Description
The Research Methods and Ethics seminar (RME) introduces students to the conceptual and practical tools for gathering primary data and the knowledge and skills that are essential for completing an academic project in the cultural context of Argentina. In particular, the course enhances students’ skills at building rapport; initiating purposeful dialogue in the cultural context of Argentina; gathering, recording, and analyzing primary data; and writing a scholarly academic report. The course also pays particular attention to US higher education ethical considerations that guide primary data collection and how these could be translated within the local cultural context of Argentina and Public Health. Broadly, the seminar introduces students to both qualitative and quantitative approaches of social science field research.

The main emphasis of the seminar is on the development of empirical tools and ethics of interactive research skills involving the collection of primary data. The seminar includes lectures on qualitative methods of research in social sciences and in particular in Public Health, development of a research proposal or internship proposal, and preparation of an application for review of research with human subjects. All students will participate in an overview of research design and methodological approaches to program themes. Ethical considerations related to conducting research or completing an internship will be discussed. The overall aim is to help students hone their experience-based learning processes and prepare them for the development of an Independent Study Project (ISP), which is largely based on the data gathered from primary sources, or an internship at a local organization.

Learning Outcomes
The Research Methods and Ethics course comprises 45 hours. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Show an acute sense of positionality and perspective and operate independently, using cultural sensitivity, language skills, and local networks of trust built over the course of the semester;
• Demonstrate awareness of appropriate methods and ethics used in field research in the critical global issue of Public Health or demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of Argentina;
• Analyze and process primary data gathered in the field and draw valid and ethical interpretations and conclusions;
• Produce an Independent Study Project proposal that is in strict observance of ethical academic standards and local values and that includes a research question, sample review of the relevant literature, outline of the research methods, and anticipated ethical challenges and ways of addressing them or an internship proposal that includes a description of the host organization, an outline of tasks that will be performed, a proposed work timetable, and projected outcomes such as a paper or business plan.

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

Course Schedule

Module 1: Experiential Learning and Positionality in Field-Based Research
This introductory module is designed to introduce students to field-based research in a study abroad context. Students learn how to relate to local communities and individuals. Most particularly, this module allows students to discover the power of experiential learning and use it as a tool to connect to local communities and individuals and develop into reflexive researchers who are attentive to their own positionality in relation to the local communities in which they engage for their research or internship.

Sample Sessions
Cultural Adjustment Cycle
Homestay as a Cultural Experience and Site of Learning
Doing Field-Based Research in a Study Abroad Context
Experiential Learning Philosophy and the Politics of Culture in Argentina
Positionality and Outsider/Insider Research

Required Readings:

Module 2: Introduction to the ISP and Internship
This module will describe the ISP and internship processes and help students brainstorm ideas and set goals for their ISP or internship. The module will include a review and critique of past ISP and/or internship papers.

Sample Sessions
One-on-one Meetings with the Academic Director to Discuss Preliminary ISP or Internship Ideas

*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.
Critical Review of past ISPs or Internships
Introduction to the LRB/IRB Process and HSR Application
Identifying an ISP Advisor and Securing an Internship Placement

Required Readings:

Module 3: Research Methods in Public Health
This module focuses on the tools and methods required for conducting quantitative and/or qualitative field research.

Sample Sessions
Selecting Topics, Formulating Research Questions, and defining research objectives
Literature Review and conceptual framework
Data Collection: Participant Observation, Interview and Survey
Mixed Methods Research

Required Readings:

Module 4: Ethics in public health research and standard processes for ethical conduct
Ethical issues involved in scientific research in general and in the work in health field in particular. The historical development of ethics in scientific research. Basic concepts of informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, damage are analyzed in the light of practical experience in research in the field of health. Exploring institutional norms, issues of language, and expectations for ethical behavior while conducting research or working in an institutional setting. The role of the Research Ethics Committee. Codes of ethics and institutional policies.

Sample Sessions
The historical development of ethics in scientific research.
Basic concepts of informed consent, privacy and confidentiality of information.
Work-based norms and practices related to institutional contexts in in Argentina.
Applying theory to the resolution of ethical dilemmas in the field.
The role of the Research Ethics Committee.
Discussion with a members of an institutional Research Ethics Committee.

Required Readings:
**Project Proposal Development**
Based on learning and engagement in the preceding course modules, this module focuses on ISP and internship proposal development and guiding students through the development of the Human Subjects Review (HSR) application for review by the Local Review Board (LRB). This critical phase in the course involves both large student group meetings and individual student meetings with the academic director and the ISP advisor or internship supervisor.

