Field Methods and Ethics  
ANTH 3500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)  
SIT Study Abroad Program:  
India: National Identity and the Arts  

Introduction: Please read this carefully, you are expected to be fully conversant with these class requirements.

Course Description  
This is the course that will give you the practical and theoretical skills to carry out your Independent Study Project (ISP). Field Methods and Ethics (FME) is the course common to every SIT Study Abroad program; it provides the conceptual, contextual, theoretical and methodological frame, which supports the knowledge and skills gained in language study and the thematic seminar. It aims to improve your research skills and your expository writing. Keep in mind the course is meant to encourage critical theoretical thought as well as offer some practical skills.

This Field Methods and Ethics course will help students develop competence in the following areas: self-orientation in a new environment; ethical behavior with human subjects; critical analytical skills, expository writing and methodological approaches to fieldwork.

Learning Outcomes  
At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- To develop confidence, self-reliance, flexibility and initiative in field work and to develop resilience and patience in meeting the challenges of life in India;
- Demonstrate analytical skills necessary to distinguish neutral facts and subjective opinion;
- Demonstrate connoisseurship or participatory aesthetic response, through theories such as rasa;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the basics of Human Subject Research protocols and the demands of ethical research norms;
- Select fruitful ISP topics and research methodologies, related to the theme of the program, which are attainable given time and resource constraints and ethically and socially appropriate in terms of local culture;
- Demonstrate the importance of historical and cultural context. The implementation of explanatory context should become integral to students’ expository and analytical writing;

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.
• Apply appropriate language skills necessary to conduct interviews in English and Hindi, using effective and ethical interviewing techniques;
• Distinguish the appropriate, respectful use of photography from touristic “taking.” Photography and sketching are important tools in art history, but they must be used with caution and honesty;
• Apply and to assess the value and use of contemporary critical theory in conjunction with fieldwork methodology.

Course Requirements

FME Formal Classroom Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assessing “the Other”</td>
<td>Pruzan, Sontag</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Understanding Context and Finding an ISP topic</td>
<td>James, De Botton</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Articulating Ideas, Interviewing</td>
<td>Montaigne, Orwell, Jackson</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Research Skills: Field Journal, Notes, Library, Draft Writing</td>
<td>Geertz, Lamotte</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Critical Theory</td>
<td>Barthes, Said, Buruma, &amp; Margalit</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Choosing and Analyzing the ISP Topic</td>
<td>Cousineau</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Presentation Skills</td>
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Annotated Bibliography of Required Readings


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Jackson, Bruce. “Interviewing,” in Fieldwork, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987, pp 79-104. This essay explains how to detach while interviewing, and how to maintain ethical practices while interviewing. Some of the mechanics will seem outdated (reel to reel tape recording?), but the practical ethics are still applicable.

Lamotte, Anne. “Shitty First Drafts,” in Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life, New York: Anchor Books, 1994, pp 21-27. Anne Lamotte has written a number of bestselling books: novels, memoirs and this particular book, which is part memoir and part writing manual. She teaches writing at University of California, Davis. This essay is alternately, funny, cranky and kind. Get off your duff and put down the first draft.

Margalit, Avishai with Ian Buruma. “War Against the West” and “The Occidental City,” in Occidentalism, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2004, pp. 1-47. Avishai Margalit is Professor Emeritus at Hebrew University, Jerusalem and Professor at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton University. His philosophical writings focus on the ethics of memory, religion, and language. These essays are responses to Edward Said’s Orientalism.

Montaigne, Michel de. “On the Art of Conversation,” in Essays, (trans J. M. Cohen), London: Penguin Classics, 1958, pp 285-310. Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, (1533-1592) often referred to as “the father of the essay,” was the product of the French Renaissance. His essays cover many topics from Cannibalism to Clothes; they remain insightful, ironic and honest. In this essay he urges the reader to use conversation for thoughtful and provoking dialogue, not just empty speech.

Orwell, George. “Politics and the English Language,” 1946, https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm. George Orwell [Eric Arthur Blair] (1903-1950) was an essayist, novelist, journalist and political activist. His dystopian novels Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four were famous post-war critiques of capitalism, socialism and fascism. The term “Orwellian” refers to authoritarian obfuscating political writing, his particular bête noire. This essay urges the composition of jargon-free, cliché-free prose.

Todd Pruzan. “Global Warning: Mrs. Mortimer’s Guide to the World,” in “The New Yorker,” April 11, 2005, pp 34-41. Todd Pruzan is a contributor to ‘The New Yorker.’ He is a journalist and editor. We have all met a Mrs Mortimer sometime in our lives.

