Research Methods and Ethics
ANTH 3500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Jordan: Modernization 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
Research Methods and Ethics (RME) is a qualitative research methods course designed to give students a general overview of methodological approaches within the local cultural context and provide them with the basic tools necessary to conduct field research in Jordan. As part of the program’s focus on intercultural learning experiences, the research tools which will be emphasized require extensive interaction with the primary field resource—the people of Jordan. To that end, the RME course will not only introduce field-based research skills (such as interviewing, and participant and non-participant observation), but will also strengthen students’ cultural awareness through exercises and discussions about student positionality and ethics of field work in Jordan.

Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of the RME course, students will be able to:

- Operate independently, using cultural sensitivity, language skills, and local networks of trust they have built or otherwise accessed during the course of the semester;
- Develop a culturally-appropriate and intellectually-rigorous ISP, grounded in current debates and relevant literature;
- Conduct field research using appropriate methods in an ethical manner;
- Analyze data gathered in the field, and make valid interpretations and conclusions;
- Produce a solid proposal of an ISP project that is doable and in strict observance of the ethical guidelines of the Local Review Board and SIT’s ethics.

Language of Instruction
This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Course Schedule
*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers’ availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.
Module 1: Cultural Understanding and Ethics
Upon their arrival in Amman, students are briefed on the politics, social norms, and the construction of Jordan’s cultural identity through SIT’s introductory orientation. Students are also informed of their responsibilities while studying at SIT and begin honing the necessary research and analytical skills to become successful in their ISP endeavors. Through their preliminary research, there will be a particular stress on students to sharpen their own quantitative analytical skills and cross-cultural analytical skills.

Week 1: Orientation
- Academic introduction
- Drop-off debriefing

Week 2: Introduction
- Course introduction: assignments, readings, timetable
- Introduction to qualitative research (including the difference between qualitative and quantitative research)
- Research ethics in general, cultural considerations, and other important issues in research conduction, including logistics
- Local Review Board and Institutional Review Board regulations and considerations
- Activity: Five proposals will be distributed to students in five groups; students will discuss the proposals as if they were members on the LRB and/or IRB

Required Readings:

Module 2: Research Methods & Tools
Using their preliminary quantitative and qualitative research, students will begin developing their topics for their respective ISP. During this time, students are expected to have identified a research topic, developed a working thesis, and built a means to collect data relevant to their research.

Week 3: Research Design: from an Interest to Questions and Hypotheses
- Identifying a research interest
- Research conceptual and theoretical framework
- Developing a research topic
- Narrowing down the research topic
- Significance of a research topic
- Identifying and phrasing research questions/hypotheses
- Assignment # 2 distribution (identify a research topic, write-up of importance and significance of the topic, develop research questions/hypotheses). Please refer to the Description of Assignments and Rubric
- Field work to develop the ISP topic
Required Readings:

Week 4: Research Skills and Data Collection Methods
- Data collection methods
- Interviews
- Observations
- Questionnaires and surveys
- Documents and material culture
- General research skills
- Assignment # 3 (two parts) explanation and distribution. Please refer to the Description of Assignments and Rubric for more information.
- **Field work**, conducting interviews

Required Readings:

Module 3: The Badia Homestay and Southern Excursion
Students will be leaving central Amman to spend time with Jordan’s Bedouin population in either the Northern or Southern Badia. This experience will help the comparative analysis of each student’s ISP topics. Cultural, historical, and environmental landmarks will also be visited. Students will evaluate the importance of various destinations within Jordan from the perspective of modernization, environmental sustainability, or cultural heritage.

Week 5 & 6: Application, Practice and Discussion
- Plenary discussion of assignment # 3 (SWAT analysis: what went well? Why? What needs to be improved? Why? What lessons have you learned?)
- **Badia homestay starts**

Assignment # 4: Badia journal (Due October 10th)

Module 4: ISP Proposal
By this time, students are expected to have fully developed their research topics and a working thesis to be submitted for approval by a review board. Their initial findings will be edited, critiqued, and as a result, improved, before their final data, analysis, and findings are submitted.

Week 7: Turkey Excursion

Week 8: Application, Practice and Discussion: ISP Outlines, ISP Presentations, and ISP evaluation
- ISP outlines, ISP presentations, ISP evaluation
- Explanation and distribution of assignment # 5

**Week 9: Proposal-Related**
- *Proposal issues and IRB applications and procedures*

**Week 10: Southern Excursion**

**Week 11: Proposals Final Submission**

**Week 12: ISP period**
- Complete literature review and conduct interviews

**Week 13: ISP period**
- Continue interviewing
- Begin analyzing field data and start writing the report

**Week 14: ISP period**
- Complete data analyses, finish writing the ISP, submit the ISP, prepare the presentation

**Week 15: ISP period ends**
- ISP presentations, evaluation & re-entry session

**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

**Course Requirements**
RME classes will be held throughout the semester and include field-based activities during orientation week, excursions around Amman, the *Badia* homestay, Southern Jordan, and the educational excursion to Turkey. Individual meetings will take place over the course of the semester with the Academic Director (AD) and the Academic Coordinator (AC). These meetings are designed to give specific guidance on the formation, development, and execution of the Independent Study Project. Each student will also be assigned an advisor who will be an additional resource to guide them through the articulation of their research question and help them identify important in-country resources. Please note that because the program's ISP advisors are mostly full-time professionals in their field of expertise, the advisor's availability and the extent of their support may vary from one advisor to the next.

**Readings**
Assigned readings are listed in the **Course Schedule** section, above. Students are responsible for all the required readings and should be prepared to bring them to bear in class discussions. The readings will help to place the classes in their context, challenge and engage lecturers, generate questions for class discussions, and deepen student knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class.

