



UNIT ONE

Introduction

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CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
Section 1	
1. Introduction	1
2. Links with other units	1
3. Background notes	2
Section 2	
1. Outline of a session	7
2. Description of a session	7
3. Advice and comments	12
Section 3	
1. Assignment	15
2. Handouts	16
3. Readings	23

SECTION ONE

1. Introduction

A degree in modern languages is a sandwich course and the meat is the year abroad (Colin Evans, 1988:42)

What I have tried to do is to teach the reader how to *think* anthropologically, to develop, that is, an anthropological sensibility. The development of such a sensibility is a prerequisite without which all the knowledge of the facts and of the theories is sterile. It is all too easy to turn the world and the diversity in human culture into a sort of museum of curiosities, interesting enough but irrelevant to our day to day concerns. (David Pocock, 1975: ix)

The Year Abroad can be seen, in Evans' terms, as the 'meat' in the modern languages degree programme and the purpose of this unit is to begin the process of making connections between the course and the year abroad. The ethnography course is designed to prepare students for this period abroad as a cultural learning experience. On the course they will learn about some of the cultural concepts which they may use when undertaking their ethnographic projects and the ethnographic methods needed for doing it.

This course, as Pocock suggests, would not be very useful if it were about facts and abstract theories. Instead it is about learning to look at the everyday in a cultural or anthropological way, drawing out meaning from day to day observations and finding patterns which help to make sense of the way in which particular groups in society live and experience the world.

This unit has been designed to be used in a short introductory session rather than as a full unit. It could be combined with 'ice-breaking' activities to help produce a participative atmosphere or elements of it could be used to present the whole course if students have to choose from a range of optional modules.

2. Links with the other units

Since this is very much an introductory unit, there are links with all the other units. The most immediate links are with Unit 2: *What is an ethnographic approach?* and Unit 4: *Shared Cultural Knowledge* which introduce the conceptual framework and methods for the whole course.

3. Background notes

3.1 The Year Abroad

In Colin Evans's book on *Language People* (1988), most students present themselves as technical people concerned with language skills. The year abroad is perceived either as an opportunity to improve language skills or as a time away from home to enjoy and experience a different lifestyle. On the whole, the period abroad is not discussed as a structured experience of alternative cultural practices – a systematic process of cultural learning – nor is the experience well integrated into the undergraduate programme either before or after the period abroad.

The aim of this unit is to persuade students of the value of seeing the year abroad as an integral part of their undergraduate programme and to do this by extending their identity as language people to include ways of knowing and seeing which we can broadly call 'cultural'. Their time abroad is an opportunity but, as many students have remarked, it is easy to let things pass you by, to rely on your own student group for 'rest and recreation' or to limit yourself to necessary instrumental transactions. There is a tendency not to reach out and 'seize the moment'; to experience difference but not reflect on it; or to withdraw into the safe haven of your room and barricade yourself in. The limited contact with local people can then reinforce some of the (negative) stereotypes which students may have brought with them. Of course, many students have a marvellous time and/or look back on their time abroad as a period of intense learning. But, even for these students, there is often a lack of connection between the course, the experience abroad, their projects and any long-term learning and change in their lives.

Whatever judgement students make, in retrospect, about their stay abroad, most experience some form of 'culture shock' either when they leave Britain or on re-entry. 'Culture shock' (Adler 1972) refers to the stress of living in and coping with a different social and cultural environment. It usually manifests itself as some form of irritation and a sense of loss.

Attempts by individuals to apply their old cultural rules will quickly elicit 'wrong' reactions from their new environment. Confusion results together with frustration, and finally, doubt, why aren't my rules working? What's wrong with these people? What's wrong with me? It's not surprising, therefore, that one of the most salient characteristics of a cultural transition is stress – what Oberg (1960) termed *culture shock*.
(Riall Nolan)

The studies of culture shock suggest a U-shaped pattern which starts with a 'honeymoon' phase in which all but favourable data is screened out. There then follows a period of crisis in which irritation and feelings of loss set in. The final phase is a recovery in which adjustments to the new social and cultural world are made. Riall Nolan makes the point that this recovery period is brought about through cultural learning and that this learning is the result of integrating new patterns of meaning into their lives through stressful encounters.

This notion of learning through stress suggests that the period abroad needs also to be seen as a time of accelerated personal development and that there is a necessary element of stress which should not be ignored or strategically avoided but used for active learning. "One of the reasons why the experience may be so profound and stressful is that, as Adler suggests, the *greatest* "shock" in culture shock may be the individual's self-confrontation. For many people, the transitional experience acts as a looking-glass, giving insight into one's own personality as a cultural product. Not everyone likes what they see. (Nolan)

However, it would be misleading if this course, the time abroad and the project were seen only as matters of psychology. Cultural studies are not concerned with individual personalities but with the relation between people and society. Students are expected to reflect on themselves, but as individuals who are a part of a social group with its patterns of interaction and representation linking it to other groups but also serving as boundaries around its own group.

3.2 Social Anthropology and Ethnography

Once language learning is put in the context of everyday life, once the language learner has to live the language and not just learn it, it becomes impossible to separate off language learning from cultural learning. It is common, of course, to teach appropriate second language behaviour in the classroom but once the student is surrounded on all sides by interactions and texts in the foreign language, appropriacy – that rather shallow interpretation of communicative competence – is not enough. It is possible, with sufficient attention, to observe how people interact and to copy it, but to *live* the language entails finding answers to the questions: Why do people behave the way they do? What meanings do they bring to, and construct out of, the behaviour and representations of the world that they experience? And how do these meanings form part of a coherent whole within relations of power in society?

This course was designed to help students observe more acutely and begin to find their own answers to these questions. The disciplines of anthropology and linguistics – and more specifically the sub-disciplines of social anthropology and sociolinguistics – provided the most useful epistemologies and methods. The introduction of an explicit cultural studies element has provoked the question: Why anthropology and sociolinguistics? Why not literature, history, media studies, sociology and so on? Clearly all these disciplines feed into Cultural Studies which has always had a multi-disciplinary base.

The reason for focusing on social anthropology and sociolinguistics is because of the close relationship between the idea of the social anthropologist living in and studying a particular community and the idea of the foreign student using their time abroad to learn about a new set of social and cultural experiences.

Social anthropology has as much to do with living as with learning, if not more. It can produce an alteration in one's consciousness of society, and this is achieved by the constant interaction of one's personal anthropology with the anthropologies of others... (Pocock: 8, op.cit.)

The anthropologists' metaphor of 'the field' is crucial here. Just as they go out to do fieldwork either in a country far removed from their own or in a community much closer to home, so the foreign student can use some aspect of their temporary residence in a foreign country as their 'field'.

The method for studying some aspect of social and cultural life in the field is ethnography. Developed by social anthropologists, it is now used by sociologists, educationalists, linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists, among others. For this reason, there are borrowings from these disciplines in these materials, but the key messages about ethnography are drawn from social anthropology. The metaphor of the 'field' in social anthropology and ethnography is an illuminating one, but it can also be misleading. It suggests a hands-on, practical, sometimes rather uncomfortable experience which well captures what it feels like to be out there talking, observing, crouched in awkward places writing field notes. But it is equally true to say that ethnography is not 'out there' but right here, that 'the field' is not some distant village but part of one's everyday life. To that extent, ethnography is something that can be done all the time, everywhere:

Social anthropology is concerned with the whole of life, and not just something you do until six o'clock. The study of social anthropology encourages you to have a new kind of consciousness of life; it is a way of looking at the world, and in that sense it is a way of living. (Pocock, 1975:1)

Pocock suggests, therefore, that we can live the ethnographic life within our own communities and, in so doing, can make explicit to ourselves what he calls our 'personal anthropology'. In other words we can reflect on our own taken-for-granted assumptions and values and begin to see that they are social and cultural constructions and not 'natural'. This is a fundamental principle of social anthropology and central to its ethnographic methods. The analysis of the natural and the search for patterns and formulations beneath the surface are supported by a conceptual framework which is an essential part of the course. It is of little value to teach ethnographic methods unless there is a coherent way of looking at what these methods are for.

