Course Description
The Research Methods and Ethics seminar (RME) provides the theoretical, conceptual, and practical tools for conducting field research in Brazil. In particular, it provides the means to identify and carry out an independent three to four-week field-based research project. Emphasis is placed on grappling with cultural differences and on recording, interpreting, and analyzing information from primary sources. The concepts and skills developed in the seminar underlie and reinforce all other program components. The seminar begins during orientation with an initiation to field study techniques and continues throughout the program. In addition, the ethical implications and consequences of observations, discussions, field exercises, interviews and work journal assignments are examined throughout.

Course Objectives
The objectives for this course are to:

- become familiar with some of the standard methodologies used in the social sciences, including in-depth interviewing, participant and non-participant observation, and case studies;
- consider ethical issues in the context of field research in another culture;
- develop an understanding of the contextual opportunities and limitations for an Independent Study Project;
- gain awareness of how the knowledge and skills acquired may be applied in the students own cultural and geographic context.
- acquire the practical skills to undertake small-scale research in a local setting;
- enable students to utilize the unique human and physical resources available;
- draft a final monograph based on their field research in Brazil.

Expected Outcomes
The RME Seminar enables students to understand and profit from experience-based learning processes. It provides students with skills on gathering, analyzing and interpreting information from a range of sources, maximizing the knowledge provided by the local context. This

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knowledge and/or skill should assist students in assessing their own culture and in dealing with people from different cultures in later life.

All aspects of the Seminar link directly to the Independent Study Project. The expected outcomes of this course are the following:

- Students will be able to define, discern, analyze and deal with ethical questions that arise in an intercultural setting;
- Students will be able to identify, examine and make use of culture bound local resources;
- Students will have an understanding of the proper methodologies for cross-cultural research;
- Students will learn to identify field methods appropriate to research objectives;
- Students will have a grasp of monograph writing based on primary resources;
- Students will be able to find, identify, label, list, name, order, outline, recognize, and record data and qualitative information obtained during field work;
- Students will have learned the skills for the use of critical analysis in other cultural settings, including their own.

**Course Modules**

Topics that are covered in the RME course include:

**Module 1**
- Conceptual understanding of field-based learning;
- Introduction to field methods;
- Observation as a field method;
- Participant observation and open-ended interviewing as field methods;
- Interviewing: the art of asking questions;
- Reliability & validity of fieldwork;
- Work journals and recording data;
- The structure of the monograph;
- Data analysis and report writing;

**Module 2**
- Ethical Considerations for Field-Based Research
- A Local Case Study
- Ethics and the Definition of a Research Problem
- How to deal with Vulnerable Populations
- Ethics and the Research Process
- Ethical Consequences of the Research Product
- Post-Research Ethics

**Required Readings**


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**Other Readings**


Cranse, Julie and Michael V. Agrosino, “Participant Observation” Anthropology Field Projects.


Crane, Julie G. and Michael V. Angrosino, “Interviewing Informants,” Field Projects in Anthropology, Prospect Heights, 1984


**Student Assessment and Evaluation**
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Students will be expected to prepare for, attend, and participate in the lectures, discussions, and field visits. They will be expected to complete all assignments in a professional, timely manner. The following breakdown of grades will be used to arrive at the final letter grade, which is determined by the Academic Director (AD).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caninde</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>MST Field Exercise</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final ISP Proposal</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISP Field Journal</td>
<td>40 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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**Grading Scales and Criteria**
Grades are given both fairly and rigorously and in accordance with the system below. They will reflect a combination of absolute quality of performance, progress made, the ability to take into account and assimilate the Academic Director’s and the teachers’ advice in assessing the work done. An “A” letter grade reflects exceptional work, perfect combination of academic competences and personal research and analysis. It shows great ability to integrate field-based investigation and personal reflection into a structured and well argued paper. A “B” letter grade reflects serious and methodical work as well as a substantial effort at analyzing and understanding cross-cultural issues. A “C” letter grade shows the work meets the requirements but needs more in-depth reflection and personal involvement. A “D” letter grade is insufficient and clearly reflects lack of work or serious deficiencies.

The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-76%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-73%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-66%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below 64</td>
<td>F</td>
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Please see the SIT Study Abroad student handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

Please note, the syllabus, course content, lecturers, and readings may modified by the Academic Director in order to better suit the needs of the course and its participants. Should any change of class topics or lecturers may be necessary, student will be promptly notified.

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