**Description of Assignments:**

**Assignment #1: Participation**
Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, educational excursions and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

**Assignment #2: Identify a research topic, write up of importance and significance of the topic, and develop research questions/hypotheses.**
Identify a research topic, write up of importance and significance of the topic, and develop research questions/hypotheses. Will be distributed and explained on Monday. On Wednesday however, each student should bring a written one-page assignment on to the plenary, and should submit a min of 2 pages on Saturday) if the student doesn’t bring one page to the plenary, he/she will lose half the assignment grade automatically.

**Assignment # 3: Two parts**

A: Design an interview and observation sheet, build a questionnaire/survey, and use documents and material culture

B: Apply your data collection method in real situations

Part A: Design an interview and observation sheet, build a questionnaire/survey, and use documents and material culture. All should be connected to the assignment # 2 topic. For Part B of the assignment, students apply what they have designed in field. Following is a plenary discussion (SWAT analysis: what went well? Why? What needs to be improved? Why? What lessons have you learned?) of both parts of assignment # 3.

Part B: implements data collection methods you would actually use to achieve the goal of answering your research question. You will use a minimum of TWO methods for this assignment. For example, you may use observation (minimum two subjects/sites) and interviews (min. two interviews). You need to justify the choice of methodology in the context of gathering information on a specific topic in Jordan. You should consider these different methods as related to different milieus – location, age, gender, length of time, etc. What factors contributed to the overall success (or not) of different methods employed, and what methods worked well for gathering different kinds of information? In addition, a brief analysis as to how you modified your approaches, what influenced your selection of different methods (including your personal characteristics), and the effectiveness of your approaches. Comment on the ethical considerations of your study, including any ethical questions or issues that arose and how you resolved them. What might you do differently in the future (the actual ISP time) and why? The assignment will be written as outlined in two separate sections and not integrated in one essay. Pay attention to language and style.

**Assignment # 4: Badia journal**

You are required to keep a journal comparing your observations and experiences on the Badia rural stay to your observations of Amman. It is significant to maintain the format of a journal - not an article - and to write down a post for each day of the Badia excursion. In terms of content, the journal should include, but not be limited to, the following four elements explicitly pointed out:

1. Reflective insights on cross-cultural events you encounter during your stay
2. A comparison between rural and urban homestays
3. Your personal experiences in which you interpret and analyze culturally relevant behaviors and practices. Remember, the Badia Journal is not an activity log in which you record what, where, and when; it is a reflective log in which you look beneath the surface and should contain
4. Analysis of your observations.

The journal needs to be typed and submitted as a soft copy in which language (grammar and spelling) is correct.

**Assignment # 5: ISP analysis paper**

The main goal of this assignment is to learn what makes a good ISP by reviewing former papers in terms of topics, research questions and hypotheses, data collections methods, and findings. You will be working in pairs as assigned by the AD. You are required to select 2 ISPs that are relevant to your possible topic of study. Consider clarity of the research question; accuracy of information; diversity of sources; quality of analysis; clarity of expression; self-reflection on the process, standpoint and ethical/cultural issues;
organization and presentation of the written report; and conclusions drawn on the selected topic. Perhaps
the student did not draw a conclusion based on their research question or perhaps they interviewed the
wrong participants to answer their research question. Was the topic too big or too broad? Try to draw
some conclusions about what might have improved the papers (versus pointing out everything that was
missing). The outcome paper is 4 pages minimum, and should include a summary of each ISP clearly stating
the research question and topic of study, followed by discussions of what you thought worked well for each
project, your suggestions for improvement, and an assessment of the new contributions your proposed ISP
would make to the field.

(Student should assign a grade to the ISP he/she did read)

Assignment #6: ISP proposal preparation and submission
The Independent Study Project is an important part of RME, so you will receive credit for the work you do
in preparation for the ISP, including preparing and submitting your IRB application, and the creation of your
ISP proposal.

Assignment #7: Cultural challenges and ethical considerations
1. Write 3 cultural challenges you faced in Jordan. State the challenge and why it was a cultural
   challenge for you. No more than one page
2. Write 3 ethical considerations you encountered and think worth considering. State the ethical
   consideration, and why you think it is worth considering. No more than one page

Assessment:
Students are expected to prepare for, attend, and participate in all lectures, discussions, and field visits. You
are likewise expected to complete all assignments in a professional and timely manner. Your final grade will
be determined as follows:

| 1. Attendance and Participation | 10 |
| 2. Identify a research topic, write up of importance and significance of the topic, and develop research questions/hypotheses. | 10 |
| 3. Two parts: |
| A: Design an interview, an observation sheet, build a questionnaire/survey, and use documents and material culture. | 10 |
| B: Apply your data collection method in real situations. | 15 |
| 4. Badia journal | 10 |
| 5. ISP analysis paper | 10 |
| 6. ISP proposal submission including the Application for Review of Research with Human Subjects | 30 |
| 7. Cultural Challenges and Ethical Considerations | 5 |

Papers and presentations will be graded on style, form, content, depth of analysis, and understanding of the
readings and lectures as demonstrated by their appropriate incorporation into the assignment. Participation
will be graded by observing attendance, attitude, preparation, active involvement in class discussions and
question and answer sessions with lecturers, and culturally appropriate behavior on excursions and with
guest lecturers.

Grading Scale
94-100% A
90-93% A-
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**Expectations and Policies**

**Class Participation:** Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, educational excursions and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

**Academic Policies:** SIT prides itself on providing students with an experientially-based program; we hold ourselves, and our students, to the highest of academic standards. Students are asked to refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process.