



Research Methods and Ethics in the Arts

ANTH 3500 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:

Czech Republic: Arts and Social Change

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

This course aims to achieve two main objectives. First, the aim is to help students gain direct experience in culturally-appropriate field methodologies in post-socialist context. Second, the objective is also to prepare them for the Independent Study Project (ISP) through review of standard methodological skills including interviewing, participant and non-participant observation, data recording techniques, and interpersonal communication techniques. Emphasis is placed upon Arts-Based Research (ABR) methods in which the creation and analysis of art is utilized as primary mode of qualitative inquiry. Students review the different kinds of arts-based research methods (narrative, poetic, dance, and visual forms of inquiry, for example), the debates surrounding the use of arts-based methodologies, and gain practical experience for integrating creative work in a social science research context, which may be used in their ISP. Course topics include project selection and refinement, and appropriate research methods and ethics in the arts. Students also learn how to develop in-country contacts and resources, the ethics of working with professional artists, and how to maintain a field study journal. Throughout, the objective is to promote critical analysis of the role of the arts, artists, and creativity in social change and foster insight and utilization of appropriate methodologies for qualitative study of the arts and society in total respect the ethics and value systems of the host community.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a solid knowledge and skills associated with qualitative methods and ethics for conducting research in the arts;
- Show greater awareness of ethical and culturally-appropriate methods for the study of the arts in post-socialist Czech society;
- Analyze and evaluate unique knowledge of various arts-based methodology and the debates surrounding its use in qualitative research;
- Design a clear and solid proposal for the Independent Study Project and submit the application for review of research with human subjects.

Readings

Required Readings:

- Barone, Tom and Elliot W. Eisner. (2012). *Arts-Based Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Dewey, John. (1997) *Experience and Education*. New York: Simon & Schuster. Originally published, 1938.
- Merriam, Sharan B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Knowles, Gary and Cole, Ardra. (2008). *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Additional & Recommended Readings:

Additional readings may be assigned throughout the semester, including selections from the texts listed below based on the student's area of study (theatre readings for theatre students, for example). Students are expected to complete readings in advance of designated lectures and site visits.

- Barrett, Estelle and Bolt, Barbara. (2009). *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. London & New York: I. B. Taurus.
- Dewey, John. (1980). *Art as Experience* (originally published in 1934). New York: Perigee Books.
- Kershaw, Baz and Nicholson, Helen. (2011). *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Spencer, Stephen. (2011). *Visual Research Methods in the Social Sciences: Awakening Visions*. New York: Routledge.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well as the nuances of the arts and social change through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Course Schedule

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: Introduction: the Experiential Education Model & the Czech Context

This introductory module is presented within the context of Orientation week and considers the basic components of the Experiential Education Cycle and how applies to the Czech Republic study and research context.

Session I: The experiential education cycle – models

A brief review of experiential education cycle diagram, a consideration of the basic principles and philosophical underpinnings and how they connect to semester themes in the arts and society.

Required reading:

Dewey, John. (1997) *Experience, the Means and Goal of Education in Experience and Education*. New York: Simon & Schuster. Originally published, 1938. (pages to be announced)

Session 2: Czech Cultural Context and Customs

A summary of Czech etiquette, customs, and culture that includes a review of Edward T. Hall's iceberg model as well as the four phases of culture shock. Student observations and questions about Czech culture and customs drive the discussion.

Required reading:

No required readings. Students are asked to bring their own comments and questions on Czech culture, etiquette, and customs based upon what they have observed, heard, or read prior to their arrival.

Module 2: Scope & Terms of Qualitative Research

This module summarizes the key terms, theoretical underpinnings, and methods utilized in qualitative research and the stages of the ISP research proposal development, and highlights key methods of interviewing and participant and non-participant observation. Emphasis is placed upon understanding the inductive approach in qualitative research and reasoning and how concrete methods facilitate that approach.

Session 1: What is Qualitative Research?

