Description
Research Methods and Ethics (RME) is a qualitative research methods seminar designed to give students a general overview of methodological approaches within the local cultural context and provide them with the basic tools and skills necessary to conduct social and health-related field research in Jordan. Given the theme of the program, the seminar will also provide a solid background and framework for conducting research on displaced and refugee populations in line with the program's objective of increasing students' knowledge on humanitarian assistance and humanitarian aid. To this end, the seminar addresses in detail the methodological and ethical challenges and considerations of conducting social and health research on refugees and displaced populations. The seminar also discusses the ethical guidelines, the rights of research participants, and the duties and obligations of researchers in strictly observing ethical standards and guidelines so as to minimize the risks of violating the dignity of participants or jeopardizing their safety. This reflects the program's commitment to refugee rights to protection and humanitarian aid with dignity. Finally, the seminar will also attempt to strengthen students' cultural awareness and understanding of the cultural and educational background, as well as the social norms that should be considered when designing, enlisting, and collecting data on refugee populations, as well as the political and socio-cultural considerations of doing research in the context of Jordan.

Learning Outcomes
The Research Methods and Ethics course comprises 45 class hours (3 credits) of instruction. Upon completion of the seminar, students will be able to:

- Operate independently, using cultural sensitivity, language skills, and local networks they have built or otherwise accessed during the course of the semester;
- Demonstrate understanding of the methodological and ethical considerations, guidelines, and the researcher's responsibilities when conducting research on vulnerable populations including women, children, and refugees;
- Conduct field research on issues of refugees, health, and humanitarian aid 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 LRB and SIT’s ethics.

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: Introduction to Research and Formulation of Research Problem
This module addresses the methods and purposes of qualitative research and takes the students through the process of formulating and narrowing down a research topic, writing a statement of the research problem, and phrasing research questions and a hypothesis. The module also introduces students to the ethical issues and cultural-related considerations of doing research in the context of Jordan. The module incorporates theoretical sessions and hands-on sessions to practice what has been learned individually and in groups.

Session 1: Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Research
This session introduces qualitative research and the specific features differentiating qualitative and quantitative research uses and methods. The session also discusses in more detail the major qualitative research genres.

Required Reading:

Session 2: Formulating and Narrowing Down a Research Topic
This session addresses the process of identifying research interest, researching conceptual/theoretical frameworks, selecting and narrowing down a research topic, and writing the statement of problem. It also addresses the purpose and significance of the research and phrasing research questions and a hypothesis.

Required Reading:

Session 3: Ethical and Cultural Considerations of Research
This session addresses the ethical principles in doing research and elaborates on the rights of research participants including privacy, confidentiality, and consent, the duties and obligations of researchers, and the ethical review by the ethics review board. Ethical issues such as deception, thinking through ethical dilemma, compensation, conflict of interest, and contribution are also discussed. The session also includes an orientation about conducting culturally appropriate research in the context of Jordan, taking into consideration religious, political, and cultural realities and sensitivities as well as prevalent social norms.

Required Reading:
Module 2: Research Design and Data Collection
This module addresses research design, including experimental and non-experimental research designs. The module addresses data collection methods including unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviewing, observation, and material culture.

Session 1: Research Design
This session addresses the variety of research designs and how they are implemented in experiments, field research, and surveys. The session also discusses the concept of threats to validity and how to respond to them.

Required Reading:

Session 2: Semi-Structured Interviewing
This session is focused on semi-structured interviewing for individuals and focus groups. The session addresses preparing an interview guide and interviewing skills and techniques. This session combines a lecture and a hands-on session to practice developing an interview guide as well as conducting a mock interview.

Required Reading:

Session 3: Structured Interviewing
This session addresses the types, construction, and administration of structured interviews with special focus on the questionnaire, the structured interview tool most commonly used by students.

Required Reading:

Session 4: Observation and Material Culture
This session addresses the purpose of using direct and indirect observation as data collection methods as well as the strategies for direct and indirect observation. The session will also discuss the use of material culture to supplement observing and interviewing as data collection method.

Required Reading:
Module 3: The Ethics of Research with Vulnerable Populations

This module addresses the methodological and ethical challenges and considerations in social and health research on vulnerable populations with special focus on refugees and displaced populations. The module looks at issues and circumstances of vulnerabilities (as arising with children, gender and refugees) and explores the cultural and social norms that should be considered when conducting research on refugees. The module also addresses the rights of research participants including privacy, confidentiality, and consent, the ethical guidelines, and the duties and obligations of researchers to minimize the risks of exposing participants to emotional pain.

Session I: Methodological and Ethical Consideration of Research with Vulnerable Populations

This session addresses the methodological and ethical challenges and considerations in social sciences and health research on vulnerable populations. The session discusses the rationale for and objectives of conducting research on vulnerable populations, the challenges faced by researchers, and viable approaches to reduce and contain potential emotional harm to participants.

Required Reading:

Session 2: Research with Refugee Populations

This session addresses the political, economic, and social circumstances which increase the vulnerability of refugees and the ethical and research guidelines and obligations for conducting research with this group. The session also explores the cultural and social norms that should be considered when designing, enlisting, and collecting data on this group.

Required Readings:

Session 3: Research Ethics and Gender-Related Vulnerabilities

This session addresses the social and cultural norms and educational and economic circumstances which increase the vulnerability of women, especially when studying sensitive topics such as reproductive and mental health issues. The session also addresses the ethical standards and obligations for conducting research while minimizing the risks of emotional and mental stress for the participants.

Reading Reading:
Module 4: Data Analysis, Evaluation, and Interpretation

This module introduces students to the methods of analyzing and interpreting qualitative and research data. The sessions combine theoretical background sessions and hands-on practice sessions.

Session 1: Qualitative Data Analysis, Evaluation, and Interpretation

This session combines theoretical background and a practice hands-on session to analyze and interpret interview data using content analysis and coding techniques.

Required Reading:

Session 2: Quantitative Data Analysis, Evaluation, and Interpretation

This session addresses methods of quantitative analysis most likely to be used in data processing and for finding patterns in data such as regression analysis, univariate analysis, and bivariate analysis. The session will also address evaluation and interpretation. The session will combine theoretical background and a practice hands-on session using field data.

Required Reading:

Session 3. Qualitative Data Analysis, Evaluation, and Interpretation-SPSS Practical Session

This session is a practice session to demonstrate application of SPSS for the statistical analysis of field-data, followed by evaluation and interpretation of the data and testing the research hypothesis.

Required Reading:
SPSS v21 Manual.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Course Requirements
RME classes will be held throughout the semester and include field-based activities during orientation week, field visits, excursions around Amman, rural homestay, the southern excursion, and the educational excursion to Turkey. Individual meetings will take place over the course of the semester with the academic director (AD). 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 the student through the articulation of the research question and help to identify important in-country resources. Please note that because the program’s ISP advisors are mostly full-time
professionals in their fields of expertise, the advisor's availability and the extent of their support may vary from one advisor to the other.

**Readings**
Assigned readings are listed under each session of the syllabus. 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.

**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:

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.

**Description of Assignments:**

1. Identify a research topic, write up of importance and significance of the topic, and develop research questions/hypothesis
2. Two parts:  
   A. Design an interview, an observation sheet, build a questionnaire/survey, and use documents and material culture  
   B. Apply your data collection method in real situation
3. ISP analysis paper
4. ISP proposal submission including the application for human subjects review forms
5. Field work challenges
6. Attendance and participation

**Assessment:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify a research topic</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design research tools (Part A)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply data collection method in real situation (Part B)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP analysis paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP proposal submission</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field work challenges</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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  
between 64%  F  

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.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices.