



## Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 credits/45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:

**Tunisia and Italy: Politics and Religious Integration in the Mediterranean**

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.

### 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 to forming constructive relationships with organizations and/or individuals, which are necessary for completing an academic project in the cultural context of Tunisia. Essential among these tools is the conceptual ability to translate lived experience into learning experience. In particular, the course enhances students' skills at building rapport; initiating purposeful dialogue in the context of post-colonial and post-revolutionary Tunisia; 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 Tunisia and the critical global issue, Migration | Identity | Resilience. Broadly, the seminar introduces students to both qualitative and quantitative approaches of social science field research. Throughout, the objective is to promote critical analysis of the processes of immigrants' integration in Italy and the thorny relation between religion and democracy consolidation in Tunisia and foster insight and utilization of appropriate methodologies for qualitative study of society in total respect the ethics and value systems of the host community.

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 Migration | Identity | Resilience, 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 either an internship at local organization or an Independent Study Project (ISP), which is largely based on the data gathered from primary sources.

### **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 Migration | Identity | Resilience OR demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of Tunisia;
- Analyze and process primary data gathered in the field and draw valid and ethical interpretations and conclusions;
- Develop a culturally-appropriate and intellectually-rigorous ISP or internship, grounded in current debates and relevant literature on immigration across the Mediterranean and the consolidation of democracy in Tunisia and the role of religion therein;
- 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 in the context of Tunisia in its Mediterranean environment .

### **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 to 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 I: 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. The module is designed to heighten students' awareness of the various inter-cultural determinations set in motion when living and conducting research in another culture, and to turn this awareness into a learning experience useful for anthropological research.

#### Session I: What is Cultural Anthropology?

This session reviews the various definitions of culture and the main issues raised by the discipline. It mainly explains the historical determinations of “culture” and “civilization” and shows their significance for cultural politics.

*Required Reading:*

Miller, B. (2007). *Cultural Anthropology in a Globalized World*. London: Prentice Hall.

### Session2: Cultural Informant

This session examines the ambiguous role of the indigenous informant in research and the anthropologist’s ambivalent position vis-à-vis that role. While deconstructing the notion of “objectivity” in cultural anthropology and social science generally, the session stresses the notion of validity and coherence.

*Required Reading:*

Theroux, P. (1996). “The Ferry El Loud III to Kerkennah.” In *The Pillars of Hercules: A Grand Tour of the Mediterranean*. London: Ballantine Books, 465-82.

### Session3: Cultural Incidents.

This session teaches how to turn cultural incidents into learning experiences; and how to translate the anecdotal narrative into significant cultural discourse.

*Required Reading:*

Storti, C. (2007). *The Art of Crossing Cultures*. Maine: Intercultural Press.

### Session 4: Teaching Culture?

This session raises the fundamental questions related to intercultural communication, mainly the centrality of verbal intercourse and art forms.

*Required Reading:*

Seeley, N. (1993). *Teaching culture: Strategies for Intercultural Communication*. New York, N.Y.: The National Textbook Co.

Wintergerst, A.C. & McVeigh, J. (2010). *Tips for Teaching Culture: Practical Approaches to Intercultural Communication*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education ESL.

## **Module 2: Research Methods and Ethics in the Context of Tunisia**

This module focuses on the tools and methods required for conducting quantitative and/or qualitative field research in observance of the ethics and value systems of the local community. The module reviews various social science research techniques and explains how they relate to fieldwork; it also demonstrates how empirical learning is transformed into qualitative research.

### Session 1: Research Methods in Migration | Identity | Resilience.

This session explains the main research approaches used in social science, with an emphasis on conducting research related to the program’s critical global issue, Migration | Identity | Resilience.

*Required Reading:*

Gerring, J. (2012). *Social Science Methodology: Strategies for Social Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### Session 2: Qualitative Research: Participant Observation and Interviewing

This session familiarizes the students with qualitative research and its purpose, objectives, themes, and structures. It teaches the basic techniques of interviewing in social science research.

*Required Reading:*

Goertz, G. & Mahoney, J. (2012). *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in Social Science*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Session3: Data Analysis, Evaluation, and Interpretation

This session reviews major techniques used in social science research and explores how to analyze and interpret quantitative and qualitative data.

*Required Reading:*

Creswell, J.W. (2009). 7<sup>th</sup> ed. *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods and approaches*. Pearson Publications.

Session 4: Research Ethics in Migration | Identity | Resilience

This session explains the moral and deontological guidelines set in research in social science and explains its institutional requirements.

*Required Reading:*

Howie, J. (1987). *Ethical Principles and Practice*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

**Module 3: Introduction to the ISP and Internship in the Context of Tunisia**

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. The module will also walk the students through the Local Review Board (LRB) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and the application for Human Subjects Review (HSR application).

Session 1: Critical Review of Past ISPs or Internships

During this session, students review past ISP or internship papers and engage in roundtable discussions about methods, ethics, and success of the projects.

Session 2: Human Subject Research

This session reviews the history of research on human subjects and reviews SIT's Human Subjects Review application process.