For that reason, throughout the course, students are introduced to some basic anthropological concepts which they can use to illuminate their data and draw it together into a more general set of themes. These concepts, as the list of units indicates, include: gender relations, social identity, symbolic boundaries, ritual and gift-giving as a form of local politics. In such a short course with non-specialists in anthropology, the aim is not to turn students into anthropologists or even ethnographers, but to give them what Pocock calls 'an anthropological sensibility' and to help them collect data and write projects with an ethnographic approach.

The conceptual framework offers a way of seeing which allows students to generalise without stereotyping. Unless there is such a framework in place, observations about behaviour either have only local and transitory meaning or are slotted into culturally-specific behavioural stereotypes. For example, observations of leave-taking behaviour within a community might lead to the conclusion that it was very protracted and formal but such observations need to be interpreted within concepts of rituals and boundaries. Finishing off any interaction marks a boundary between one activity and another. Moving across boundaries, whether the routine ones of entering into and leaving interaction or the major boundary shifts that occur in different phases of our lives, is always problematic. For that reason, some kind of ritual is necessary to subvert the immanent danger inherent in boundary crossings (see Unit 3 on non-verbal communication and Unit 13 on boundaries).

An ethnographic approach is a comparative one in which the ethnographer makes comparisons with her or his own cultural world. Students during their period abroad will inevitably be making comparisons and a conceptual framework helps students to understand and not simply make ethnocentric judgements on alternative ways of organising one's life and experiencing the world.

3.3 Ethnography versus ethnocentrism

The course, therefore, has elements both of intellectual enquiry – seeking to understand other ways of acting, believing and thinking – and of the experiential and practical. The two are obviously linked in that a better understanding of a community may help to improve communication and reduce ethnocentric practices.

Like the other humanities, anthropology does not seek to solve problems; it seeks to understand other possible ways of thinking, believing and acting. This is unashamedly intellectual interest for its own sake. Yet because we can come to understand ourselves more by contemplating the differences found in other people, it is difficult to regard such activity as useless. Is it useless to discover that there is a comprehensible and even elegant logic in the apparently bizarre activities of peoples in other cultures? Such a discovery should reassure us that people everywhere strive for rationality in their own distinctive ways. (Parkin)

There is a connection here with the current debate on anthropology and anti-racism. It is helpful for students to reflect on their own attitudes and practices in relation to Britain as a multi-ethnic society and see links with their planned experiences abroad. They will also be aware of the anti-European rhetoric in Britain and the gap between pro-European national policy and more negative views on both the right and left. For example, at a Party conference, a few years ago, a government minister suggested that if a 'foreigner' asked 'où est l'hôtel?', he or she was in fact asking 'where is the social security office?' The discourse of 'foreigner', 'nation', 'heritage' and 'tradition' is used both against Black British and non-British Europeans. It is in this context that students as language people have a particular responsibility to sort out their own positions and to use the period abroad to work on how they can make others more receptive to change.

Language students often assume that 'Cultural Studies' means acquiring knowledge about a different 'culture' in the way that area studies programmes cover information about the political and economic institutions of the country studied. It is important to explain to students that they will not be learning that but learning how. In other words, they will be developing an epistemology and ethnographic methods so that they can learn for themselves about the everyday practices and symbolic meanings of a particular group.

The ethnographic process requires of students an openness, flexibility and capacity to take risks and manage a degree of confusion and uncertainty. The design and pedagogy of the course help students experience some of these qualities. The methodology is largely inductive, drawing themes and concepts out of the structured experiences of the assignments. The pedagogy in the classroom is designed to create as relaxed and participative an environment as possible in which students are encouraged to listen and empathise with others in the group as well as developing analytical skills.

