Course Description
This course will support students in developing their own comparative research project to explore the politics of food, water and energy in relation to climate change. The first few weeks of this course will consist in plenary sessions to provide students with tools to learn in a unique cross-cultural environment, challenging them to go beyond the familiar learning methods of their home campus. It will orient and engage young researchers to different research methods as well as the ethical dimensions of fieldwork including questions of power, positionality, perception and accountability.

As part of this course, students will be asked to choose a research topic and to conduct a mentored-independent study. Depending on their main area of investigation, they will be assigned to one faculty who will support them developing their research project, choosing their methodology and writing up their report. Classes will thus develop in a series of workshop conducted by each faculty with their group of supervisees to provide them with methodological tools and advice.

Questions addressed in the workshops will vary according to the faculty and student’s needs and might include: How to interpret and critically analyze documents, primary and secondary sources materials; how to conduct a literature review; how to do structured, semi-structured or non-structured interviews and how to navigate political and social power arrangements of state bureaucracies and the private sector. Special emphasis is placed on research ethics with particular emphasis on power differentials between researcher and subjects, hosts and visitors, and along the axis of race, gender and class identities.

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 Objectives
- To introduce students to various research methodologies and tools for field based research, including ethnographic and archival methodologies.
- To introduce students to the problematic power dynamics associated with research and provide students the opportunity to learn about research ethics and weigh their individual roles in field research.
- To introduce students to research proposal formulation and writing.

Course methodology:

By the end of the launch, students will submit a research proposal stating ideas of the topic that they will want to investigate in the four visited countries. Once they receive feedbacks on their proposal, students will be asked to choose their topic and will be assigned to one faculty who will supervise their research and facilitate workshops. A mid-term review will take place in Morocco where students will be expected to present the development of their research project as a group of 4 or 5 people. By the end of the course, students will submit the report of their independent research project and present it orally to the rest of the group.

Assessment and grading

Participation (15%)

Students are expected to participate actively in sessions, meetings, and related activities. “Participation” requires active engagement in discussions, curiosity and interest during classes, meetings, guest lectures, and field visits; and a supportive attitude towards other students.

Mid-term presentation (15%):

Students will form groups of 4 to 6 people to work on and present a specific theme related to their research. The goal of this mid-term presentation is for students to discuss how their topics overlap, to share their resources and encourage each other to think and work collectively and collaboratively in order to give each other feedback and advice.

Final paper (70%):

This paper will have to be 15 pages long, minimum, and will be assessed by their supervisors in collaboration with the two other faculty members. Final presentations should demonstrate original research, clear organization, synthesis and creative use of theoretical and historical readings from classes. Final presentation of the paper should demonstrate efficient and clear oral presentation, according to the following requirements:
- The research study is comparative and arguments are based on primary and/or secondary data collected in the four different countries visited.
- Ideas are illustrated with first hand information from field research and put into perspective with references from the assigned and recommended readings.
- The paper demonstrates the ability to reflect on the ethical implications of the chosen research topic and methods of fieldwork.
- Students explain and reflect critically upon their own cultural values and assumptions within the research process.

Class Schedule

CALIFORNIA

Class 1: How does one “see” the politics of climate change?
This class will explore: What is climate Change? How does one research it? Why research it? What are the limits and possibilities of the comparative method? How does one formulate a research question?

Readings:


Optional readings:


Final Research Question and abstract due Sept 18.

VIETNAM

Class 2: Ethical dilemmas associated with power and politics when doing research in post-colonial contexts

This class will look at: How to conduct research in a respectful and culturally appropriate way as a Western researcher interacting with research participants from the global South? Who can be approached and by whom and why? How do political issues affect the research process? What are the politics of photography as regards
power and surveillance? How does one integrate the voices of those who are usually socially marginalized into one’s work?

Readings:
Sultana, F. “Reflexivity, Positionality and Participatory Ethics: Negotiating Fieldwork Dilemmas in International Research,”


The history of research as violence
Watch: “The Stanford Prison Experiment,”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=760lwYmpXbc (30 min)

Optional:
Watch “The Milgram Experiment”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdb20gcc_Ns (15 min)

Class 3: Designing a research strategy and methodology, tools for fieldwork-based research

This class will address: Qualitative vs quantitative methodologies; Documents, primary and secondary sources; Conducting structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews; Ethnographic research and participant observation.

Readings

MOROCCO

Class 4: Progress Review and Trouble Shooting
In this class, research groups will report on the process and progress.

Class 5: Workshop

Class 6: Workshop

Class 7: Group Oral Presentations

BOLIVIA

Class 8: Workshop
**Class 10: Workshop**

Student Research Presentations

**Suggested readings:**


Punch, S. 2010 Hidden struggles of fieldwork: Exploring the role and use of field diaries, Emotion, Space and Society

**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

For final grades in IHP *Climate Change* courses it is useful for both faculty and students to think of letter grades in the following way. An "A" represents truly outstanding work that exemplifies thorough analysis, superior insight, and crystal clear presentation. A "B" signifies highly competent work that accomplishes the task at hand very well, through considerable thought, reasonable analysis, and an organized presentation. A "C" represents adequate work that meets basic requirements but demonstrates no distinction in terms of analytical insight or organization. A "D" is characterized by poorly or partially completed work that reflects a lack of initiative, inconsistent analysis, and/or erratic presentation. Plus and minus indicate relatively better or poorer work within each category. There is no A+.

*Nota bene*

Papers without thematic ideas or arguments—those that lapse into mere narration or description, or whose arguments are buried within the text—will be graded in accordance with their low level of organization.

Attendance and Participation: All students are expected to be present at every program session, with the only exceptions being illness (written note required from a non-IHP adult, e.g. homestay parent, or preferably, health care professional). Unexcused absences and habitual lateness will result in penalties reflected in your participation grade. Please inform the instructor if tardiness is anticipated. All students are expected to come to class on time.

Late work: In keeping with IHP policy, papers handed in late will drop one point per day, unless permission is granted otherwise. Course assignments are due at the beginning of the day.

Electronic devices: The use of mobiles, smartphones and laptops is not permitted in class sessions. The idea behind this policy is to guarantee an environment in which constant attention and concentration are maintained.
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.