This session reviews the philosophical orientations and approaches to qualitative research, and the differences between quantitative and qualitative research. It also considers the types of qualitative research recommended for the ISP.

Merriam, Sharan B. (2009). Chapter 1: What is Qualitative Research? And Chapter 2: Types of Qualitative Research. In Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research: A guide to Design and Implementation* (pp. 3-37)

Session 2: Interviewing Methods in the Arts

This workshop session asks students to consider the benefit of interviews vs. other types of data collection, the different types of interviews, from fully-structured to unstructured, and the ethical and practical challenges associated with conducting personal interviews on sensitive topics around arts, ideology, dissent, and social change.

Required reading:

Merriam, Sharan B. (2009) Chapter 5: Conducting Effective Interviews, In Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research: A guide to Design and Implementation* (pp. 87-115)

Session 3: Participant and Non-Participant Observation: Art & Community

By way of introduction to the Rural Stays at arts and community centers in villages outside Prague, this session considers the relationship between observer and observed and insider-outsider relationships and how to take structured field notes around the concrete topic of arts and community.

Required reading:

Kay, Alan. (October 2000). Art and Community Development; the Role the Arts Have in Regenerating Communities. *Community Development Journal*, volume 35 (No. 4), 414-424.

- Lowe, Seana S. (2000). Creating Community: Art for Community Development. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Volume 29 (No. 3) 357-386.
- Merriam, Sharan B. (2009) Chapter 6: Being a Careful Observer, In Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (pp. 117-137)

Session 4: Module 1 Reflection: Where Have We Come From? Where Are We Going?

The session begins with student group presentations on the role of arts in the communities explored outside Prague and returns to the practical lessons of the first module, based around students' actual experiences with observation, participation, and interviewing in the field. Reflections on the arts and artists in the Czech regional context provide a springboard to our focused module on arts-based-research.

Module 3: Arts-Based Research Methods

This module picks up on students' concrete observations and experiences to date in the Prague arts community in order to explore questions around the role of research in the arts or about the arts.

Session 1: Definitions & Theoretical Frameworks in Arts-Based Research

This session focuses on defining the scope and terms of Arts-Based Research, an area of research that, despite decades of development, is only now gaining currency in education and academic discourse.

Required reading:

- Barone, Tom and Elliot W. Eisner. (2012) What Is and What Is Not Arts-Based Research? In *Arts-Based Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc (pp.1-12)
- Knowles, Gary and Cole, Ardra. (2008). Chapter 3: Arts-Based Research and selected chapters as assigned in *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Session 2: Bias & Ethics in Arts-Based Research

This session considers how the question of bias enters into project design and implementation and considers some concrete case studies where the question of ethics played a role in the students' project designs. The session also addresses challenges and benefits of research methods that employ creative methods in a cross-cultural context.

Required reading:

- Barone, Tom and Elliot W. Eisner. (2012) How Might Arts Based Research Be Both Political and Ethical? In *Arts-Based Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc (pp.121-136)

Session 3: Module 2 Reflection – Viability, Validity, and Assessment of Arts-Based Research

In thematic teams based on their area of academic study, students review case studies in literary, narrative, or performance inquiry and address the contemporary debates surrounding arts-based research. Assessing the design and success of ABR projects is the key here, and the question of “but is it research?”

Required reading:

- Barone, Tom and Elliot W. Eisner. (2012). What are Some Criteria for Assessing Arts Based Research? In *Arts-Based Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc (pp.145-155).
- Chenail, Ronald J. (2008) But is it Research?: Patricia Leavy's Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice. *The Weekly Qualitative Report*, Vol. 1. No 2, October 13. pp 7-12.

Module 4: Research Strategies & Ethics

This final module is focused on critical aspects of the ISP project proposal including project design, the literature review, gaining access in the Czech context, and Ethics.

Session 1: Developing Resources & Contacts in the Czech Context:

Students are asked to identify the possible ways they may gain access to people and resources in the Czech research context. They also consider through concrete examples, aspects of behavior, social norms, and Czech communication styles that are critical to know before embarking on creative work.