References

- ◆ Geertz, C (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books
- ◆ Evans, C (1988) *Language People*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- ◆ Nolan, R 'Culture Shock and Cross-Cultural Adaption. Or I was OK until I got here'. In *Practicing Anthropology*
- ◆ Parkin, D 'How useful is anthropology?'
- ◆ Pocock, D (1975) *Understanding Social Anthropology*. London: Hodder and Stoughton pp.1-29

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1. Outline of a session

1. The aims of the course
2. The pedagogy
3. Assessment
4. Students' feelings about the year abroad
5. Assignment and Readings

2. Description of a session

2.1 The aims of the course

Talk through Handout 1 and link it to some of the general issues discussed in the background notes:

- ◆ the fact that the year abroad is not always used systematically as an opportunity to develop not only language skills but also an understanding of cultural practices and cultural difference;
- ◆ the notion of 'culture shock' and how it can be turned into a constructive experience;
- ◆ the need to go beyond appropriacy in linguistic behaviour and try to make sense of the meanings that people bring to and construct out of this behaviour.
- ◆ the metaphor of 'the field' and the specific methods developed by ethnographers for observing and interpreting behaviour;
- ◆ the need for a conceptual framework;
- ◆ the case for using ethnographic approaches to interrogate one's own attitudes and assumptions about groups outside one's own community;
- ◆ a statement about what the course is trying to do, i.e. it is not a survey of another 'culture(s)'. It will not provide information about the other 'culture(s)', except indirectly and in a provisional way. It *is* about knowing how to observe and make sense for oneself.

A simple OHT (see OHT 1) may help at this stage.

2.2 The pedagogy

Students are usually very puzzled about what this course is about and how they will manage on it. It appears elusive and the content not visible enough. As one student said: "[it's] difficult to understand what ethnography is. It takes time to realise what you are asked to do and how to do it." Although the classroom pedagogy should help to provide a relaxed and participative atmosphere, the sense of puzzlement is quite deliberately sustained in order to model some of the experiences that students will have when doing their ethnographic projects.

It is probably worth talking through the teaching/learning methods to be used as some students may expect a more traditional lecture/seminar format:

- ◆ all teaching is through discussion based seminars;
- ◆ a high level of participation is assumed;
- ◆ sessions will evolve from a pre-session task set the week before;
- ◆ concepts will be drawn out of the data collected in the task;
- ◆ weekly readings are used to introduce further concepts, show how they can be used in a variety of ethnographic settings and give examples of what an ethnography (the written text) looks like.

2.3 Assessment

On the course: 60% on the 'home' ethnography, 40% on participation in the sessions.

The home ethnography is a short ethnographic project carried out in the students' own environment (where possible) and is a preparation for the more substantial project carried out while abroad. It is assessed by staff. The participation aspect of student performance is assessed by peers.

A detailed description of the assessment procedures is given in the general introduction to the course materials.

Students who have taken the ethnography option are normally expected to write an ethnographic project(s).

Criteria of assessment for projects is also given in Unit 18.

2.4 Ethnographic projects

See Handout 2.

The handout gives students a feel for what might be an interesting topic, both for the home ethnography and for the ethnographic project abroad.

A brief discussion of three of the studies gives students an introduction to what makes an interesting ethnographic study.

- (i) Despatch riders in London. (This was a Home Ethnography carried out in the break between two terms).

This student had a holiday job as a despatch rider and so decided to study the group he was working with. He was interested in why the group presented themselves in such a macho way. As he observed and recorded their lives (and his own), he realised there was a real tension between the free-wheeling 'cowboy' or 'lone ranger' figure and the very mundane and controlled lives that the company regulations and work patterns demanded. The motorbike and leather rituals masked a humdrum, pressured and bureaucratic existence (see Unit 12 for a more detailed analysis of this project).

