Course Syllabus

Public Health Research Methods and Ethics
IPBH-3500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Argentina: Public Health in Urban Environments

Course Description
The Public Health Research Methods and Ethics course teaches skills that enable students to conduct research in the field of public health by preparing them to design and conduct their ISP research, following ethical standards, in the Argentine cultural milieu. The course compliments the semester's two thematic courses: Health Systems, Policies, and Programs, and Epidemiology and Social Determinants of Health. Emphasis is placed on appropriate methodologies, research design, and the ethics of applied health and social research. Students receive instruction and guidance regarding local customs, values, and appropriate behavior in Argentina.

Specific course foci entail qualitative and quantitative research methods such as culturally appropriate interviewing techniques, focus groups, surveys, basic statistics, and basic epidemiological methods. The methods are taught within the context of public health and population. Lectures, readings, assignments, and field visits allow students to become acquainted with the principle social and public health challenges that occur in Argentine urban centers. Throughout the course, students learn techniques that they can apply to their own research, enabling them to grow as student researchers through the ethical teachings of the curriculum.

Course Objectives
The Public Health Research Methods and Ethics course has an interdisciplinary and critical focus. Its main objectives are the following:

- To introduce students to scientific research and research methods in public health
- To provide students with the research tools that support conducting the Independent Study Project
- To provide students interdisciplinary and culturally-grounded analytical strategies for their research
- To promote humane and ethical awareness for research in the field of public health

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.*
To give students critical insight into their own ethical decision-making processes

**Expected Learning Outcomes**
By the end of the seminar, students will be able to engage in the following:
- Determine the role and importance of the scientific method in the health care arena
- Define a relevant research topic that is realistic and respectful, considering the constraints of time and resources
- Collect, analyze, and interpret basic statistical and epidemiological information
- Carry out research using qualitative and quantitative methods
- Identify relevant ethical issues that affect health care research

**Program Structure**
The course is composed of four modules:

**Module I**  
**Introduction to scientific research and research methods in public health.**

What is scientific research? Types of research in health studies. Research design. Techniques for primary and secondary data collection. Types of observation. D.I.E method, cultural observation, and registration in a journal. In-depth interview, focus groups, surveys, basic statistics, and basic epidemiological methods. Preparation of bibliographic notes.

**Module II**  
**Descriptive and Analytical Epidemiological Methods**

Epidemiological research as a particular application of scientific research. The basic concepts of epidemiology, measures, and indicators for use in epidemiological analysis will be incorporated in the development of the course of Epidemiology and Social Determinants of Health (Modules 1 and 2)

**Module III**  
**Ethics in public health research and standard processes for ethical conduct.**

Ethical issues involved in scientific research in general and in the health field in particular. The historical development of ethics in scientific research. Basic concepts of informed consent, privacy, confidentiality of information, damage and moral hazard are analyzed in the light of practical experience in health research. The role of the Institutional Research Boards, ethical review, ethical codes and institutional policies.

**Module IV**  
**Definition of Independent Study Project topic and proposal preparation.**

What is the Independent Study Project (ISP)? From topics to problems, from problem to questions. Bibliographic review and citation forms. The ISP proposal format.

---

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.*

Copyright © SIT, a program of World Learning
Module V  The research process: fieldwork, application of data collection methods, analysis strategies, and academic writing.

Challenges in doing field work. Quantitative and qualitative data collection. Analytical methods. Research report writing and reporting formats. The presentation of the report. The contents of this module will be developed both as lectures as well as workshops in small groups.

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

Course Requirements
Readings
Students are responsible for all the required readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings assist students in placing classes in context, to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions, and to deepen their knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class.

Required Readings


*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.


Student 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographic Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Report</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Case Analysis</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP Final Proposal</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Bibliographic Review** Students will elaborate a bibliographic review on their chosen topic, to further compose their conceptual framework.

- **Interview Report** In preparation for their field work, students will interview experts or health professionals working in their selected field and will produce a report critically reflecting on their interview experience.

- **Ethical Case Analysis** In preparation for the proposal design and fieldwork, students will work on a case analysis of situations that represent an ethical challenge. Results of these cases will be discussed in class.

- **Journal** Students are expected to keep a cultural journal during the course.

- **ISP Final Proposal** The ISP proposal should follow academic standards, including a clear research question and a well-developed conceptual framework.

Grading Scale and Criteria

Grades are earned 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 instructors’ advice. 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 the 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</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
</tbody>
</table>

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.*
80-83%       B-
77-79%        C+
74-76%        C
70-73%        C-
67-69%        D+
64-66%        D
below 64      F

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: Course content, lecturers, and readings may be modified as needed. Should any change of class topics or lecturers may be necessary, students will be promptly notified.