Required reading:

Merriam, Sharan B. (2009) Chapter 5: Conducting Effective Interviews. In Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research: A guide to Design and Implementation* (pp. 87-115)

Session 2: Project Design & Integrity

Students work in teams to review and discuss their draft research proposals, considering the validity and framework of the research question, the methods, and goals.

Required reading:

Merriam, Sharan B. (2009) Chapter 4: *Designing Your Study and Selecting a Sample*, In Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research: A guide to Design and Implementation* (pp. 55-83)

Session 3: Ethics & Bias in Field Research

This is a workshop devoted to reviewing case studies of student projects in which ethical questions have emerged during the project design phase or in unexpected fieldwork situations. Through focused discussion around their own research proposals, students consider the underlying principles driving ethics and research in the local context and identify tools for managing ethical challenges in the field. The requirements for informed consent and Human Subjects Review are also discussed.

Required reading:

Merriam, Sharan B. (2009) Chapter 9: *Dealing with Validity, Reliability, and Ethics*, In Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research: A guide to Design and Implementation* (pp. 209-236)

SIT Study Abroad Ethics Policy

Module 5: Evaluating & Processing the Research and Cross-cultural study experience

This module takes place in two parts of a final synthesis and analysis workshop that concludes the semester.

Session 1: Analyzing the Foreign Study Experience

This first session is an interactive workshop in which students are challenged to identify the lessons learned during the semester—both academic and personal—and to reflect upon how the course themes have broadened and challenged their previous understandings of the topics and themselves.

Required reading:

No required readings – rather reflection on course themes and working with prompts provided during the workshop for group work.

Session 2: Integrating the Foreign Study Experience II: Re-Entry

This final session addresses the challenges often associated with return home after an immersive study experience. A review of concrete challenges associated with re-entry and tips for managing those challenges form the basis for the discussion.

Required reading:

Bruce, A. Culture Shock at Home: Understanding Your Own Change - The Experience of Return (1997). In *Transitions Abroad*, January/February, pp. 79-80.
<http://www.transitionsabroad.com>.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Description of Assignments:

Final grades are based upon performances over the course of the semester and take into consideration active participation, punctuality, as well as initiative for creative and critical thinking. Seminar assignments are designed to develop research and communication skills for conducting the ISP fieldwork. They are evaluated on clarity and depth of analysis, demonstration of applied skills, selection and synthesis of relevant sources and experiences, and organization and presentation.

Regional Stay Assignment: A written essay with a creative component drawing on observation and field notes, analyzing cross-cultural situations, and one of the Art-Based Research techniques introduced in class.

Interview Assignment: Students conduct an interview with an artist, NGO leader, or other specialist and prepare a transcript and analytical summary of the in-depth interview.

ISP Proposal: A project in which students develop and focus their research goals through a two-phase preparation of the ISP proposal, including a literature review, summary and explanation of the methodology, and ethical considerations. It must also include a preliminary calendar, as well as reflection on the student's positionality and expected methodological challenges and results.

Attendance and Participation: Students are required to be on time to all lectures and site visits, to attend all lectures, and to participate actively in classroom discussions, group assignments, and presentations.

Assessment

Regional stay assignment	30%
Interview assignment	30%
ISP proposal	30%
Attendance and participation	10%

Grading Scale

94-100%	A	Excellent
90-93%	A-	
87-89%	B+	
84-86%	B	Above Average
80-83%	B-	
77-79%	C+	
74-76%	C	Average
70-73%	C-	
67-69%	D+	
64-66%	D	Below Average
below 64	F	Fail

Expectations and Policies

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy artists and professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak to us.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.

Academic Policies: SIT prides itself on providing students with an experientially based program; we hold ourselves, and our students, to the highest of academic standards. Students are asked to refer to the **SIT Study Abroad Handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.