

Research ethics and fieldwork in an authoritarian context, HÖS007F

PhD course 3 credits, elective in the PhD in East and South-East Asian Studies, included in the Graduate School in Asian Studies, also open to other PhD students.

Obligatory literature around 200 pages, plus ca 150 pages of relevant selected readings depending on the student's own research area and/or country focus.

There are some overlaps in topics between Glasius and the Grimm book so you can choose parts of the latter that are of relevance, and for those of you who don't have access to that book through your libraries just use Glasius.

The recommended reading list include more specific country or region focused readings.

Obligatory readings

Authoritarian and Challenging Environments Research Group, a specialist group of the Australian Political Studies Association (2025), *Fieldwork Guide for Researchers in Authoritarian and Challenging Environments*, accessed at <https://auspsa.org.au/Filestore/CustomContent/APSA%20Doc%20Assets/A-Fieldwork-Guide-for-Researchers-in-Authoritarian-and-Challenging-Environments-2025-V2.pdf> 10 pages.

Glasius, Marlies, et al., (2018), *Research, Ethics and Risk in the Authoritarian Field*, Cham: Springer, 122 pages, Open access book.

Greitens, Sheena Chestnut and Rory Truex (2019), "Repressive Experiences among China Scholars", *The China Quarterly*, 242, 349–375.

Grimm, Jannis J. et al. (2020), *Safer Field Research in the Social Sciences*, Los Angeles: Sage. 149 pages, open access book at LU.

Grimm, Jannis J. (2022), "The Mixed Blessing of Digital Fieldwork: Digital Security and Ethical Dilemmas of Remote Research during and after the Pandemic," *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research*, Vol. 20, no. 2, 33-37.

Jumet, Kira D. and Merouan Mekouar (2025), "Introduction" in *Doing Research as a Native: A Guide for Fieldwork in Illiberal and Repressive States* Oxford University Press. Pp. 1-25. E-book available at LU.

Koehler, Kevin (2022), "Managing Uncertainty: How Risk Assessment Can Empower Field Research," *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research*, Vol. 20, no. 2, 29-33.

Lust, Ellen and Isabell Schierenbeck (2022), "Lessons for Safer Fieldwork Practices from the Covid Pandemic," *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research*, Vol. 20, no. 2, 25-28.

Wolfe, Sven Daniel and Dasha Kuletskaya (2026) "Researching the authoritarian: a conversation on methodology and ethics in closed contexts," *Geographica Helvetica*, 81, 297–304.

Selected readings

150 pages depending on topic and country. Suggested readings, but feel free to add others.

Alpermann, Björn (2022), "Ethics in Social Science Research on China," *Made in China*, <https://madeinchinajournal.com/2022/06/27/ethics-in-social-science-research-on-china/>

Brooten, Lisa, and Rosalie Metro (2014), "Thinking about Ethics in Burma Research," *Journal of Burma Studies* 18, no. 1 (2014): 1-22.

Clark, Janine A. (2018), *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa* : New York, NY : Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190882969.001.0001>. (available at LU library as e-book)

Cui, Ke (2015), 'The Insider–Outsider Role of a Chinese Researcher Doing Fieldwork in China: The Implications of Cultural Context.' *Qualitative Social Work* 14(3): 356–69.

Fung, Zali (2024), "Navigating research ethics during COVID-19 in authoritarian Southeast Asia: a feminist approach to combining online and in-person qualitative methods," *Australian Geographer*, 55(4), 541–561.

Heimer, Maria and Stig Thøgersen, eds. (2006) *Doing Fieldwork in China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Knott, E. (2019), "Beyond the Field: Ethics after Fieldwork in Politically Dynamic Contexts," *Perspectives on Politics*, 17(1): 140-153.

Liu, Hong Yu (2022), "Reflections on Conducting Fieldwork under Digital Surveillance: Investigating Labour Politics in China's Tech Industry," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 52:1, 152-162.

