Course Syllabus

Racial Dynamics, Community Activism, and Human Rights in Brazil
IPBH3005 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Brazil: Public Health, Race, and Human Rights

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

Course Description
Along with health, the Universal Declaration of the United Nations also names a range of other human rights, which include the right to social services, education, and employment. In this course, students continue their exploration of how human rights access intersects with racial dynamics in Brazil, and how individuals and communities work to secure and improve this access. Students will explore such issues as economics, housing, sanitation, and education, focusing in particular on the African descendant population and indigenous people as two of the nation’s most clearly marginalized groups. Students will learn about the human rights infringements endured by the lower middle class and the corresponding impact on Brazilian society. Through site visits in Salvador and elsewhere, students dialogue with grassroots organizations and community activism groups, as well as with university professors, political activists and a wide range of community members in order to construct a sophisticated understanding of how Brazilians are working to assure the provision of these basic rights to diverse populations in Brazil.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
- Discuss the conceptualization of human rights by the UN and the struggle to institutionalize these rights in Brazilian society.
- Critically assess the provision of social services, education, employment opportunities, etc. as it intersects with race, ethnicity, and class.
- Analyze the situation of Brazil’s Afro-descendent and indigenous populations (with reference to specific cases, visits, and readings), as they illustrate the struggle to secure basic human rights.
- Examine community activism in the Brazilian context and articulate the relationship between social justice struggles, human rights, and identity.

Language of Instruction
This course is conducted in English and Portuguese.

Course Modules
*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: Human rights, social rights and social justice in Brazil
The course begins with a consideration of the UN document and the establishing of familiarity with race in Brazil's history. Students will consider race in some detail in order to understand the more specific cases and contexts in the semester.

- The Universal Declaration of the UN on human rights. From a utilitarian/practical understanding of social services to an ethical stance.
- Race in Brazilian society – historical roots -- overview of colonization, slavery and systems of oppression, contemporary realities and socio-political perspectives.
- Brazil’s struggle to materialize this UN goal for its diverse populations. The current human rights model in Brazil, shortfalls and advances made through community activism.

Module 2: Afro-descendent populations
From statistics and media to the case of Afro-Brazilian communities. In this module, students will visit Quilombo communities such as Ilha de Maré and Remanso. These field experiences will highlight the themes explored in module 1, creating the opportunity to analyze in practice the materialization of human rights infringements in these Afro-descendant populations and the role of race in the process. Students are able to survey the individual and community stories of these populations from the right to education, sanitation, and others.

Module 3: Indigenous populations
Following on the previous module, students now turn to Brazil's indigenous populations. Brazil's indigenous population includes both contacted and uncontacted groups. How are their rights considered, ignored, honored or violated? Students will complicate their understandings of how Brazil's indigenous groups are incorporated or not into larger national concerns with human rights.

- An overview of Brazil's indigenous groups. Brief history. Diverse realities and struggles.
- Contacted and uncontacted groups.

Module 4: Community Activism for human rights
This module focuses specifically on exploring a range of human rights organizations in Salvador and elsewhere in order to understand how the gap in provisions is being fulfilled in practical ways through community activism. Some areas explored could include sanitation, education, employment, safety and security, housing, etc.

- An overview of the dominant human rights organizations and community activism groups – struggles and successes. Intersection with political and governmental organizations.
- Representation of afro-descendant and indigenous populations.

Required Readings

- Johnson, O & Heringer, R. *Race, Politics, and Education in Brazil: Affirmative Action in Higher Education.* Palgrave Macmillan (Forthcoming August 2015).
- Romo, Anadelia. *Brazil’s Living Museum: Race, Reform, and Tradition in Bahia.* The University of
North Carolina Press: 2010

Educational Excursions
Excursions typically include:
- Salvador: health centers, community organizations and NGOs
- Salvador: Climerio de Oliveira Maternity Hospital
- Ilha de Maré
- Terreiro de Candomble: Afro-Brazilian religious center
- Cachoeira and Alecrim in the Reconcovo region of Bahia
- Remanso: Quilombo community in the Chapada Diamantina region
- NGOs, community organizations, & MST settlements

Evaluations and Grading Criteria
Description of assignments:
Course evaluation includes a critical response paper, a community project, participation in classes and activities and a group presentation.
- Critical response papers. Students will write 2 critical response papers to specific issues raised in lecture and/or on site visits. Responses must reference primary sources.
- Discussion Group Presentation. In small groups, each student will be responsible for leading a discussion during the semester.
- Community Project. Details to be distributed onsite.
- Participation. Includes class participation in all learning sites, engagement with local community members, field activities and discussion of readings.

Assessment:
Response papers 40%
Discussion Group Presentation 20%
Community Project 30%
Participation 10%
Grading Scale
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

Expectations and Policies
- 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.
- Excursions: Many of the visits will be to underprivileged areas, challenging students to understand how historical oppression and public policies affect the lives of peoples today. Students are expected to be respectful, to engage local community members, and to listen actively to all participants.
- Readings: Not all readings will be directly addressed in every class; however, students are responsible for all of the required readings, and should be prepared to discuss them at group de-briefs and in classes, regardless. The readings will help place the classes in context, engage lecturers, generate questions for class discussions, and deepen student knowledge of particular issues discussed in class.

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 be 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 be necessary, student will be promptly notified.