



**Netherlands Institute at Athens (NIA) in collaboration with the University of Leiden
& Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU)**

First Summer School on Multimodal Anthropology
1-24 July, 2022
(Athens & Skyros island, Greece)

Urgent Multimodal Ethnographies of Greece

Applicants:

Students at last year BA, Master & PhD students in
Social/Political Sciences & Fine Arts

The **Netherlands Institute at Athens** in collaboration with staff from the department of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology of the **University of Leiden** and the department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the **Free University Amsterdam (VU)** organize this intensive three-week course on **visual anthropology**.

The scope

Anthropology and ethnography have been transformed in recent years drawing from a number of critical traditions. Visual anthropology has also changed as film, photography, multimedia and visual documents can produce new forms of storytelling and experimental ethnographies. At the heart of anthropological work is the study of politics in the widest sense of the term, from gender and ethnic inequalities to neoliberal capitalism and social movements. Our research will be based on a vision to participate each time anthropologically in a small collaborative shared community project, in which all students will be able to offer a part of the ethnographic mosaic



through various multimodal methodologies. Depending on the circumstances the summer school products will be authored by the students, staff and interlocutors. The urgency of each topic and location is related to an evaluation of the circumstances and the social dynamics that our research collaborators bring to focus each year. Our aim is to bring together ethnography and multimodal methodologies with the urgent political matters of our post-covid era. Finally, we intend to examine in detail larger global or regional processes and power relationships at play and how these unfold and influence the smaller networks we study.

On multimodality

The future of visual anthropology depends partly on how its practitioners engage with new visual and digital media and technologies

(Pink 2006: 105)

Visual and textual language are two media with very distinct qualities, different and wide possibilities. Each of the two offers unique features in ethnographic research. The role of image in the creation of anthropological knowledge that goes beyond the written format has been an important issue of concern in the past decades (Clifford 1986; Grimshaw 2001; Ruby 2005; Macdougall 2006). However, when we combine visual and textual ethnographic strategies, we can overcome the differences and distinctions between image and text. As Pink (2004) notes, through visual anthropology it is possible to highlight the interdependence of image and text for the production of anthropological knowledge. Alternative methodologies and research methods that have emerged through visual ethnography -over the last 15 years-beyond the bipolar text-image play a key role in experimenting and expanding methods in qualitative research (Westmoreland: 2017; Varvantakis & Nolas, 2018).

The (relative) democratization of the media, the possibility of producing and disseminating anthropological content in digital media, the new possibilities and the shift to more collaborative models of quality research, the active involvement of research participants in data production, the development of new audiences and the use of new media in research reflect the radical transformations that have taken place in media ecology and the expansion of new ethnographic research practices that emerge utilizing the methodological heritage of visual anthropology (Collins et al, 2017; Westmoreland, 2017; Varvantakis & No.201).

The renaming of the section "Visual Anthropology" to "Multimodal Anthropologies" in 2017 on the website of the American Journal of the Anthropological Society is a major global development and demonstrates a methodological shift in anthropology to a post-textual era. Anthropologists, in the context of multimodality, make use of participatory audiovisual methods and multimedia technologies to collaborate with



the communities/ networks they study around the world in the research process (Harper & Gubrium 2017). If we take all of the above into account and think about the field of anthropology and what Manovich (2002) claimed twenty years ago, the logic of organizing a digital database would change forever the way people tell stories (Papailia 2018) and consequently the way in which anthropologists write ethnographies.

The moment that Manovich described is here. Surrounded by smartphones, social media applications, digital tools, and living in a globalized reality where the local and the hyperlocal, we and others are being re-defined, it is necessary to reconsider the classic holistic approach to ethnography with "hidden" datasets and monographs. We can now see ethnographies as open/accessible files, as a participatory open-access database, diffuse across media (Jenkins 2006), with "live" field notes (Tricia Wang 2011) with ethnographers-participants and participants- ethnographers.

