Field Methods and Ethics in Social Science and Health
(ANTH 3500 / 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
Working in communities requires a specific preparation quite distinct from working in libraries and traditional school settings. Working in the area of public health also demands a critical awareness of ethical issues related to conducting health inquiries, making observations and working cooperatively with local community groups. In this methods course designed to prepare students for the Public Health, Race, and Human Rights Project, students learn how to organize and conduct independent work in, and collaborate productively with, local communities on topics related to the program’s main themes. Through lectures, readings, and field activities, students examine the ethical issues surrounding community and public health work; learn to write proposals for independent projects; and practice methods appropriate to a range of project topics and designs. While the primary independent activity students will undertake is a community project -- whether framed as a case study or a project proposal developed in cooperation with the community group -- students will also be exposed to methods appropriate to health studies to lay a foundation for future work and study in this general field of public health and human rights.

With the help of the academic director, all students will identify a site in which to study a topic related to the program themes and their specific areas of interest, as well as write a proposal for their project. The course is conducted in English and Portuguese with interpretation.

Learning Outcomes
At the end of the course, students will be able to:
• Apply several community-based approaches and reflect critically upon practice activities.
• Analyze key ethical issues and challenges related both to working in communities in general and to conducting public health studies in particular.
• Critically analyze qualitative data from both primary and secondary sources.
Students will also have successfully:
• Written a solid proposal for a public health/community-based project.
• Assessed and chosen appropriate community-based methodologies for this project.
Identified a site in which to study this topic and reached an agreement with the organization/program of interest.

**Pre-requisites.** None

**Language of Instruction**
Portuguese and English, some interpretation.

**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: Introduction**
This brief module provides students with an introduction to the course and the project. Students will learn about possible project types, locations, partners, and models. Students will also learn how to construct a project proposal and review basic requirements for the final project and presentation.

Students will discuss how community is defined and learn a range of methods appropriate for working in community sites and spaces. Community-based methods often includes community members in the selection and design of projects, whether members are community-workers themselves (such as NGO leaders) or community residents involved in the theme at hand. Students will learn about the challenges and advantages of working and learning this way, and this will be contextualized within the program’s larger concerns and commitments.

An overview of the ethics and politics of health studies will also be included.

**Module 2: Community-Based Studies – appropriate methods**
Students will learn methods appropriate to working with communities.
Topics include:
- basic ethnographic and qualitative approaches
- quantitative methods
- surveys, focus groups
- specific community-based methods, including observation and participation.

*The module includes practice activities with these methods.*

**Module 3: Health-related methods**
In this module, students will study methods directly related to conducting health-related studies.
Students will learn about basic concepts related to studying epidemiology, such as:
- History of Epidemiology
- Design Strategies
- Descriptive Epidemiology
- Analytic Epidemiology

The course will also cover an overview of topics such as diet and nutrition, violence, pre-natal care, sickle cell disease and others, as a way to assess approaches to health care analysis and planning. These topics will be considered through lectures and/or small group projects.
The module includes practice activities with these methods.

**Module 4: Ethical issues related to community projects**
How does one work ethically with communities? In this module, students will learn about working with local organizations and programs and how to collect and analyze data responsibly and critically. Reciprocity, access to information, and other concerns will be addressed.

**Module 5: Ethical issues related to studying public health, race and human rights**
Studying issues related to public health, race and human rights can bring up a range of student identity issues, emotional concerns and deep care for those studied. Anger, political and humanitarian desires, and empathy should not be discounted but do need to be discussed and thoughtfully made sense of. Students will discuss these issues surrounding their own position.

They will also study ethical issues related to privacy, confidentiality, consent and use of data; as well as receive direct instruction related to what students can and cannot do in health studies (such as provide medical care, intervene in treatment, etc.). Topics include:
- Health studies, privacy and consent, empathy, politics and other concerns
- Studying race in situ; positionality and intersectionality.
- Human rights studies in Salvador and environs

**Required Readings**


**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

Course evaluation includes the weekly assignments and participation, which consists of students’ engagement during lectures and site visits. Timely completion of all assignments is expected, and late hand-ins will be penalized one grade level per day late (An A becomes A-, A- becomes B+, etc.). All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality and depth of understanding, formation of an opinion/interpretation, use of examples, references to readings and experiences, and standards of good writing (style, citation, punctuation and grammar, etc.) Details and further requirements to be provided onsite.

**Assessments:**
1. Problem Statement 15%
2. Community Project: Participant Observation, Interviewing & Ethics 20%
3. Village Study Paper 20%
4. Project Proposal 35%
5. Class Attendance & 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**
- **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.