

Call For Papers:  
**Extra-terrestrial ethnographies**

*Fieldwork for the new space age.*

UCL Anthropology | London | September 18th & 19th 2023



The anthropology of outer space is a vibrant emerging area of research that often challenges traditional notions of the field and its constitution within anthropology. During the opening decades of the 21st Century, scholarship on the social studies of outer space has opened up new ways for understanding place, technology, organisation, humanness, futures, and much more. The growing body of empirical research around outer space has helped to push the boundaries on the accepted scope of anthropological subject matter and furthered methodological and analytical conversations in the social sciences. The *Extra-terrestrial ethnographies: Fieldwork for the new space age* symposium at UCL invites contributors to discuss the emerging issues such work presents for the future of the field site, anthropological theory and engagements with interlocutors, in an area often marked by multi-sited, multi-temporal and multi-scalar issues.

The growth of anthropological literature around the conceptual, organisational, political, and historical faces of outer space has occurred in tandem with the heterogeneous growth of spaceflight industries and projects. Occurring at the level of grass-roots discourse, national political agencies, and amongst commercial entities, this boom is characterised by multiple political and cultural positions in relation to space science. Fieldwork-led, empirical research is well-positioned to offer valuable critical insight into emergent social phenomena around such things as re-conceptualisations of territory, religion, the body, materials and infrastructures, the future, and other forms of being human amongst other things.

This call for papers is seeking ethnographies of outer space. The symposium will consider the challenges such work presents to the anthropological field and open up discussion as to the future of the emerging social studies of outer space. Taking 'fieldwork' as a broad descriptor for a methodological approach towards studies of outer space, we are inviting papers from scholars whose work foregrounds empirical engagements with their subject matter within, but not limited to anthropology.

The symposium is hosted by the ETHNO-ISS project at UCL Anthropology in conjunction with the Social Studies of Outer Space Network (SSOS). Whilst we encourage in-person attendance we will accommodate virtual participation. Presenters will be allocated a 20-minute slot total. If you would like to present, please submit a 250-word abstract to Giles Bunch at [giles.bunch.20@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:giles.bunch.20@ucl.ac.uk) by Friday 23rd June 2023 with selections made by 30th June. Whilst this conference has a limited budget we will endeavour to contribute to accommodation and travel expenses. We ask those who do not have access to institutional funds to state that they would like to access our accommodation (3 nights) and travel budget in their application.

