Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH-3500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:

Chile: Comparative Education 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
The Research Methods and Ethics seminar (RME), provides the theoretical, conceptual, and practical tools for conducting field research in Chile. 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. In addition, the ethical implications and consequences of observations, discussions, field exercises, interviews, and work journal assignments are examined throughout.

The course themes entail a series of lectures, readings, and assignments, carried out individually or in small groups. It has three broadly defined and related areas of inquiry, covering topics and contents about culture and intercultural learning, field study issues and techniques, and ISP preparation.

Course Objectives
- To prepare the student for the Independent Study Project (ISP) through an evolving series of discussions, assignments, and related readings and lectures some culturally-grounded tools for their research
- To enable the student to apply and improve language skills (as well as those acquired from the intensive language study) as well as the knowledge gained from the seminars and the experience of everyday life in Chile with some of the standard methodologies used in the social sciences, including in-depth interviewing, participant and non-participant observation, and case studies
- To contribute to the student’s greater integration into Chile and to develop their awareness of the different cultural values and sociopolitical and educative processes in Chile, considering ethical issues in the context of field research in another culture
To develop an understanding of the contextual opportunities and limitations for an Independent Study Project
To enable students to utilize the unique human and physical resources available

**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 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. At the end of the course,
- Students will be able to discern and deal with ethical questions that arise in an intercultural setting
- Students will identify, describe, and analyze different cultural values and “ways of doing things” in Chile
- Students will be able to identify and make use of culture bound local resources
- Students will be able to identify and have an understanding of the proper methodologies for cross-cultural research
- Students will use skills for critical analysis in other cultural settings, including their own
- Students will be able to select an ISP topic (and corresponding methodology) that is relevant, realistic, and respectful, considering the constraints of time and resources
- Students will be able to deal with primary sources in the field – information that is acquired through observation and interviews

**Program Calendar**

**RME 1**
- Introduction to RME: reviewing the course outline.
- SIT’s Experiential Learning Model.
- Explaining the Life History Interview Assignment.

**Homework**
Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of an ISP paper.

**Mandatory Readings**

**RME 2**
- Use of primary sources
- Participant Observation; Structured and non-structured interviews; Oral Stories.
- Approaching an ISP topic: writing a proposal.
- Due date for the written exercise: analyzing strengths and weaknesses of ISP papers (no more than 2 pages, Times New Roman font, size 12).
Mandatory Readings
RME Course Outline – ISP section, pp. 17 - 27

Suggested Readings

**RME 3**

- Participant Observation in Schools.
- Life Interview Assignment (due date)

Mandatory Readings
RME Course Outline- ISP section, pp. 18 - 25

Suggested Readings


**RME 4**

Six Participant Observations in Schools
- Participant Observation Assignment

**RME 5**

**Working on the ISP research plan**
- Manageable research question.
- Initial arguments.
- Research methods.
- Resources and timeline.
- Theoretical or conceptual approaches.
- Examples of ISPs.
- Expectations on fieldwork and ISP.
- ISP Journal.
- Social research and ethics.
- Writing a major essay.

Mandatory Readings
RME Course Outline, ISP section pp. 7 – 33

**RME 6 and RME 7 ISP**

- ISP tentative proposal 1st draft.
- Final instructions.
- Personal interviews with academic director.
Assessment
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>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance, preparation, and class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP fieldwork journal</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life history interview exercise</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini ISP participant observation in schools:</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• written work (5 pages)</td>
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<td>• oral presentation (7 minutes)</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, and 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:
- 94-100%     A
- 90-93%      A-
- 87-89%      B+
- 84-86%      B
- 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 contents, lecturers, and readings may be modified as needed. Should any change of class topics or lecturers be necessary, the student will be promptly notified.