

Department of Social Anthropology - Teaching and Learning Statement

Lecture recording policy

The Department of Social Anthropology recognises the pedagogical and social benefits of attending in-person lectures. Lectures provide a unique environment for collective learning and engagement between academics and students. The vitality of this environment, both for students and academics, depends upon regular and continuous levels of attendance. Lectures are not intended to provide content for reproduction in essays, but rather to introduce topics and orient thinking. Attending lectures enables students to form better connections with their wider cohort and to interact with the lecturer. These larger collective forums are a vital complement to the small-scale supervision teaching that is a hallmark of a Cambridge degree. The schedule of lecture delivery throughout terms sets the appropriate rhythm for engagement with topics across each paper.

Standardised recording of lectures has led to declining attendance, undermining the status of in-person teaching and depriving students of the pedagogical and social benefits of collective lecture hall learning. Repeat viewing of captioned lectures has also led to the misuse of lectures, transforming them from launchpads for further reading and critical reflection to quotable forms of content to be reproduced in exams and essays. Binge-watching of lectures at the end of term undermines their role in setting the rhythm of the paper by sequentially introducing topics. Recording of lectures may also inhibit student participation.

For academics, recording reduces the space for creative and improvisational forms of delivery, turning lectures into a forensically documented record that might plausibly travel well beyond its intended context. This discourages engagement with difficult or controversial political and ethical issues by undermining the space of relative intimacy and trust that lectures rely on. These considerations are particularly important for the Department of Social Anthropology, where subjects regularly raise and require critical engagement with controversial and sensitive themes. Effective research-led teaching relies on academics' confidence that intellectual property, particularly unpublished work, is secure. Recorded lectures undermine this confidence.

In light of the benefits of collective in-person teaching, the observed negative effects of standardised lecture recording, and the regularity with which controversial and sensitive issues are discussed within the Department of Social Anthropology, lectures will not be recorded as standard. The department also strongly discourages the recording of seminars and of discussions during lectures, on pedagogical grounds and grounds of academic freedom and security.

Department adjustments for disabled students

The Department is committed to providing reasonable adjustments for disabled students. First and foremost, our focus is on doing whatever we can to help all students attend in-person lectures wherever possible. The Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC) and your college tutorial system should be able to support you with this, and if you feel there is more the departments can do to help, please let us know.

Accessing lecture recordings is not an appropriate substitute for in-person attendance. If you think you will be missing a significant number of lectures for disability-related reasons, please discuss this as soon as possible with your supervisor who will be able to advise you on next steps. However, used well (see note 2 below), lecture recordings may be helpful to students who are occasionally unable to attend lectures for disability-related reasons. As a complement to lecture attendance, lecture recordings can also benefit students with specific disabilities. If this applies to you, please contact the ADRC as soon as possible. They can issue a Student Support Document (SSD) which states that you would benefit from access to lecture recordings. This document will automatically be communicated

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to the department administrators, who will then add you to a bespoke Moodle course or Moodle folder containing lecture recordings. The Department will make the SSD available to teaching staff and any other relevant person. You need do nothing further beyond contact the ADRC.

Two important notes:

1) We do not record seminars, as this raises complex issues of consent and may discourage student participation. Not all lectures will be recorded by the lecturer. Furthermore, in some cases, recording lectures may be inappropriate, such as if the material provided in the lecture is sensitive. If the lecturer decides that recording a lecture is inappropriate, we will endeavour to have alternative reasonable adjustments in place, such as handouts, PowerPoint or lecture notes provided instead. These will be provided on the general Moodle page of the paper, not on the SSD-specific Moodle course or Moodle folder for recordings.

2) When used poorly, lecture recordings can actively harm your learning, and can encourage practices which have negative effects on your wellbeing. These issues are detailed [here](#) along with advice and guidance on how to best use lecture recordings.

Consent for lecture recordings

By providing a recording of a lecture to the departments, lecturers consent to the use of that recording under the following terms:

Lecturers consent to the making of a recording and to the processing of their personal data collected within the recording (image, voice, opinions, etc.). They understand that, as a member of University staff, the University has a non-exclusive, royalty-free, license to use the recording for teaching in the University. The material may not be used for any purposes relating to non-registered students, without seeking additional consent from the lecturer. Material will be made available only to the cohort of students, or individuals within the cohort, for which the recording has been prepared. Separate consent will be sought for use in other modules/course sections or otherwise.

Lecturers can withdraw or modify this consent at any time.

Lecturers may share their lecture PowerPoints and/or handouts with students instead of providing recordings of their lectures.

This consent does not cover any periods of industrial action.

The university lecture recordings policy can be found here:

<https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/supporting-students/policy-recordings>

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