Choosing a field site for Anthropology 136Q, Participant Observation.

Pick a field site that interests you, one that is very, very different from what you've experienced before. The stranger, more off-putting it is to you, to more you'll learn by figuring out how to participate. If you're entirely comfortable and intuitively know how to function there, you will find it extremely difficult to self-consciously reflect on your experience and hence conceptualize it. Your field site must be safe, accessible, open to outsiders (you), and occur frequently enough that you can be sure you can reliably participate about ten hours per week. Here are examples of some places people have done fieldwork for this course in the past; use this to stimulate your imagination. Some of these were not very challenging, and hence not as rewarding.

Bus
Homeless shelter
Homeless man and his relationships
Skid row downtown
Break dancers
ER nurses
Chinese traditional medicine doctor’s clinic
Juvenile detention center
Homes of wives of active duty Marines
Piercing parlor
Barber shop catering to a particular ethnic clientele
Churches catering to particular ethnic congregations
Meetings of the True World Religion Given by the Promised God-Man Adi Da Samraj
Bars
Various lesbian and gay organizations and clubs
Street performers
Nursing home
Alcoholics anonymous meetings
Serious chess players at a coffee shop
Meetings of players of “Magic” (the game)
“Second Life” (online virtual reality avatar game)
World of Warcraft group
Mixed martial arts training center
Air Force ROTC
Meetup.com events
Buddhist temples
Soka Gakkai Buddhist Organization
Church of Scientology
Cosplay
Autism treatment program
People living far out in the dessert
Plastic surgery center
Juvenile detention center
Spirit medium/fortune teller
Day labor pick-up center