(ii) Studying with a child: an ethnographic study of student single mothers in Berlin.

This German project was a study of a small group of single mothers studying at the Humboldt or Free Universities in Berlin. The account focuses on three main aspects: 'studying and bringing up children', 'daily routine' and 'social contacts'. Early morning and sleeping times are crucial concepts around which students organise their and their children's lives. Although the Federal Ministry for Youth and Women concluded in a report that single mothers were isolated and lonely, this project demonstrated that this group of women had many social contacts and did not feel lonely.

(iii) Code switching as a marker of identity in Barcelona.

This Spanish project was more sociolinguistic than many of the ethnographic projects. The phenomenon of code-switching – in this case switching between Castellano and Catalan – was observed and commented on by informants as a symbolic resource for giving messages about and managing their identity. In Barcelona, the majority are Catalan speakers (although during the Franco period many repressive measures were used to require people to speak Castellano). However, there is a substantial minority of Castellano speakers who are internal migrants from Southern Spain. This project was concerned with how the use of the two languages in contact came to be markers of social identity and how these markers related to other aspects of identity and boundary maintenance.

2.4 Students' feelings about the Year Abroad

This exercise introduces students to the kind of group work that will be used regularly on the course. A maximum of four in the group works best. The exercise is structured around three questions:

- ◆ What are you most looking forward to?
- ◆ What are you most anxious about?
- ◆ What do you most want to learn?

The following were expressed by students:

I am most looking forward to:

- 'a complete change'
- 'a different environment'
- 'getting away from England'
- 'becoming fluent in the language'
- 'exploring new ground'
- 'experiencing a different culture'
- 'customs – learning about them'
- 'getting involved with other people'

'beaches and the hot weather'

'actually being there'

'seeing how they live'

I am most anxious about:

'finding my feet'

'being accepted'

'fitting in'

'leaving friends behind'

'being stuck with other English students'

'sorting out everyday problems'

'not being able to understand'

'self-expression'

'the unknown'

'unfulfilled expectations'

'coping on one's own'

'problems of adaptation'

'financial problems'

I most want to learn:

'to make the best of new situations'

'to appreciate things more'

'about working with other people'

'to join in more'

'the language of the country'

'thinking/talking like a native'

'about myself'

'self-reliance'

'becoming more tolerant'

'seeing how other people live'

Students are usually very ready to participate but tend to produce anecdotal rather than analytical responses. There may be contradictions within the group. Some students are most looking forward to aspects of the time abroad which others are most anxious about.

The challenge of being abroad can be seen in terms of how the relationship of self and environment is affected (or unbalanced) by change and how a new balance can be achieved through learning.

The following categories for analysing their comments may offer themselves:

A different environment:

- social/cultural
- linguistic
- physical

Relationships/ways of relating:

- anxiety, uncertainty, deficiencies
- losing/gaining friends
- inclusion/exclusion
- belonging/wanting to be accepted
- adaptability

Then refer them back to the course aims and suggest how the learning outcomes of the course provide ways of overcoming anxieties and provide a stimulus, a structure and methods for helping them to achieve what they most want to learn – in other words ways in which they can turn experience into learning through reflection.

2.5 Assignment and Readings

Assignment

Remind students that the assignments are intended both to help develop ethnographic methods and to provide the data out of which the more conceptual elements of the course can be inductively drawn. If the assignments are not done, then not only is it difficult to run the course but students will find it increasingly difficult to develop an 'anthropological sensibility'.

The assignment for discussion in Unit 2 is given in that unit but students will need to have it explained to them in this unit. That goes for all assignments. A few minutes for some explanation and motivation will need to be given in each unit to prepare the assignment for the next unit.

Students can be asked to do either A or B but there need to be at least three doing the same one so that they can form a group in the next session. Assignment A is more perplexing to students but may elicit a clearer discussion of 'frame'.