These are some of the potential possibilities offered by the internet age for the shift of anthropological cultural production, for a more experimental and multimodal ethnography. An anthropology that will creatively develop the ethnographic archive and will go beyond the classic versions of the monograph, the academic article, and even the ethnographic film (Papailia 2018). Thus, Through the files and visual material we produce as users or that have already been posted on the internet, a multimodal approach can be a new way of analyzing and understanding today's world. To create more participatory/collaborative relationships in research by offering an alternative role to modern anthropologists.

The field

This first year the summer school will be focusing on the industrialization of the environment and more specifically on the possible construction of an onshore gigantic wind turbine project (among the biggest onshore proposed plans in Europe) on the island of **Skyros at the centre of the Aegean Sea**. Similar projects have been proposed to take place on a number of Aegean islands and other locations in Greece since the general legislation (περιβαλλοντικό) that was approved by the government in 2020 is in fact deregulating the construction of renewable energy sources. The overlapping of EU funding, the Greek government quotas for Green energy, the "Green" investments by the monastic community of Mount Athos that owns the asset of the proposed project and the decision to industrialize an EU protected natural habitat, create a paradoxical situation as the islanders go against such large-scale plans. While the islanders are not necessarily against renewable energy as they have suggested to construct turbines for the local needs of the island, the construction of a wind farm with 50-80 onshore wind turbines by private funds could be devastating for the local community and the fragile Aegean ecosystems. We will be working together with the



Faltaits Ethnological Museum of Skyros, the activist island organizations and networks and various local actors in order to understand the island perspectives of these controversial plans, the politics of the environment and the ways that our methodology can offer critical perspectives.

Instructors/speakers:

- Mark Westmoreland (anthropologist, University of Leiden)
- Dimitrios Dalakoglou (anthropologist Free University Amsterdam, VU)
- Steffen Köhn (anthropologist, Aarhus university)
- Tryfon Bampilis (anthropologist, NIA)
- Aimilia Voulvouli (anthropologist University of Aegean)
- Arjang Omrani (anthropologist/filmmaker, Ghent University)
- Elpida Rikou (Athens Polytechnic School of Fine Arts)
- Fotini Gouseti (artist/anthropologist, University of Thessaly)
- Constantinos Diamantis (anthropologist/filmmaker, University of Aegean)
- Maro Anastopoulou (film director)
- Nii Obodai (photographer)
- Giorgos Samantas (anthropologist TWIXTlab/to Aesthate)

Structure of the course

From **1 to 11 July** the course will take place in Athens with a **preparation** in anthropological theory, methodology and film studies. **From 12 until 24 July the summer school will take place on Skyros island in order to conduct research and prepare on the spot a multimodal project in collaboration with the Faltaits Ethnological museum of Skyros where the project will be exhibited during the summer period.** The seminars will focus on a general theoretical context in relation to visual anthropology/ethnographic methodology and contemporary approaches to field research with references to the island and Greece. In the sessions, the lecturers will give an overview of the theory of visual anthropology/ ethnography with reference to key debates.

The research on the island will take place in small groups of two or three students in collaboration with local groups and other networks. The students will be responsible for carrying on research and there will be regular research meetings with the staff of the school. **Theoretical knowledge of social sciences research methodology with a focus on qualitative research and ethnography is mandatory as well as basic knowledge of multimodal equipment. Artists are expected to demonstrate community-based work and collaborative projects.**



Our aim will be to complete our work by the 23th of July. On the 24th of July we will present the results of the research to the islanders at the Faltaits Ethnological museum and there will be a first public screening-exhibition of the research. **Our work the rest of the summer will be presented in a special section at the ethnographic museum of Skyros. The work will be further uploaded to a number of sites and academic journals.**

Finally, it is important to note that due to **COVID 19** related restrictions and measurements **the school might alter the proposed structure to adapt to the government's regulations.** For any alterations you will be informed in advance as far as you are accepted to the program. **It is essential that all accepted students take full responsibility for the COVID 19 related travel restrictions and all arrangements about appropriate EU certificates.**

