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COVID-19 MPhil FAQs for Social Anthropology

Teaching and Assessment in Social Anthropology in 2020: some frequently asked questions

This page is to set out the changes to how teaching and assessment will work in Social Anthropology over Easter Term 2020. This document is for MPhil students in Social Anthropology.

(For second and third-year students – that is, those taking papers in Social Anthropology in HSPS Part IIA and IIB, please refer to [HSPS Part II FAQs](#). If you are taking the first-year paper (SAN1), it is better to look at the [HSPS website](#) for more information.)

The basic arrangement is that all **exams** will be taken on-line, via a Moodle site. You write timed essays, and there will be word limits for each exam script. Social Anthropology **teaching** – online lectures, seminars and revision supervisions organised by Colleges – will continue virtually in Easter Term. Dr Lazar is holding an office hour on MS Teams (in the MPhil channel) on Wednesdays at 4-5pm BST, until the end of May.

Here are some answers to frequently-asked questions (FAQs) about these arrangements. They should be read in conjunction with the University's frequently asked questions on [assessment](#) and [teaching](#), which set out the general University-wide policies on these matters, and with the information provided by other Departments and Faculties in relation to their papers. We have not replicated the information already in those documents here, but only included the information that is relevant specifically to students taking papers taught by Social Anthropology.

The questions are broken down into four sections: the format of the exams, the exam timing and scheduling, the results from the exams, and the teaching in Easter Term.

- 1. Format of the exams**
- 2. Exam schedule**
- 3. Results**
- 4. Teaching**

1. The format of the exams

How will the exam process work?

Three days before each of your exams, the Department will send you the link to the specific Moodle site for that exam. Please test this link to be sure you have access. You will not be able to see the contents of the exam paper at that stage, but the link should take you to the relevant page. Your exam will go live (that is, you will be able to see the contents of the exam paper) via that link at the timetabled start of the 5 hour window within which you will take the exam. Refresh the page if you have it open before the start of the 5 hour window. You upload your exam essays on the same site.

If the link is not working, or if you have not received a link two days before the exam, please do let Dave Clark know urgently.

For information on exam process, we strongly recommend you read the University's guidance here, which also shows you the format of the site on which you will view the exam paper and submit your essays: <https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=12212311> .

You should complete the essays within a single document (not a separate document per essay). We recommend you save the file with the title of your personal exam number (your 'blind grading id') and the paper code (ie MP1 or MP2). Do not include your own name or your CRSid (the first part of your Cambridge email) anywhere in the saved document.

You have a choice about whether to type the essays or to handwrite them. If you type the essays, please do so in a Word document. It should be in 12-point font and with 1.5-line spacing.

If you choose to handwrite your essays, the University Information Service has provided instructions on how to do this, as well as a list of recommended iOS and Android apps, in the following Moodle course: <https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=182441> .

For most exams, you should spend three hours between opening the exam paper and completing your essays. If you have specific examination access arrangements, please add this to the time limit. For example, if you are allowed 25% extra time, this would mean you should take up to 3 hours 45 minutes in sitting the exam, if the exam would otherwise be for 3 hours. You should not include the time at the end spent scanning (if handwriting) or uploading the essays within this 3-hour period – we appreciate this may take a few extra minutes on top of the time spent writing. Please note though that your essays have to be uploaded within the 5-hour window.

The Exams Team will monitor the time that the exam paper was downloaded and the complete script was uploaded, and will inform us if there is any cause for concern (i.e. if it has taken significantly longer than 3 hours).

If you experience any short interruptions – a technical problem or interruption of your working environment (noise, distraction, etc.) of ten minutes or fewer – please just add the lost time to your 3 hours. If you experience longer interruptions, we suggest that you try to continue working for up to three hours within the window. If you are concerned about interruptions that have happened, and certainly in the case of interruptions of more than ten minutes, please email Dave Clark to document and explain the interruption as soon as possible after the exam.

If you have serious technical problems with Moodle during the course of the exam, contact moodlehelp@uis.cam.ac.uk. If you are unable to submit your assessment online you should email your submission to the Exams Office: exams2020@admin.cam.ac.uk. In the event that a student successfully submits their assessment to both Moodle and the Exams Office, the version submitted to Moodle will be used.

