to learn and experience ethnographic fieldwork more deeply and intensively than during the Ethnographic Methods class. The course was introduced as an experimental project in the 1970s by the then director, professor Zofia Sokolewicz. At the beginning, it used to be an auxiliary tool for early career scholars to develop their own projects. It was also seen as a space for intellectual freedom, an act of political, oppositional activity, and a shift from the Marxist focus on material conditions of being (Halemba, Smyrski 2015: 51). The content of the "Ethnographic Lab" used to reflect contemporary changes in theory and research; for example, in the 1980/90's it mirrored the political and social shifts to focus on ethnicity, religiosity, borderland relations, and nationalism, among others (cf. Kościańska, Malewska-Szalygin, Radkowska-Walkowicz 2015). During this time, it also expanded to allow students to go abroad. Because of its proximity and due to financial limits, the students started to conduct their initial research in Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus, and later also in former Yugoslavia, Romania, Georgia and Moldova. At the same time, most Labs were also offered in small towns or villages in Poland, and only lately 'at home', in Warsaw.

The Ethnographic Lab lasts 4 semesters, starting from the second semester of the first year. The themes change from year to year, depending on the teachers' interest and expertise and contemporary changes in theory and research. Themes also reflect new socially important questions, like immigration to Poland, reproductive rights, ecology or, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. Although Labs are team projects, their themes are always very broad in order to allow the students leeway to choose their own topics within them. Projects have included "Familiarizing the space among migrants and refugees. Anthropology of mobility in the area of Warsaw"; "Music, soundscape, tourism. Sound anthropology on the Polish-Belarusian border in the Hajnówka region"; "The economy of favours in Zakarpattia"; "Life on the border – transnational practices of the inhabitants of the German-Polish borderland"; "Miracles, pilgrimage practices and the embodied religiosity of Catholic communities in the Rzeszów region, Poland".<sup>7</sup>

We usually offer three to four Lab projects per year, including at least one in Warsaw<sup>8</sup>, for those who are interested in urban anthropology, but are either unwilling or not able to spend 4-5 weeks in the field. Some Lab topics are organized at the field sites of the instructors, who have an established network of contacts in place; other teachers simply follow their side-interests, since due to financial, linguistic, or security reasons it is not always possible to take the students to one's own field site. Students who choose a Lab in a foreign country are supposed to take a relevant language class (Macedonian or Ukrainian classes are provided by our institute).

Within the team project, students choose their own individual topics. Then they go through all the stages of research process (from identifying research questions, to methodological design, collection and analysis, and finally writing the results) under the supervision of one or two teachers per a group of up to 12 students. The Ethnographic Lab engages both teachers and students for two years, and to a large extent shapes further research interests of the students. At the same time, the success of students' work depends on teachers' engagement, their ethnographic skills, and dedication. It is always a big challenge for teachers to be involved in a 2 year-long project that includes field trips during the summertime, and demands more commitment than a single, 1-semester course. Apart from fieldwork, the Lab consists of weekly seminars, conducted by the same teacher, where participants discuss literature relevant to the topic of the group, deepen their knowledge about the studied area, and discuss the stages of writing. The result of the student's work is a "laboratory essay", presented to the public after the end of the fourth semester. The presentations usually take place in one of the university's bigger halls,

with the students, their friends, colleagues from our institute, and research participants all being invited. During a one-semester seminar the laboratory essay is further developed into a BA coursework – the main requirement (along with an oral exam) for the BA degree. In rare cases laboratory essay almost meet the whole requirement for the BA coursework, more often, however, it constitutes around 70% of this work (usually more thorough analysis is needed). In this way, the Laboratory is the most important course during studies. Furthermore, it is quite common to publish a book or a special issue from this student BA work