Aim

The aim of the seminar is to give students an introductory understanding to audiovisual and multimodal methodology, experience filming in social contexts where ethnography can become a tool of dialogue and mediation and offer to the communities and the networks we will be working together with, the results of our findings in forms that can be made accessible to a wider public. We will also have an overview of current debates and research topics in visual anthropology and ethnography. By participating and learning the filming and production process, the students gain some practical experience, use their skills, make new contacts and learn how to present their findings within wider local and global processes.

Method

During the seminar the students are expected to participate actively in all the courses and take part in a collaborative ethnographic field research. The work of the students will have to focus on the main research theme by following life stories, specific neighbourhoods of each place or social networks with the aim to address wider processes. In collaboration with local research groups, students will be able to come in contact with various people to discuss, interview and materialize our topic. Students will record and collect their material, which will be put together under the guidance of experienced staff in order to be presented at the end of our school.



Course requirements, language and evaluation

The course is available to last year BA-students as well as Master and first year PhD students in the fields of social sciences and fine arts. All lectures will be given in English. Students are required to participate actively in all the lectures and discussions during the courses as well as in research. Mandatory knowledge of anthropological research methodology, social sciences methodology with focus on qualitative research and ethnography. The course will be evaluated by all staff and participants at the end.

Participation – application

Students can apply online (application can be found at the website of the institute, www.nia.gr) until the **20th of May** . Please contact us at nia@nia.gr in case assistance is needed. Successful applicants will be notified by **the 24st of May**. The number of participating students is limited (max. 20 students), so we encourage early registration. Selecting criteria will apply.

Costs and subsidies

The total cost of the course is **750€ for all E.U. students including accommodation in Athens during the course (if accommodation in Athens is not needed there is a discount of 250€). The accommodation on the island on Skyros is not covered** and there will be a list of proposed Airbnb's/local low-cost rentals to share with other participating students (the cost per night will be 20-35€ per person per night). Tickets to the island and back are not covered. Oversees (non-EU) fees are 1250€. **We will offer two full scholarships for covering the tuition fees to students that can demonstrate their need, and who will be assisting in practical arrangements of the school.** Students are expected to cover their airplane return ticket from the Netherlands or country of origin to the island and their lunch and dinner costs. The institute is going to **reimburse fully the fees of the course in case of cancellation** but there will be **no refunds for travel related cancellations** such as airplane or train tickets.

Accommodation

During the course the summer school will offer **free accommodation in Athens** to the participants/students and **students are expected to cover their accommodation in guest rooms or Airbnb's on Skyros**. Students might need to share their accommodation with another person, taking into account all related COVID 19



measurements and precautions. The institute will publish contact details as soon as students are accepted.

COVID 19 Measures

It is important to note that the **summer school will take place only** if all related regulations allow us during the proposed time. Please follow all relevant updates by EODY (Greek Organization for Public Health) and find further information about travelling to Greece in the Greek consulates in your country of residence. **The summer school cannot take any responsibility for the validity of any vaccination or health certificates of the participants, please make sure you have checked all relevant documentation timely.**

Texts and research: Tryfon Bampilis and Constantinos Diamantis (All Rights Reserved 12/04/22)

For more information regarding the course, please contact:

Dr. Tryfon Bampilis, Netherlands Institute at Athens (NIA) Tel.: + 30 210 9210760; Mobile: + 30 6976465830, email: trifonb@yahoo.com or nia@nia.gr

Organizing Committee

- Mark Westmoreland (University of Leiden)
- Tryfon Bampilis (Netherlands Institute at Athens)
- Dimitrios Dalakoglou (VU)
- Constantinos Diamantis (anthropologist/filmmaker, University of Aegean)
- Fotini Gouseti (University of Thessaly)

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