**Sample Sessions**
Writing an ISP or Internship Proposal  
One-on-one Meetings with Academic Director and/or ISP Advisor or Internship Supervisor  
Peer review of ISP or Internship Proposal Drafts  
Writing the HSR Application  
ISP or Internship Draft Proposal roundtable discussion with peers.

**Required Readings:**  

After completing Modules 1-4, students will split into groups by ISP or internship. ISP students will take Module 5 and 6a, and internship students will take Module 5 and 6b. ADs can choose to split the groups or hold a session together at any time based on program-specific resources and course design; the statement above can be adjusted accordingly.

**Module 5a: ISP in the Context of Argentina**
This module prepares the student for the ISP experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to conducting research in Argentina. The module highlights the importance of applied methodology in the ISP experience and the expectations and responsibilities of the student.

**Sample sessions**
How to approach and develop rapport with research participants  
How to work collaboratively with the ISP advisor  
Logistics of the ISP period, including travel, materials, and timelines.

**Module 6a: The research process: applying research methods and techniques.**

The research process is analyzed through a practical case. Defining a topic and research objectives, building the conceptual framework, collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative information. Research methods in the field. Data base design and the analysis of basic statistical measures. Analysis of qualitative information. Writing the research report and presenting research results. Students will also review the ISP assessment rubric.

**Sample sessions**
Planning the research: topic, objectives and conceptual framework  
Defining the research strategy.  
Analysis of qualitative information.  
Data base design and the analysis of basic statistical measures.
Analysis of the research process steps and reporting research results.
The ethics through the process of planning and conducting the research.
Meeting with ISP Advisors: the students’ research experience and the advisor´s role
Tutorial session with program staff mentors.
Final ISP Proposal – oral presentation.

Required Readings:

Module 5b: The Internship in the Context of Argentina
This module prepares the student for the internship experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to internships in Argentina. The module highlights the importance of ethics in the internship experience and the expectations and responsibilities of the student, the host institution, and the program.

Sample sessions
Approaching the institutional culture in Argentina: norms, communication and workplace expectations.
The work culture in public and private health and social sectors
How to best describe the internship experience and purpose to potential internship hosts and others.
The ethics in participating in an internship in Argentina

Required Readings:
McDonald, Francis (2011) Ethical Use of Interns. Retrieved from:

Module 6b: Internship process: applying methods and techniques.
The internship process is analyzed through a practical case. Defining observation focus, learning objectives, building the conceptual framework, collecting and analyzing information. Writing the internship report and presenting research results. Students will review the internship rubric.

Sample sessions
Planning the internship: focus, objectives and background information
Preparing for the internship: résumé preparation and cover letter
Defining the internship activities and strategy.
Analysis of the internship process steps and reporting internship results.
Meeting with internship institutional supervisor: the students´ internship experience and the supervisor´s role
Tutorial session with program staff mentors.
Final Internship Proposal – oral presentation
**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

**Description of Assignments:**

**Assignment I: Practice Interview**
Students are asked to conduct a practice interview with professionals working in their area of interest. They are asked to write a small reflection (2-3 pages) about their role and attitude towards their research subjects and the skills they brought to the interview to establish an ethical and safe environment for the interviewee. Students are also encouraged to explore how their own positionality along the lines of gender, sexuality, race, and class affected the set-up and wording of their questionnaire and consequently the outcome of the interview.

**Assignment II Literature Review**
The skills developed in the assignment aim to prepare students to approach the state of the art of the selected health area of study/work and to understand the context in which they are going to carry out their Independent Study Project or internship.

**Field Work Journal**
Students are expected to keep a work journal where they will document thoroughly all the activities and assignments carried out during the course. This will also continue during the Independent Study Project or the internship period. The work journal is submitted for review and evaluation during the course of the semester.

**Research/Internship Proposal**
All students must develop a research or internship proposal. The research proposal should address a theme related to the program, include research question and objectives, theoretical framework, methodology, and comply with the ethical standards learned throughout the course. The internship proposal should include the objectives to be achieved during the internship period, a justification of the work and the organization selected, skills or areas in which the student can contribute to the work of the host organization, and an outline of the work plan to be carried out.

**Participation**
All students are expected to prepare for classes, attend and participate in all lectures, class discussions, field activities, and carry out all assignments and other activities prepared in the context of the Research Methods and Ethics course.

**Assessment:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice Interview</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment II</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Work Journal</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research/Internship Proposal</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</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
below 64%  F

Expectations and Policies
- **Show up prepared.** Be on time. Have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- **Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done according to the specified requirements.** This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- **Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer.** These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- **Comply with academic integrity policies** (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- **Respect differences of opinion** (those of classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits, etc.). 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.

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.