During the entire laboratory project, the students take four trips to the field (usually 7-10 days long) and are required to obtain a sufficient amount of ethnographic materials in the form of interviews and field notes. We try to establish a kind of equilibrium between recorded interviews and observations based on non-verbal bodily experiences and emotions. We encourage the students to adjust their topic accordingly to both the field and their interlocutors, as well as to their own interests. We advise them to keep an open mind and change the topic if it turns out to be irrelevant to the observed and experienced reality. This teaches them to be open-minded and attentive, to listen and ask rather than merely acquire information. We also encourage students to choose socially meaningful projects, important for their research partners and the contemporary social, cultural, and political situation. In one of our laboratory projects (“Multi-ethnic neighbourly relations in Macedonian-Albanian borderland” coordinated by Karolina Bielenin-Lenczowska in 2006-2008), we came to the village to research inter-ethnic relations between Albanians and Macedonians, but the village was largely depopulated and the locals explained that we should return during the holidays, as most of the former inhabitants of the municipality migrated to Italy and other countries and would be back only then. Students had to revise their knowledge and their planned topics, and follow the people (cf. Marcus 1995). We also had to revise the literature read during the classes, focusing more on migration and transnationalism, and we returned to the village during the summer. Within this project, two students chose to research seasonal labour migration, and two others focused on gender relations linked to transnational ways of living.

One of the significant aims of the Lab experience and the teaching is to encourage students to focus on micro interactions and bodily experiences, a practice that is often developed by a ‘good’ ethnographer. The following examples demonstrate how students can successfully develop this sensitivity, even during brief fieldwork encounters.

During the Lab coordinated by Karolina Bielenin-Lenczowska in Western Macedonia (2006-2008), one of the students, Anna Zadrożna, researched gender relations among the local youth. By including analysis of her own experiences of meeting with young men, sitting in a cafe, or simply spending leisure time with them, she was able to observe gender and ethnic relations. As she wrote in a paper based on the research:

Although I was a foreigner, men notoriously paid for my coffee and drinks, no matter if they were sitting with me, or at the next table. They used to joke: “here women do not pay”. I received notorious “discounts” from the cafe owners. It also happened that they refused to accept the payment, justifying that they had “special offer for students”. (...) When buying me a coffee, men symbolically bought my company, thus establishing a relationship of subordination and domination (Zadrożna 2008: 135).

Another student, Jagoda Schmidt, participated in a laboratory in the Republic of Georgia coordinated by Iwona Kaliszewska. She analyses her experience of fieldwork in Georgia between March 2013 and December 2014, where she observed the beneficiaries of a development project aimed at supporting horse tourism.<sup>9</sup> In her BA essay she writes:

During subsequent visits to Georgia, the attitudes of the beneficiaries towards me changed. [...] With Tengo, we found a common ground in regard to horses. Although the Caucasian horse riding style differs from the one I knew from Polish horse riding schools, we both shared a particular kind of attention and intuition, we sensed the horse’s character, we understood why it does not want to walk, or what it can be afraid of. [...] Through showing my riding abilities I entered a male domain [women in Georgia do not ride, nor do they take care of horses]. Tengo started to treat me more like his male colleague than a tourist that has to be taken care of [...]. During this trip and the subsequent ones I was treated as a “cultural man” (cf. Hryciuk 2008). When we drank beer after training, Tengo even said that I’m their (male)friend rather than (female)friend. However, apart from the horse-related situations, they treated me as a woman: my food was served before theirs, they would let me go first through the door, or paid for me in the cafe [all of which are commonplace practices in Georgia]. Although Tengo found me self-sufficient in regard to horse riding, in other spheres of life he still took care of me and treated me rather like a daughter (cf. Hryciuk 2008), inquiring if I am not hungry, or if I did not forget a jacket for a trip in the mountains. (Schmidt 2015: 13-14).

