

## **Fieldwork for ASR PhD Students**

Fieldwork is a central research component for PhD students in ASR (Anthropology and Sociology of Religion). Most students will pursue fieldwork for their dissertation for a period of at least 12 months. While the longest period of fieldwork is usually after exams, shorter preliminary fieldwork trips during the prior summers are highly encouraged. During the dissertation writing period, shorter follow-up trips may also be necessary in consultation with one's advisor. For MA students applying to the PhD program, fieldwork experience and language training are not required prior to doctoral study; however, applicants with fieldwork experience and language training for their proposed dissertation project are often in a stronger position in the admissions process.

## **Language Training**

All Divinity School PhD students must demonstrate reading competence in French and German. Students may meet the requirement by taking the University's language exam, or receiving a grade of "A" in the Reading for Research Purposes courses. In some situations, it may be possible for a student, in consultation with the advisor, to petition the Committee on Degrees to consider competence in another research language instead of either French or German. For more, see

<http://divinityannouncements.uchicago.edu/div/degreeprogramsandrequirements/>

In addition, PhD students must achieve competency in the language(s) relevant to their fieldwork. The University of Chicago offers instruction for an impressive number of languages:

<http://humanities.uchicago.edu/about/languages-uchicago>. In addition, the University Language Center is a helpful resource for students: <http://languages.uchicago.edu/>

Each winter quarter, the FLAS (Foreign Language Area Studies) summer and academic year fellowships are advertised. For U.S. citizens and students pursuing language study at the intermediate and advanced level, FLAS fellowships are a good resource. For more, see <https://grad.uchicago.edu/fellowship/foreign-language-area-studies-flas-summer-and-academic-year-fellowships/>

## **Finding Funding**

Students are responsible for securing their own funding at each stage of their fieldwork, including both preliminary summer trips and longer-term fieldwork for dissertation research. Given the competitive nature of grant awards (internal and external), students are highly advised to identify appropriate funding institutions and prepare their applications at least one year before their planned departure. Students must consult with their advisors about potential fellowships, grants, and awards. In addition, the following sites are useful resources for exploring funding opportunities:

<https://grad.uchicago.edu/fellowships/>

<https://anthropology.uchicago.edu/content/university-funding-sources>

<https://anthropology.uchicago.edu/content/external-funding-sources>  
<https://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/?source=forumsnav>

## **Preparing for Fieldwork**

All students who plan to conduct research on human subjects must submit an application to the University of Chicago's Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB). While expedited reviews may be requested, students are advised to submit applications at least 3 months prior to fieldwork. For details, see <https://sbsirb.uchicago.edu/>

Students are responsible for securing the necessary visas and permits to conduct fieldwork in the countries of interest in a timely fashion. During fieldwork, they should also inform the U.S. (or other relevant) embassy officials of their residency, so the embassy knows where to locate them in the event of an emergency.

The University of Chicago's Travel Medicine Clinic offers advice about travel health risks and provides necessary vaccinations. Before fieldwork, students should be sure that their health insurance covers any potential medical costs incurred outside the U.S. <https://www.uchicagomedicine.org/conditions-services/infectious-diseases/travel-medicine-clinic>

## **Responsibilities during Fieldwork**

Given how crucial data collection is, students are responsible for backing up their field notes, photos and all relevant fieldwork material on a regular basis. Maintaining contact with advisors during the fieldwork process for advice and consultation is highly recommended. Students are responsible for providing the Divinity School with a field address or appropriate contact during the fieldwork period. While away from campus, students must maintain their good standing with the University.

## **Additional Resources About Fieldwork**

Professor Doostdar regularly offers the course Ethnographic Methods. It is highly encouraged that ASR students take it before embarking on fieldwork. In addition, the following books are useful resources to consult in preparation for the field:

Briggs, Charles, 1986. *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*.

Dewalt Kathleen and Bille Dewalt. 2002. *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*.

Sanjek, Roger. 1990. *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology*.

Wolcott, Harry. 2001. *The Art of Fieldwork*.