Am I allowed to look things up online or look at my notes during the exams?

These are being treated as 'open book' exams, so you are allowed to look at your notes and use the internet during the exam. However, the exams have a time and word limit – 3 hours (though see below) and 6,000 words per exam, so you have to use your time well. Please note that the 'open book' assessment format may permit the odd bit of looking things up, but students should be aware that too much on-the-spot research may mean that you are unable to finish the three answers required of you in the advised amount of time. It is therefore **strongly advised that you revise, write timed practice essays, and otherwise prepare for these exams as you would have done, had they been being held as normal in Cambridge.**

Some students have raised specific questions about the 'open book' nature of the exams, and whether this means that their scripts will need to contain more references, or bibliographic material or lengthy quotes. Please be reassured that this is **not** the case. You should type them pretty much as you would write your exams were you to be taking them in Cambridge. We will not expect you to be doing anything different, and while you may want to look up the odd thing (since this is open-book, that is permitted), you don't need citations or specifics of the sort that might be googled. In fact, the danger is that you may spend precious time doing that and become distracted from the actual writing of an argument which will continue to be the hallmark of a good essay.

Will the question paper look any different from past papers?

In essence, no, the format remains exactly the same and the intention is to examine you just as we have always done, so your preparations should include looking at past exam papers, writing timed essays, reading lots of ethnography and honing your arguments.

The only other difference is that the exam paper will have the word-limit on each cover sheet

Why is there a word limit, and what is that limit?

Since these exams are necessarily open book, we are conscious that this would make it possible for students to prepare sections of text in advance and incorporate them into an exam essay. We do not want to encourage this, partly because it will not help candidates to write essays that are **answers to the specific questions actually asked**, because that, and not pre-prepared answers to a different question, is what the assessors will give credit for. As a result, we have introduced a tight word limit of 6,000 words per script so that you write closely focused essays within the allotted time limit. Under these conditions, copying previously prepared material is likely to result in a weak performance, because it will mean that the answers are not sufficiently focused on the questions you are being asked.

For all the Social Anthropology exam papers, the word limit applies to the script as a whole: 6,000 words in total. As students are required to answer three questions, each answer should be around 1,500-2,000 words per essay.

The word limit is a maximum not a target, and includes all text of the essays in the script. There is no need to include footnotes, but if you do (though see the point about that below), they would be included in the word count. You can discount the words in the essay title, the candidate number (if included) and other material in the script that is not part of the substance of the essay.

Should my answer be written like an exam essay or like a supervision essay? Should I include full referencing and a bibliography? What are the marking criteria?

It should be written as if it were an exam essay, not a supervision essay. We do not encourage you to use your time and words to write full referencing or to compile a bibliography. The [marking criteria for exams](#) remain the same as if these were exams taken under invigilated conditions, and the advice on writing exam essays remains the same. Please view the [MPhil Assessment](#) webpage for detail.

I can't access relevant printed books. Will this put me at a disadvantage?

An issue of concern to many has been that some of you will have very limited access printed sources (almost all libraries in many countries are now closed). We fully recognise that access to print-only sources at the moment is very limited for many of you. This applies both in writing dissertations and in preparing for exams. We will take account of this in the assessment process: no exam script will be marked down because it does not make reference to secondary sources that are available only in print copy. Social Anthropology exam questions are always open-ended, and can be answered in a wide range of ways. You will be assessed on the cogency and originality of what you do write, not marked down because you haven't read any specific secondary texts. We do however strongly encourage you to make full use of on-line sources, and you should have access to the wider range of sources made available electronically over recent weeks.

On what system do I type my essays? Can I handwrite the essays if I so choose?

We are offering all students the possibility to **either type their essays in a Word document, which you would then upload to Moodle, or to handwrite their essays and scan them in.** See above for explanation of the exam process.

If you choose to handwrite your essays, you must use black ink as this is the most easily read. The University Information Service has also provided specific instructions on how to scan and upload handwritten scripts, as well as a list of recommended iOS and Android apps, in the following Moodle course: <https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=182441>. You will need to self-enrol in order to access this. You can test the process of uploading and submitting scanned documents in the practice area, and we strongly recommend you look at this and practice before arranging to take your exams through handwriting.