Readings

For most units there is at least one reading, usually with questions. This piece of reading is included in the materials and, copyright provided, should be made available to students the week before it is due to be discussed. For this unit the reading is Chapter 1 of Spradley and McCurdy's *An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (especially pages 3-18). (See Section 3.) It is extremely useful for students to come

having read at least one short piece on anthropology, if there is a way in which students can obtain the reading before the class. But as this may be difficult, there is no slot in the unit to discuss the reading and students may like to have it as some background reading to refer to as they go through the course.

There are also some supplementary readings which, copyright provided, could be photocopied for students or made easily available to them. In addition, there are further suggested reading and references to follow up for the really keen. See Unit 2 Section 3 for the readings.

3. Advice and comments

Over the last three years students have been asked to evaluate the course. They were asked what they liked most and least about the course and to give any other comments. Overwhelmingly, the aspect of the course least liked by participants was the amount of work they were asked to do. They were expected to read one or two papers and carry out a task each week. There is, not surprisingly, some discrepancy between what staff and students consider a reasonable workload. Despite the protests, we still consider the demands of the course not unreasonable and, also, a minimum, if students are to become involved in a new discipline area. On the positive side, the reactions were more varied. Here are just two quotes, the first in answer to the question 'What did you like most?' and the second offered as an additional comment:

The doing it. Having to look at things, listen to people. ... an excuse to analyse things you talked about casually already and I found that there was some depth behind nearly everything that is going on ... it seemed to bring out something in us all – a creativity ... good to have class diaries ... liked the way staff were flexible to change and incorporated our ideas ... having input from so many members of staff.

I really liked the different ways we worked – doing interviews in pairs, discussing in small groups and then one group – analysing videos or printed adverts or conversations, being able to read so many ethnographies or articles about them. At the time it was heavy going reading ... but almost always very interesting which is why they were read by most of us. The sheer variety of assignments made you think – what are we gonna to get this week? I didn't know I could be so nosy with a proper reason - and when interviewing informants I really felt they enjoyed someone else being obsessed with the detail of their knowledge or thought. I didn't know I could stop people in the street and get them to talk to me so easily. So I have learnt some social skills too! Sometimes, now I find myself aware that I'm maintaining a conversation - whereas in the past I'd just be bored! ... Ethnog. really added some spice to the academic year.

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This enthusiasm was in retrospect. At the beginning of the course, students are intrigued but often puzzled and confused. The difficulty is to maintain the interest of students and yet not, in Clifford Geertz's phrase, 'reduce the puzzlement' (Geertz 1973) to bite-size morsels of knowledge, to revisable facts.

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SECTION THREE

1. Assignment

There is no assignment for this unit but the assignment for Unit Two needs to be given out and explained at the end of the session.

UNIT ONE – Introduction to Ethnography for Language Learners

Handout 1

Aims

The aim of the course is to help prepare you for the cultural challenge of the period abroad, and to make the time spent there more effective. The course aims to enhance cultural sensitivity and lead to a better understanding of your own and others' cultural worlds.

Content

The course will introduce you to anthropological concepts, e.g. what is meant by cultural knowledge, values and beliefs, the way these are expressed through language, and how cultural knowledge relates to behaviour and social structures.

The course will also introduce you to ethnographic methods, i.e. ways of observing and understanding one's own and other cultural practices from an insider's point of view. As a result, the course should help you to make the most of your year abroad in terms of understanding the people around you, their cultural practices, including their beliefs and values and your own response to them and the social world that they inhabit.

Course methodology

The syllabus has been designed with our particular interests as 'language people' in mind. Your skills as language learners in accurate listening and remembering will be built on and your general language awareness and sensitivity will also be exploited. The disciplines of anthropology and sociolinguistics will be introduced by drawing on your own experience and by using weekly tasks as the basis for drawing out concepts and developing skills. The class sessions and tasks will prepare you to carry out a 'home ethnography', i.e. an ethnographic study of some aspect of your own society. This, in turn, will be a preparation for your ethnographic project while abroad.

