

Call for papers for an Edward Ellgar textbook on “Courthouse Ethnography”

(edited by Dr. Lisa Flower & Dr. Sarah Klosterkamp)

This textbook focuses on the courthouse as a site of ethnographic fieldwork highlighting the nuances and negotiations the ethnographic researcher faces, which together with the plethora of methodological standpoints and a smörgåsbord of empirical data to be collected, contributes to the courthouse being a dynamic, challenging and reflexive site of study.

At this early stage we retain a certain degree of flexibility, however we invite contributions along three themes:

1) Doing courthouse ethnography

Practical examples of how to conduct courthouse ethnography, problems and conflicts that may be encountered along with solutions, conducting ethnography alone and/or in teams, the spatiality and temporality of courthouse ethnography, reflexivity, observing different types of trial - from the mundane to the risky and high security, to the sensitive. We are also interested in themes such as the role of building relationships in the field as well as the changing role and impact of the ethnographer. Furthermore, contemporary aspects of ethnography are also welcomed, such as conducting ethnographic fieldwork in the digital age. Widening the ethnographic senses to go beyond the purely ethnographic eye, as well as issues of access, gatekeeping and ethical issues are also welcomed. Also complicated ethnographic work - covering a long period of time, entailing many participants and carrying out fieldwork in sensitive settings are of interest, along with many other themes!

2) Ethnographic studies of the courthouse

We invite empirically-based contributions, in particular focusing on different actors in the courtroom (interpreters, families, judges, defence lawyers, prosecutors, counsel for plaintiff, witnesses, plaintiffs, defendants), as well as those from a range of different types of cases (from the mundane to the sensational) and from a different areas of law (environmental, immigration, human rights, business, criminal, family and so on).

3) Doing courthouse research as a non-ethnographer

Here, in particular, we are interested in contributions from researchers new to the ethnographic field, perhaps entering ethnographic work for the first time, or entering the field from another discipline. Contributions are welcomed regarding conflicting identities, methodological issues, epistemological and ontological troubles and more!

We welcome contributions from a wide range of disciplines: sociology, human geography, law, sociology of law, and more.

Please send a title and short abstract (max 300 words) and indication of which section you consider your contribution will fit under to Lisa Flower (lisa.flower@soc.lu.se) or Sarah Klosterkamp (s.klosterkamp@uni-bonn.de) by Feb 14th.

Chapter contribution is max 8,000 words. First drafts will be expected by October 2022 and will be discussed at a workshop in November 2022. Final manuscripts will be submitted in June 2023.