How will the word limit on handwritten exams work?

Students who handwrite exams need to keep to the 6,000 word limit. If it appears that a script may be over 6,000 words, then assessors will stop reading at 6,000 words. To be clear, we do not expect students to count their words precisely but to estimate and use their time to write concise arguments in response to the question.

I have specific examination access arrangements. How will these be respected?

It is important to be in touch with your College if you have an EAA or have any other concerns about this. We expect that in the large majority of cases, specific access arrangements can be accommodated within the five-hour window. If you are not sure this is possible, your College tutor should be in touch with the Exams, Assessment and Mitigating Circumstances officials at the Student Registry to discuss alternative examination arrangements.

Can I access the centrally managed assessments in Moodle to check that I can access it ok?

Students will be able to access the Moodle courses containing centrally managed assessments **72 hours before the assessment** is due to begin. You ***must*** check that you have access **before the assessment period begins** and if there are any issues, please urgently contact moodlehelp@uis.cam.ac.uk The question paper will appear in the course as a PDF to view or download, as will the assessment tool for submissions. They will be visible but greyed out and inaccessible until the assessment begins.

What if I am taking my exams in a different time zone from the UK?

Students who are not currently resident in the UK should **update the time zone** in their Moodle profile to ensure the times shown in the system – such as assessment deadlines – **are correct for their location**. Instructions are available on this page of the Moodle help course:

<https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=156022§ionid=2666811> .

How can I ask a question or ask for clarification about an exam question when I start my paper?

Due to the online nature of these assessments, there will be no facility via Moodle for communicating about the paper to students. It will not be possible to announce or circulate corrections or clarifications during the assessment.

What do I do if I am suddenly taken ill or find myself unable to take an exam due to extenuating circumstances?

Just like an illness that could affect you when taking exams in Cambridge, you must inform your College Tutor **immediately** (sending an email is OK) if you are unable to undertake an assessment. Your College will inform the central authorities who will inform the Department.

What happens if I have a technical or connectivity problem during my exam?

Since the assessment for Social Anthropology is digital with remotely typed open-book exam assessment, there is the possibility of technical problems or even technical failure. If it is impossible to connect, complete or upload / send one or more papers because of something going wrong at the time of the exam, it would be the same as if you have been affected by sudden illness during an exam sat in Cambridge. **You should tell us about this (please email Dave Clark on dpc38@cam.ac.uk),** but you must also ***contact your Tutor immediately*** giving them the details because the formal application for extenuation must be made by your College Tutor in the usual way. For minor problems and / or interruptions (for example, a dropped connection for 5-10 minutes) during the course of the exam, the 5-hour window will in most cases accommodate this, and you will be able to report difficulties separately.

For technical problems with Moodle, especially if you cannot upload your script, contact moodlehelp@uis.cam.ac.uk. If you are unable to submit your assessment online you should email your submission to the Exams Office: exams2020@admin.cam.ac.uk. In the event that a student successfully submits their assessment to both Moodle and the Exams Office, the version submitted to Moodle will be used.

2. The exam schedule

When will the exams be?

The original schedule for the exams has been cancelled.

The assessments will be:

Examination in Social Anthropology for the degree of Master of Philosophy, 2020 - HUSAM2

Wednesday 03 Jun	12.00-17.00	1	The scope of social anthropology I: production and reproduction (ET BOE 3)	Online Assessment Test
Monday 08 Jun	12.00-17.00	2	The scope of social anthropology II: systems of	Online Assessment Test

power and knowledge (ET
BOE 3)

What about the second sitting?

This is relevant to students who were unable to take their exams in Easter Term – due to, for example, illness, full-time caring responsibilities, lack of access to the internet or a suitable work-space. The dates for the second sitting will be announced by the University when it becomes clear that it can be fully operational again.

What happens to those students who are unable to take exams in the second sitting?

Any student who finds themselves unable to take exams either in the first or second sitting can also apply for an allowance via the University's Examinations Access & Mitigation Committee (EAMC) through their College Tutor.

Will students in East Asia or the Americas have their exams in the middle of the night?

