

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

SERIES 21/2026

08 September 2026, Tuesday

10.00 am – 12.30 pm

Q-3-4, Level 3

Sunway Square Campus

Sunway University

Guest Speaker

Prof Colin Michael Hall

Dean's Chair in Marketing
Sustainability and Society
Massey University

Editor of Current Issues in Tourism
Field Editor of Frontiers in Sustainable Tourism
Editor of Contemporary Geographies of Leisure,
Tourism and Mobility, Routledge and CRC Press Series



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ABOUT THE TOPIC

WHERE DOES TOURISM END AND FIELDWORK BEGIN? THE CONDUCT OF FIELDWORK AND CONTEMPORARY BUSINESS RESEARCH

Fieldwork is an essential element of many social science disciplines but has arguably not been given as much emphasis in business research, including in tourism studies, often because of its association with “travelling for fun” rather than the undertaking of “serious” research. Fieldwork is much more than ethnography. This seminar will discuss the essential nature of fieldwork for business and social science and its critical role in understanding phenomena and writing about them. The presentation will initially focus on the roots of the idea of fieldwork before discussing their importance in both a formal and informal sense, and the corresponding implications for data collection. In considering the formal scope of fieldwork it will be argued that it is undertaken in a range of different but overlapping spaces: social, methodological/theoretical, ethical, regulatory/political, physical/phygital (including material and virtual spaces), and temporal. These different spaces will then be used to highlight the challenges of undertaking fieldwork and some of the responses that may be required. The presentation concludes that fieldwork has become more essential than ever as a research strategy and as a means of improving research quality

THEMATIC ANALYSIS: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE EXTREMELY UGLY

Thematic analysis is an integral component of contemporary research. However, while often referred to, particularly in relation to qualitative research and the examination of interview transcripts, it is often poorly or unconvincingly undertaken, which arguably reflects some of the problems in demarcating the field of thematic analysis. This seminar looks to discuss some of the contemporary issues in thematic analysis which is defined as a group of methods for identifying, analysing, and reporting quantitative and qualitative patterns (themes) within data. The methodology is usually closely associated with grounded theory and content analysis as well as with the structured and open coding of interviews, transcripts, and other data. Three broad approaches are often identified: codebook, coding reliability, and reflexive. The characteristics of each approach will be discussed and their advantages and disadvantages, including with respect to the use of computer-assisted (or aided) qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) programmes such as NVivo or MAXQDA, as well as the use of AI. The latter providing interesting challenges to notions of reflexivity. However, it is argued that reflexivity is an area that is often given insufficient attention, or at least evidence, in many studies. The seminar concludes by noting some of the concerns that need to be addressed in improving the acceptability of papers that use thematic analysis, including issues of saturation and reporting.

ABOUT PROF COLIN MICHAEL HALL

Michael Hall is Dean's Chair in Marketing, Sustainability and Society, Massey University Business School, Massey University, in New Zealand and an Adjunct Professor with the Business School at Sunway University. He also holds positions at universities in Finland, Sweden, and South Africa. His doctorate is from the University of Western Australia (UWA) and he has honorary doctorates from Umeå and Lund universities in Sweden and Oulu in Finland.

He is a member of numerous editorial boards and is the Editor of Current Issues in Tourism and Field Editor of Frontiers in Sustainable Tourism. He has wide ranging research interests including tourism and hospitality, regional development, global environmental change, sustainability, food, behavioural change, phygital behaviour and strategy, business ecology, and relationality, and has been teaching research methods for over 30 years.

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