

Beyond the Field: Opportunities and Challenges for Contemporary Social Science Research

From the reading of texts, music, art, and films as symptomatic of wider social realities, to the imagination and writing as practices of social research, unconventional 'fieldwork' and empirical research is becoming increasingly prominent in the social sciences. Research areas such as (but not limited to) memory; imagination; performance; affect; practices of reading, writing and representation; socially and politically embodied cognition; technology and virtual environments; and visual imagery have been incorporated in social science research projects. Whilst this does not challenge the social scientific credentials of these inquiries, it does create a number of opportunities and challenges for the social science researcher.

Beyond the Field, invites postgraduate research students working on 'post-positivist' research projects to reflect on the research practices they employ and the implications of these methods for their research. The conference will take place at Aberystwyth University's Department of International Politics on the 9th and 10th of November 2012. In bringing together postgraduate research students- both within and beyond the field of International Studies- we aim to allow research students to share their experiences and thoughts about these methods, as well as to generate ideas about how research training programs might better support students whose research goes beyond conventional qualitative and quantitative analysis.

We invite submission of papers exploring researchers' experiences of employing unconventional research methods, as well as those reflecting on the following issues:

- The methods and practice of research outside and beyond the empirical and the quantifiable.
- The implications of studying memory, technology, literature, visual imagery and the imagination for the social sciences.
- The significance of new research practices for the philosophy of social science.
- How this research can be best supported by research training programs.

There will be up to 7 scholarships available for PhD candidates, which cover one night's accommodation in Aberystwyth and a travel grant of up to £50. These will be allocated according to the quality of the submissions. Please indicate whether you wish to be considered for one of these awards when submitting a proposal.

Please submit proposals for papers (no more than 250 words) to the convenors no later than Friday 24th August.