The Ethnographic Lab approach comes with risks and difficulties. It is difficult to evaluate and measure students' immersion and whether they can make sense of their experiences. It is also more difficult to measure and evaluate field notes, diaries and observations than transcribed interviews. To minimize the risks of students being left with little or no material for writing the BA work after 4-5 weeks spent in the field, the teachers use various methods. This can include, for example, encouraging reflective writing: after the first week/10 days of fieldwork, the students are asked to write a short essay titled "Me in the field", which includes their first impressions, disappointments, and research ideas.<sup>10</sup> This gives us an idea of how much help they need, both in the field and in the analysis. Alternatively, we might ask them to deliver a number of transcribed interviews, field notes, and fragments of a diary (here they may erase parts that they consider too intimate), or other forms of expression, such as videos, photographs, or other visual representations, to ensure they are regularly producing work.

Ethnographic Lab also generates security issues, often more profound than those encountered during the shorter Methods class. In non-local Labs the students live either in a hostel/B&B or with families local to the area. Preparation of this includes discussing gendered violence, along with discussion about local cultural practices and expectations (see the first case). In some cases (for example Labs in Georgia and Macedonia), the students were required to report to the instructor, or at least to a colleague, for every trip on where exactly they were going, and always take mobile phones with them. Generally, regardless of the context, if they were unsure of the interlocutors, they were advised to go in pairs.

Another serious concern is posed by financial problems. If funding is not available, laboratories need to be organized 'at home' - in Warsaw, where the students live, study, or work, and have other obligations. Our experience shows that while the 'local' fieldwork can be equally valuable, it is easier to teach students to be attentive and convey their experience once they are immersed in the field day and night – either in a small town or village elsewhere in Poland, or abroad. During non-local field trips, they can meet with the instructor every day and share their experiences, and get immediate feedback on what to pay special attention to, what may be potentially significant, where to look, and what not to overlook. In contrast, when fieldwork is 'at home' students (and instructors) can have other commitments that make them reluctant to meet daily.

It is worth noting the impact of Covid-19 pandemic which has proved a challenge to both the Ethnographic Methods class and Ethnographic Labs. During the Methods class in 2020/2021, the majority of students, despite being presented with an online alternative, chose to conduct an interview in person (with young people outdoors). During the academic year 2019/2020, 2 out of 3 Labs managed to make a field trip in summer 2020 (when infection risks were very low) and one Lab postponed their field trip. Fully switching to online data collection methods for the Labs was never seriously considered – on-line encounters while valid, are different kinds of encounter – online methods do not allow for an embodied participation and bodily experiences in the field, so they were treated like complementary methods. We have, however, temporarily resigned from offering Labs abroad because of unstable pandemic or political situation.

## **Conclusions**

In this paper, we share our experience of running two courses: "Ethnographic Methods" and Ethnographic Labs. These two courses are intended to teach students good fieldwork practices, with particular emphasis on noticing, analyzing and making sense of their bodily experiences, identifying where and what to look for, and developing an awareness of positionality. Overall, the Lab extends the experience gained during the Ethnographic Methods class by developing it one step further.<sup>11</sup>

As instructors, we tend to think that it is better for undergraduate students to choose an easy field site – one that is not too remote, where the interlocutors speak the same language, where the access to the group is not too difficult. However, our teaching experiences show that the opposite may be true: that what is most important is the ability of students to immerse themselves in fieldwork, and this is more likely to occur when they choose their research topic themselves, particularly when they are challenged to go beyond their comfort zone and choose topics that are interesting for both the students and the people they talk to. Our experiment of introducing a challenging fieldwork component to the Ethnographic Methods class, and the experiences of Ethnographic Labs in Macedonia and Georgia that we recall here (as well as experiences running Labs in Ukraine, and in a small suburban Polish village), show that students felt challenged and compelled to fulfil tasks that were inspiring, even if they were difficult. Potential difficulty should not therefore be a reason for discouraging student research. The only caveat to that, is with regard to language: here our experience shows that it is better to conduct Labs in

countries where languages are similar to Polish (the students' native language), so that the students are able to establish a communicative knowledge of the language quickly. We found it was impossible to learn Georgian in a year, so in this case the students took classes of Russian, which enabled them to communicate, and they also used English, but we recognize that it would generally be better to use the first language of research participants where possible. Nevertheless, while the Labs in the villages or smaller towns in Poland, presented no language barrier, they were still challenging when taking into account the cultural differences from the predominantly urban background of the students.