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Additional appropriate readings may be assigned (required and recommended) over the course of the semester.

### Evaluation and Grading Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Neighborhood Mapping Assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>2. Two-Interviews Assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. ISP Draft Proposal and LRB Ethics Application</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Drop-Offs, on-Site Presentation Skills</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Evidence of Cultural Awareness, Completion of Assigned Readings, Conversational Analysis and Thoughtful Discussions</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Evaluation Components: Read These Criteria Carefully:**

1. **Neighborhood Mapping Assignment**: Go out into your homestay neighborhood and assess and analyze the neighborhood dynamic. Write a two-to-three page DIE essay. This formal written assignment based on student observations will hone observation and analytical skills necessary for fieldwork and will develop writing skills.

   **Write your paper in the DIE format.** Identify each section with a topic header. Start your essay by describing the neighborhood with neutral facts, then, interpret the facts using the following criteria: what is public, private, residential, religious, commercial, permanent, or temporary? Is the area crowded or spacious, noisy or quiet, upscale, middle class or working class? What is the history of the neighborhood? Is it a neighborhood with a special theme; for example: is it famous for a particular temple, church, special shops, historic monument, good restaurants, university association, or a linguistic, regional or ethnic population? Then, evaluate your assessments; figure out how you came to your conclusions.

   **Use all your senses:** what does the neighborhood look like, smell like, feel like, taste like, sound like?

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Look beyond the obvious, ask questions, and do a bit of library research.

Make a map. You can be as creative and colorful as you like with your map.

2. **Two Interviews Assignment:** Students should select a single topic about their ISP or on another topic of interest and compose two sets of 15-20 questions – one set in Hindi (translated with the help of the language Instructors) and one in English. **Using these two sets of questions, conduct one Hindi and one English interview about your topic and write up your results in a 750-1000 word summary of the interview topic,** including a description of your interview process. At least one of your interviews must be conducted outside the Homestay. **Students should include question sets as appendices to the paper. Please bear in mind the limitations and possibilities of language in composing your foreign language questions. Try to make the most of the language skills you have.**

3. **ISP Draft Proposal and LRB Ethics Application** to include: statement of research topic thesis, explanation of methodology, explanation of critical theory, literature review of ten sources, risk assessment, and research ethics assessment. The latter is especially important if you intend to do Human Subject Research, See the ISP handbook for further information.

   *ISP Preparatory Meetings:* The well-considered discussion of research ideas is an important aspect of preparing a major project. Students are expected to meet regularly with the AD to discuss their ISP preparation. Meetings should occur at minimum, once a week. Students should be prepared to discuss their plans, having done preliminary library research, and come to the meetings with pen and field journal.

4. **Drop-Offs, on-Site Presentation Skills:** You will have a number “drop-offs,” which are exercises to help you observe and successfully interact in the Indian environment. We will discuss and “debrief” after the drop-off.

5. **Evidence of Cultural Awareness, Completion of Assigned Readings, Conversational Analysis and Thoughtful Discussions:** Students are expected to take part in all FME activities, complete all required readings and enthusiastically participate in classroom discussions and field activities. Each student will give reading synopses or site analyses. Evidence of cultural sensitivity and tact, display of appropriate social skills (such as good manners in an Indian context) and awareness of the Indian cultural environment will be considered in grading.

**Grading Criteria**
All grades assigned will take into account the special circumstances and challenges of students in a foreign country. 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. In terms of class participation, an “A” grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all seminar lectures, discussions, field trips, workshops and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students` participation will be monitored and taken into account.

**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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74-76%  C
70-73%  C-
67-69%  D+
64-66%  D
Below 64  F

Expectations and Policies

Show up prepared. The course is based on group learning so you must participate fully. Be on time for all lectures, workshops and field trips. There are many long days so you must be well rested and have a clear head and have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

Complete assignments on time. Assignments are due by 5pm unless otherwise instructed. Assignments are docked 5% for each day or part of a day that they are late. Contact the Academic Director in advance if health or other issues prevent you from submitting an assignment on time. All assignments must be completed to get a passing grade. Graded assignments will be returned within two weeks of submission.

The whole time we are on field trips we are in class. You are expected to act appropriately; including refraining from using cameras, cell phones, iPods, Internet etc when we are on site. Intrusive touristic photography is not acceptable during site visits. There will be time outside of class when you can take photographs.

Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).

Respect differences of opinion (classmates’, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

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 program handbook given to you at Orientation, particularly the code of conduct, the policy on blogging and taking photographs, and the grading policy.