The current expectation is that all exams will be held in the 5-hour slot from 12:00-17:00 BST. This means that students in the Americas will be able to take the exams in three hours in the morning (standardly, 6am-9am by Pacific time) and students in East Asia and Oceania will be able to take exams in the evening (for Eastern Australia, 9pm to midnight). We consider this to be a workable arrangement for the large majority of our international students, but please do let us know if you anticipate specific problems.

I have specific examination access arrangements. How will these be respected?

In the large majority of cases, we expect that specific access arrangements can be accommodated within the five-hour window. If that is not possible, please contact Dave Clark.

3. The results

When will I receive my results?

We expect that students who take their exams during Easter Term will receive feedback on their exam results from their supervisor by late June, but formal notification of the results will take place after the Examiners meeting and Degree Committee confirmation of results in late September/early October. For students who take their exams during the second sitting, we cannot at the moment project when that second sitting will be, and therefore when the results will be released.

Set essays will be marked and feedback provided as usual, please refer to the [MPhil assessment](#) webpage. We hope that this will be able to take place in the majority of cases by end May.

Dissertation submission and examination remains as normal, except that there is no need to submit a hard copy. Please refer to the [MPhil assessment](#) webpage for details.

4. Teaching

How will lectures, seminars & supervisions work in Easter term 2020?

For all Department-led teaching (i.e. lectures and seminars), we are moving to remote teaching. The digital timetable for this term has been updated to take account of changes to teaching due to the pandemic. It now indicates which 'medium' will be used to deliver different lectures, seminars and workshops (for example, the timetable will say: 'Zoom' or 'MS Teams' or 'Moodle', and will be updated as this information becomes available).

As the university has purchased MS Teams, all students automatically have accounts on it. If you wish to, you can download the app via <https://teams.microsoft.com/downloads> and log in via your Raven account. Please be aware that some lecturers, seminar leaders and supervisors may choose to use other systems (such as Zoom, Skype, Google Meet etc.) and the Department will be remaining flexible and supportive to teaching staff in these choices to enable them to deliver effective teaching and supervision to you all. Some of these can be accessed without needing to download an app. For instance, it is possible to use just your web browser to log in to Zoom and to MS Teams.

You will all have been enrolled within Microsoft Teams as part of the SOCANTH-Social Anthropology Students Team. Within that is also a specific sub-group (described in Microsoft jargon as a 'Channel') for the MPhil cohort.

MS Teams also has a 'chat' function. We would like to ask all students ***not to use*** the larger Teams or Channel 'chat' functions for anything other than academic / teaching matters please. Please continue to use your own channels to communicate with each other and keep the MS Teams ones clear for academic matters only.

The undergraduate administrator, Claudia Luna, will send out invitations for events (i.e. seminars or lectures) taking place on MS Teams or Zoom. Wherever possible, she will be aiming to send these out in the previous few days. You may wish to create a separate email folder in your inbox to ***save all the Zoom / MS Teams invites*** you get from Claudia or any teaching staff for teaching events and log them in a digital calendar so that you can be alerted to them before they happen. This is so that you are able to manage your time and the logins and can find the right email for the correct session when you need it. Without these log-in details you won't be able to attend your teaching, so please do treat them as you would entry tickets to an event that need to be kept carefully and made available in one place in an organised fashion.

For some of your other Department-organised teaching, you will see on the (updated) online timetable that lecturers will upload spoken Powerpoint slides on Moodle, or upload recorded lectures using a tool called 'Panopto'. These will be marked on the online timetable as "Moodle" (in the place where the venue would usually be) signalling that a teaching resource pertaining to that item on the timetable will be available on the paper's Moodle page and can be viewed when you are able. There are already a number of resources for week 1 that have been uploaded in this way.

Supervisions will continue through online means. We will encourage supervisors to be as flexible as they can be about timing, so that if you are in a very different time zone, you are still able to participate.

During the Easter Term, according to your timetable, you will receive notifications of recorded lecture uploads to Moodle and electronic invites to seminar, Q&A and supervision sessions on Microsoft Teams or other software.

How do I get in touch with the Department should I have any concerns or queries about teaching, exams or assessments?

If you have questions regarding remote teaching of lectures or seminars please email Dave Clark. Dr Lazar is holding an office hour on MS Teams (in the MPhil channel) on Wednesdays at 4-5pm BST, until the end of May, but do also feel free to email her directly.