The course is run as one-, two- or three- hour seminar sessions with the emphasis on group work and pair work. There are no formal lectures. You will learn from each other as much as from the teachers.

Learning outcomes

The course will give you an understanding of some of the concepts and methods of social anthropology and sociolinguistics and enable you to use ethnographic techniques. It will also provide an intellectual challenge and help to develop personal and social skills.

You will be introduced to some key concepts as used by social anthropologists in areas such as:

- ◆ family and gender relations
- ◆ roles and relationships
- ◆ identity and boundaries

- ◆ rituals and symbolic meanings
- ◆ power and language

You will learn to use ethnographic methods:

- ◆ to collect data required for your assignments
- ◆ to carry out ethnographic interviews in your own and the foreign language
- ◆ to record interviews and transcribe them
- ◆ to act as participant observers
- ◆ to take notes of field observations
- ◆ to keep a field diary.

You will learn to analyse the data for your projects:

- ◆ to index the data collected
- ◆ to evaluate evidence
- ◆ to apply anthropological concepts in order to interpret the data
- ◆ to verify your interpretations through comparison with other evidence.

Through the critique of other projects, you will be able to establish:

- ◆ the kind of project expected of you
- ◆ the standards applied
- ◆ the criteria used in assessing them.

Through course work and doing your home ethnography, you will gain greater confidence in your ability to do a project:

- ◆ to identify an area of interest
- ◆ to pose interesting and innovative questions
- ◆ to formulate a project proposal
- ◆ to collect the data
- ◆ to write up a project
- ◆ to organise your material and findings logically
- ◆ to present a coherent argument
- ◆ to use appropriate evidence as necessary.

Having learnt some concepts and methods of social anthropology, you will be more aware of:

- ◆ the social construction of perceived reality
- ◆ the social nature of apparent individualism

- ◆ the patterns and regularities under the surface of life
- ◆ the cultural construction of beliefs, attitudes, actions.

You will also have the opportunity to relate these ways of seeing to your own:

- ◆ behaviour, roles, attitudes
- ◆ environment
- ◆ identity in a foreign society while abroad.

The course will make a contribution to improving personal and social skills more generally, e.g. your ability to:

- ◆ identify and solve problems
- ◆ cope with unfamiliar circumstances
- ◆ take controlled risks
- ◆ overcome hesitation and shyness
- ◆ communicate with others
- ◆ be more tolerant of different cultures and values.

UNIT ONE – Introduction to Ethnography for Language Learners

Handout 2 – ethnographic project titles

Home Ethnography Titles

- ◆ Despatch riders in London
- ◆ Telequest [hierarchies and relationships in a market research/telephone company]
- ◆ Observations on queuing
- ◆ 'Members only'
- ◆ Pub behaviour
- ◆ Space on the Underground [how people behave and react when forced to share limited space with strangers]
- ◆ Identity and boundaries: An ethnographic project on the Irish youth community in London
- ◆ The debt collector
- ◆ 'The rituals around food and the discourses of food help to construct the borders, structures and hierarchical relations that constitute society itself... or do they?'
- ◆ Greyhound racing in East London
- ◆ Survival of the fittest [Selling double glazing]
- ◆ Things you can't get at Safeways [Portobello Road Market]
- ◆ The priest: The obstacle of the church [Institutional discourse]
- ◆ Show me your hand [Aspects of non-verbal communication]
- ◆ Culture in chaos [Latvian cultural identity]
- ◆ Shared cultural knowledge in advertising
- ◆ To belong or not to belong [Study of a group of friends in Spain]
- ◆ No escape when you are 'court' by boredom [Study of waiting rooms in a Magistrates Court]
- ◆ The Natural Law party
- ◆ Down at the Riv. [Observations in a bar]
- ◆ What makes a gift a gift [Kissing in Italy]
- ◆ 'I fry with my little eye' [Study of a fish and chip shop]
- ◆ An ethnographic study of the regular clientele in three public houses in Hanwell
- ◆ One foot in the past [Old people's home]
- ◆ 'Beyond Sarah' [Hierarchies and customer relations in a clothes shop]

