



NONRELIGION IN A COMPLEX FUTURE

LA NONRELIGION DANS UN FUTUR COMPLEXE

NCF Student Workshop: Research Design

Date: April 29, 2021

In this graduate student workshop, NCF Collaborator Jennifer Selby (Memorial University of Newfoundland) led members of the NCF Student Caucus and University of Ottawa graduate students through the steps, pitfalls and serendipities in conducting fieldwork, particularly in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Selby delivered a presentation on this topic and allowed time to discuss the students' research questions and concerns.

Below are some of the key points the students took away from the workshop:

- Establishing trust and rapport during the recruitment process is key to conducting an ethnographic project.
- It is important to curate and be mindful of your online presence when starting your project because participants will probably Google you.
- Make use of auto-transcribing tools such as the Zoom auto-transcribe function or Neo Smartpen.
- Think about digital inequalities and how to navigate digital ethnography with people who might not have access to stable internet connection or your chosen interview platform.
- Organization is key with any project. Find ways to organize field notes, interview data and other digital sources, for instance taking and filing screenshots from social media accounts.
- One challenge is knowing when to end your fieldwork. Setting time limits is a good idea.

Below are some recommended resources from the workshop:

- Stanford's Institute for Research in the Social Sciences: Interviews on doing ethnography remotely: <https://iriss.stanford.edu/doing-ethnography-remotely>
- *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practices* (2016) by Sarah Pink; Heather Horst; John Postill; Larissa Hjorth; Tania Lewis; Jo Tacchi.
- *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method* by Tom Boellstorff, Bonnie Nardi, Celia Pearce, and T.L. Taylor.
- Collins, S.G., and Durlington, M.S. (2020). 'The case for letting anthropology be quarantined: COVID and the end of ethnographic presence', *entanglements*, 3(2): 92-96: <https://entanglementsjournal.org/the-case-for-lettinganthropology-be-quarantined-covid-and-the-end-ofethnographic-presence/>