Lowell, Zachary, Mengyao Li, Yuzong Chen (2024), "Rebooting Qualitative Research in China: Reflections on Doing Fieldwork in the Post-Covid Era," *Made in China Journal* (online only), <https://madeinchinajournal.com/2024/10/04/rebooting-qualitative-research-in-china-reflections-on-doing-fieldwork-in-the-post-covid-era/>

Makhoul, J., El Ashkar, C., Nakkash, R., & Bjelobaba, S. (2023), "A Qualitative Multi-Methods Research Protocol: Applied Research Ethics in the Middle East North Africa Region," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231204820>

Messingschlager, Stefan (2026), "Conditional Access and Epistemic Resilience in European China Studies," *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies*, 7(1), 85–98.

Morgenbesser, Lee, and Meredith L. Weiss (2018), "Survive and Thrive: Field Research in Authoritarian Southeast Asia," *Asian Studies Review*, 42:3, 385-403.

Reny, Marie (2016), "Authoritarianism as a Research Constraint: Political Scientists in China." *Social Science Quarterly* 97 (4): 909–922.

Rivetti, Paola, and Shirin Saeidi (2018), "What Is So Special about Field Research in Iran? Doing Fieldwork in Religiously Charged Authoritarian Settings", in Janine A. Clark, and Francesco Cavatorta (eds), *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa: Methodological and Ethical Challenges* New York, 2018; online edition, Oxford Academic, 19 , <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190882969.003.0003>

Ryan, Caitlin M., and Sarah Tynen (2020), "Fieldwork Under Surveillance: Rethinking Relations of Trust, Vulnerability, and State Power." *Geographical Review* 110(1–2): 38–51.

Schneider, Mindi, Elizabeth Lord, and Jessica Wilczak (2020), "We, Too: Contending with the Sexual Politics of Fieldwork in China," *Gender, Place & Culture*, 28:4, 519-540.

Slater, Lisa (2022), "Fieldwork in Discomfort," *Borderlands Journal* 21(2): 175–98.

Stroup DR, and JP Goode (2023), "On the Outside Looking In: Ethnography and Authoritarianism," *Perspectives on Politics*, 21(4): 1162-1177.

Svensson, Marina (2006), "Ethical dilemmas: balancing distance with involvement," in Heimer, Maria and Stig Thøgersen, eds. (2006) *Doing Fieldwork in China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 262-280.

Svensson, Marina (2017), "The Networked China Researcher: Challenges and Possibilities in the Social Media Age," *Asiascape: Digital Asia*, 4, no 1-2, pp. 76-102.

Tan, Xiao, Nahui Zhen, Leiheng Wang, and Yue Zhao (2023), "Doing Fieldwork in China During and Beyond the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Study," *Made in China Journal* 8(1): 40–47.

Zhang, Tianyu (2022), "Media ethnography in China—ethics, access and interviews in a non-Western context," *Global Media Journal*, 12(1), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22032/dbt.53028>

Wang, Lili (2024), "Blending In or Being Co-Opted: Reflecting on an Internship-Cum-Field Work at a New Town Government in China," *The Professional Geographer* 76(2): 239–47.

Wei, Ran (2023), "Interviewing Chinese Local Government Officials: Reflection on Research Transparency and Coercion," *Field Research Methods Lab Blog*, 30 June. London: London School of Economics and Political Science. blogs.lse.ac.uk/fieldresearch/2023/06/30/interviewing-chinese-local-government-officials-reflection-on-research-transparency-and-coercion.

Wolf, Diane L. (ed.). 2018. *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Woodworth, Max D., Xuefei Ren, Jesse Rodenbiker, Ettore Santi, Yining Tan, Li Zhang, and Yu Zhou (2022), "Researching China During the Covid-19 Pandemic," In *Covid-19 and A World of Ad Hoc Geographies*, edited by Stanley D. Brunn and Donna Gilbreath, 2705–21. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Yusupova, G. (2019), Exploring Sensitive Topics in an Authoritarian Context: An Insider Perspective*. *Social Science Quarterly*, 100: 1459-1478. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12642>

Zhao, Yawei (2017), “Doing Fieldwork the Chinese Way: A Returning Researcher’s Insider/Outsider Status in Her Home Town,” *Area* 49(2): 185–91.

Zuo, Guannan (2023), “Beyond “Insider” and “Outsider” in the Field: Reflections on the Roles of Human Geographers in Shifting Contexts.’ *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 22. doi.org/10.1177/16094069231169095.