- ◆ Behavioural studies on the football terraces
- ◆ Observations of behaviour in a launderette
- ◆ What pragmatics reveals about character in a working environment [Apologising, requesting, interrupting, complaining in a bar/restaurant]
- ◆ How different people order drinks in a pub and behave around the bar [Norfolk/London]
- ◆ 'All rules are made to be broken?' [A Serbo-Croat Sunday school in London]
- ◆ 'Black talk' in a London Jamaican pub
- ◆ Twelve angry young men. A study of Pizza Hut delivery drivers
- ◆ The organisation of a children's language school and the special way of teaching children
- ◆ Pregnant fathers [What it means to become a father]
- ◆ "Steam in the Blood" [The lives of steam engine owners]
- ◆ Nudity in Spas and Saunas
- ◆ Order in the classroom - how it is affected by different relationships
- ◆ The Public Library
- ◆ 'Next customer please!'
- ◆ The 'orderly' British queue. [How far is the stereotype of British queues being orderly, true?]
- ◆ 'If you are not in with the crowd, you can forget it!' – An ethnography of the groups within the Hull Rock-Scene
- ◆ Bouncers: how they maintain their identity, earn respect and reject their stereotype
- ◆ Casualty [Observations in a hospital waiting area]
- ◆ Au-pairs working in London

France

- ◆ Le Club de pétanque à Aubervilles
- ◆ Le Carnaval de Nice: qui veut devenir Carnavalier?
- ◆ La Socialisation au sein d'une famille français

Germany

- ◆ Alltagsbewältigung der Blinden und ihre Interaktion mit Sehenden
- ◆ Inwieweit erlaubt oder begrenzt das Leben im Studentendorf Kontakte zwischen Studenten
- ◆ Die Kategorisierung ausländischer Studenten durch ihre deutschen Kommilitonen. Ein ethnographischer Bericht

UNIT 1 READING
◆ "Ellbogengesellschaft". An ethnographic study of assertiveness in public in Germany

◆ What role does 'world knowledge' play in everyday social encounters?

◆ Sprache Politeness and forms of address: the use of 'Sie' and 'Du'

◆ Single student mothers in Berlin

◆ Christmas in Germany

◆ Forms of politeness on public transport in East Berlin

Spanish (Spain)

◆ Prostitutes and identity in Cádiz

◆ Sevillanas: An Andalusian dance or a way of life?

◆ How does the Catholic church maintain its power?

◆ Young people in Seville: changing concepts of male and femaleness

◆ The influence of religion on the daily life of Sevillanos

◆ Code-switching as a marker of identity in Barcelona

◆ Out and about at night in Seville [La Marcha]

◆ ONCE – an organisation for the blind

◆ Clothes as symbolic system in Cádiz

UNIT ONE – Introduction to Ethnography for Language Learners

OHT 1

WHAT IS IT?

A tool kit of skills and concepts based on anthropology

WHY DO IT?

Practical and intellectual preparation for the time abroad and the projects/dissertations associated with it.

A structured way of becoming more culturally aware

Becoming better listeners and observers

HOW IS IT DONE?

Tasks, learning by doing

Discussions, learning from each other

Learning from experience rather than from books

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT?

Underpins most other subjects

Allows a place for personal experience

Allows for more autonomy

UNIT ONE – Introduction to Ethnography for Language Learners

READING

- ◆ Spradley, J and McCurdy, D (1972) *The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in complex society*. Illinois: Waveland Press.

We suggest this as the set text for the course, if students feel happier with a textbook. The early sections are useful, but the majority of student ethnographies are not of a very high quality and students should be warned off them as models. The set of readings (one or two for each unit) provides a more varied and wide ranging 'textbook' than any one book.