Course Description
The Research Methods and Ethics course aims at blending cross-cultural awareness with conventional academic learning. It focuses on initiating the students to the methods of conducting field research and the ethics involved in the study of health-related issues. Students learn about the cultural particulars of everyday life in urban and rural Jordan and the health resources available to various segments of the population. The lectures address issues that pertain to research methods, confidentiality and anonymity of informants, data gathering, interviewing, safety and security. The ultimate objective is to prepare the students to undertake their Independent Study Projects in total respect of in-country ethics and the international ethical norms that regulate health research. At the end of the course, the student should have the cultural understanding and the methodological tools to successfully complete their Independent Study Project.

The course combines classroom lectures and field assignments. Throughout the semester, the students work with their Academic Director and ISP advisor to develop their ISP research proposal and prepare IRB application. The course is divided into 3 modules: 1) Undertaking Field Study in Jordan; 2) Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods; 3) Health Research Techniques and Ethics.

Course Objectives
Research Methods and Ethics has an interdisciplinary, integrative, and critical focus encompassing 45 academic hours (3 credits). Its main objectives are to:

- Become aware of experience-based learning processes outside an institutional structure, and to develop confidence and initiative in learning from experience;
- Be able to apply language skills and knowledge from the Thematic Courses and other sources to extend and deepen interest, knowledge, and integration in the host culture;
- Select an ISP topic and investigation methodology that is realistic within constraints of time and resources, ethical in terms of local relationships, and capable of yielding interesting, fresh perspectives on the host culture;

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• Learn to deal with primary sources in the field, such as material gained through observation and interviews, and to learn to work with several languages, interpreters and informants.

Expected Outcomes
Upon completion of Research Methods and Ethics students will be able to:

• Show awareness of the potential and challenges of conducting field study in Jordan;
• Conduct field study using the tools of observation, interviewing, focus groups and surveys and knowledge gained from the thematic courses, language study and primary resources;
• Demonstrate awareness of the norms of ethics in health research;
• Produce an Independent Study Project proposal on an aspect of health and community development and Application for Review of Research with Human Subjects.

Course Requirements

Field Study Journal
Each student is required to keep a Field Study journal. This journal will continue as a “work journal” during the Independent Study Project (ISP) period while in the field. This journal should include field notes, maps, interviews, contacts, descriptions and interpretations of visits, participation and other processes of the ISP project. A good field journal will contain the facts and the experience, but stops short of organizing and polishing the material into a finished form. It does analyze, process connections and relationships, make interpretations, comparisons, and contrasts, explore causes and effects and finally, with great care, evaluate and come to conclusions. In this journal, it is helpful to separate observations from feelings and interpretations. Many people find it difficult to take up issues without coming back to how they affect them personally. While it is not wrong to want to tie large observations and reflections to specific, personal experiences, it is important also to be able to transcend self, to put yourself into someone else’s shoes and observe the world from the viewpoint of other people. You are expected to develop your own entries on the basis of your research needs and academic interests.

N.B. The journal should be used to reflect on academic activities and assignments, such as interviews and observation. If a student wishes to address a personal or sensitive issue with the Academic Director, the student should approach the Academic Director personally or write a note specifically about the issue and give it to the Academic Director in person, not refer to it in her/his Field Study journal. It is important to know that the Academic Director is required to respond to warning signs in a journal.

Readings
You are responsible for all the required readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will help you place the classes in their context, to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions and to deepen your knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class. They are not necessarily tailor-made for each and every class. Other required readings for each class are assigned at the beginning of the semester.

Required Readings

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PLEASE NOTE: COURSE CONTENTS, LECTURERS AND READINGS MAY BE MODIFIED AS NEEDED. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED.

**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

**Assignments**
Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

- Literature Review / Field assignments 20%
- Field Study Journal entries 20%
- Independent Study Project Proposal 20%
- Application for Review of ISP Research with Human Subjects 20%
- Class Attendance and Participation 20%

- The Literature Review / Field Assignments consists of 3 critical reviews of assigned readings and field assignments incorporating observation and interviewing
- During the semester students will be required to keep a Field Study Journal and will have the choice to indicate the two entries they would like to have assessed. Entries should be approximately half to one page long each.
- The Independent Study Project proposal should contain the research problematic, the research question, research methods, expected research findings and anticipated research ethical concerns.
- The Application for Review of ISP Research with Human Subjects should contain interview guide, a questionnaire, sample questions for focus group interviews when applicable, a consent form and any anticipated ethical concerns.

**Grading Scale:** The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

94-100% A  
90-93% A-  
87-89% B+  
84-86% B  
80-83% B-  
77-79% C+

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Grading Criteria
An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence.

Student Expectations

Class Participation
Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Course lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

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.