Experiences from both the Ethnographic Methods class and the Ethnographic Labs show that students who were more emotionally engaged in their task attained better results – the more fascinated the students were, the better the conversation or participant observation turned out. Additionally, a complete immersion, day and night, in a very different environment, made it easier to trigger critical reflection, particularly on bodily experiences. Our findings show that when one steps out of one's comfort zone, encountering people with different epistemologies and world-views that challenge our own taken-for-granted assumptions about social reality, the emotionality and bodily reaction of fieldwork becomes more visible. This is echoed in the classic ethnographic encounter, where anthropologists have traditionally sought out 'the other' as opposed to doing research 'at home', as a way of reflecting on what we culturally take for granted (for example Herzfeld, 2001; Hannerz 2006). With the more recent renewed interest in anthropology at home or anthropology from home, especially during pandemic times (cf. Chattopadhyay 2021; Higgins, Martin, Vesperi 2020), as well as the more recent political polarization of the society (and often even dehumanization of people holding radically different world-views), reflecting on what we culturally and politically take for granted seems particularly relevant for both academic and social debates.

We conclude that we are less likely to teach students how to carry out successful fieldwork if we impose a research topic on them. Good fieldwork requires great levels of engagement, passion, and empathy. While there are certainly problems with encouraging undergraduates into more difficult fieldwork encounters, and by no means do we expect it to work for everybody, we do nonetheless think that undergraduate students should have the possibility to choose more challenging topics of research, in accordance with their individual capabilities and interests. Students need to be immersed in research that interests them in order to see beyond the questionnaires, and dive deeper to unpick the information and narratives they receive. Students should also be immersed in strikingly different experiences, to emotionally and bodily encounter other people as they are embedded in their everyday lives and worlds. Without this, we find it unlikely that they will notice and pay attention to their own bodily reactions and emotions, and try to make sense of them.

We hope that our designing and re-designing of the two courses can offer some ideas for anthropology BA studies in other educational units, as well as stir a debate about future improvements and development of such methodology classes and the challenges of teaching fieldwork more generally.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Especially Helena Patzer and Iwa Kolodziejska, with whom we co-taught Labs, but also Renata Hryciuk and Anna Horolets. The issue of how to run a Lab was also extensively discussed in our department during teachers' meetings.

<sup>2</sup> They read and discuss texts by Kirsten Hastrup (1995), Thomas Csordas (1994) or Michael Jackson (2013), and our colleague Tomasz Rakowski (2006; 2011) (the choice varies).

<sup>3</sup> These criteria were slightly modified over the four years, and finally this combination proved to balance the workload and knowledge acquisition best.

<sup>4</sup> This was not planned right from the beginning, it is an improvement from 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Secret security services in the socialist times in Poland.

<sup>6</sup> The readings are in Polish, but similar texts may be found in Rakowski and Patzer 2018.

<sup>7</sup> More information about Ethnographic Labs' objectives, and about realized topics (in Polish) <https://www.etnologia.uw.edu.pl/dla-studentow/studia/laboratoria-etnograficzne> (accessed: 11.01.2021).

<sup>8</sup> For example, "Anthropology of (in)equalities: food and foodways in Warsaw" or "Urban greenery: (not) people, devices, relationships"

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.kaukaz.net/cgi-bin/bloxom.cgi/polish/konic/project>

<sup>10</sup> Since each Lab is a very individual project, this requirement was introduced by Iwona Kaliszewska and Iwa Kolodziejska in their 3<sup>rd</sup> Lab.

<sup>11</sup> The Lab was run long before the experiment was introduced into the Ethnographic Method class. The latter lasted only half of the semester and included basic information about methods with or without the fieldwork (usually interviews).

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