

ANTH4020 Academic Writing and Project Development, Autumn 2022

This is one of three mandatory courses MA students have to take in the first semester. Its purpose is to prepare students to deliver the final research proposal, which will allow them to go on fieldwork in the second semester. Assessment is through a 2 page and a 6 page proposal (with presentation), and the final proposal.

In the first part students are offered a number of lectures on research methods, library sources, research ethics and data management. The second part consists of student presentations, based on the 6-page draft research proposal, after which students continue to work by themselves and through tutorials with their supervisors on their final proposal which they submit on 20 December.

Details are on the course website:

<https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/sai/ANTH4020/>

In the midway evaluation students (14 responses) responded overall very positively on the course format, and appreciated the gradual step-by-step preparation (through the different stages of draft proposals and student presentation for the final proposal, as well as the highly motivational aspects of the lectures, teaching and student session. Students also appreciated the feedback they received on the 2 - and 6-page proposals which allowed them to focus and develop their project ideas, and the opportunity to discuss their projects with their peers, and felt they learned a lot about research design, library research and data storage (also through the sessions provided by the guest lectures from UiO library).

Some students commented on the length of the taught element of the course (which finishes classes at the end of October), whilst others would have preferred a stricter time management in the student sessions (some few presentations went overtime), and more opportunities to discuss with their peers. It was also suggested that perhaps more guest lectures could be offered by anthropologists who have been on fieldwork.

In response to these helpful comments, it should be pointed out (perhaps very early on in the semester) that the course does not finish at the end of October (only its formally taught elements), but in fact continues with the students working by themselves on the final research proposal with their supervisors, for final submission of the proposal at the end of December.

In agreement with the Programme Council, this late date of submission was precisely chosen to allow the students sufficient time for development of the proposal and not to conflict with assignments from their other two mandatory courses. Stricter time management of the presentations can surely be aimed for, as well as more opportunities to discuss with their peers, and examples /guest lectures from anthropologists having been on fieldwork, though this would have to be achieved within the teaching hours allocated to this course. Possible changes will be considered for the next year (autumn 2023), as this year's feedback was received after the taught element was already completed.