*Required Reading:*

Babbie, E. (2013). *The Practice of Social Research* (13<sup>th</sup>ed.) Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Session3: IRB and LRB

This session clarifies the role of the review boards and walks students through the LRB/IRB application process.

On-site visit to Les Anges, day school for mentally-handicapped children

*Required Reading:*

Stark, L. (2013). *IRBs and the Making of Ethical Research*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

#### Session 4: One-on-one Meetings with the Academic Director to Discuss Preliminary ISP or Internship Ideas

During this session, students meet one-on-one with the academic director to discuss their ideas and goals for their ISP or internship; they also discuss networking strategies for identifying an ISP advisor or internship placement.

#### **Module 4: 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.

#### Session 1: Writing an ISP or Internship Proposal in the Context of Tunisia

During this session, students learn what components are required for their ISP or internship proposal, and the various steps required for their successful completion.

#### Session 2: Peer Review of ISP or Internship Proposal Drafts

In this session, students do a peer review of the ISP or internship proposals and provide feedback about how to improve the drafts.

#### Session 3: ISP or Internship Proposal Presentation to Peers

Students turn in their ISP or internship proposals and present their proposals to their peers and the academic director.

#### Session 4: One-on-one Meetings with Academic Director and/or ISP Advisor or Internship Supervisor

Students continue to have one-on-one meetings with the academic director and the ISP advisor or internship supervisor to set goals and prepare for the ISP/internship period.

***After completing Modules 1-4, students will split into groups by ISP or internship. ISP students will take Module 5a, and internship students will take Module 5b.***

#### **Module 5a: ISP in the Context of Tunisia**

This module prepares the student for the ISP experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to conducting research in Tunisia. The module highlights the importance of applied methodology in the ISP experience and the expectations and responsibilities of the student.

#### Session 1: Preparing for the ISP

This introductory session prepares the student for the ISP. The session covers a range of areas that include how to approach and develop rapport with research participants, how to work collaboratively with the ISP advisor, and logistics of the ISP period, including travel, materials, and timelines. Students will also review the ISP assessment rubric.

#### Session 2: Research-based Norms and Practices in Tunisia

This session explores norms and practices related to research in Tunisia, exploring such issues as how best to describe the ISP to potential research participants and others, gender norms, issues of language, and expectations for behavior while conducting research.

*Required Readings:*

Alexander, C. (2016). *Authoritarianism and Civil Society in Tunisia*, Middle East Research and Information Project (MER 205). Retrieved from:

<http://www.merip.org/mer/mer205/authoritarianism-civil-society-tunisia>

Deane, S. (2013), *Transforming Tunisia: The Role of Civil Society in Tunisia's Transition*, International Alert. Retrieved from: [http://www.international-](http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/publications/Tunisia2013EN.pdf)

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Session 3: ISP Applied Methodology

This session covers strategies of time management, networking strategies, and problem-solving research challenges.

*Required Reading:*

Bell, J. (2010). Planning the Project. In *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science (5<sup>th</sup>ed.)*. Berkshire England: Open University Press.

**Module 5b: Internship in the Context of Tunisia**

This module prepares the student for the internship experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to internships in Tunisia. 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.

Session 1: Preparing for the Internship

This introductory session prepares the students for their internship in country. The session covers a range of areas that include résumé preparation and cover letter, dress, student objectives for the internship, and stages of student growth in the internship. Students will review the internship rubric.

*Required Reading:*

Kirkova, R. and Tanja M. (2014). *The Success of Democratization in Post-Arab Spring Societies*, *International Journal of Social Sciences*, III: 1, 2014

*Recommended Reading:*

Switzer, F. and King, M. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole (chapters 2 and 3).

Session 2: Work-based Norms and Practices in Tunisia

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to internships and work in Tunisia, exploring such issues as how best to describe the internship experience and purpose to potential internship hosts and others, gender norms, issues of language, and workplace expectations.

*Required Reading:*

Labor Regulations in Tunisia. Retrieved from:

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/tunisia/labor-market-regulation>

Session 3: The Ethics of Participating in an Internship in Tunisia

This session outlines the responsibilities of the student and the host organization for a productive and significant experience that can serve the objectives of both. The session also reviews best practices for a successful internship and exposes the student's positionality in relation to the organization.

*Required Reading:*

McDonald, F. (2011). Ethical Use of Interns. Retrieved from:

<http://www.prsa.org/aboutprsa/ethics/ethicalstandardsadvisories/documents/psa-17.pdf>

## **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

### Description of Assignments:

The assignments will be a combination of field reports and sit-in exams.

### Assignment I: Practice Interview

Students are asked to conduct a practice interview with one of the members of their host family. 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.

### Field Visit Report

Students are asked to write a three-page report on one civil society organization from the following fields: women's rights, ethnic minorities, LGBT, the environment, and transparency and good governance.

### 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 three times 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:

Practice Interview	15%
Field Visit Report	15%
Field Work Journal	20%

Research/Internship Proposal	40%
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**

- 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.

**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](mailto: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>.