



Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Samoa: Pacific Communities and Social Change

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.

Course Description

The *Research Methods and Ethics* (RME) course helps students to learn effectively in a nontraditional, cross-cultural environment and develops specific field study techniques that will be necessary for students to complete their Independent Study Projects.

Students participate in a series of discussions and exercises designed to break down stereotypes and sensitize them to the values they assign to behaviors or customs based on their cultural heritage. Emphasis is placed on grappling with cultural differences and on recording, interpreting, and analyzing information from primary sources. Written assignments include a journal of observations on cultural mores and use of a work journal during the Independent Study Project period.

Major Course Objectives

1. To become aware of experience-based learning processes outside an institutional structure, and to develop confidence and initiative in learning from experience;
2. To develop knowledge of the ethical dimensions of working with human subjects and to design a research project that is ethically sound and culturally sensitive
3. To gain skills in various methods of field study, including participant observation, ethnographic interviewing, note-taking and transcription, keeping a field journal, and to learn how to develop a thorough research proposal.
4. To be able to apply Samoan language skills, increasing information from the Seminar, and information from other sources to extend and deepen interest, knowledge and integration in Samoa and other Pacific Island communities.
5. To select an ISP topic and methodology that are realistic within the constraints of time and resources, appropriate, and that will yield an interesting and academically rigorous project beneficial to the community and/or organization studied.
6. To learn to work with primary sources in the field, such as material gained through observation and interviews, and to learn to work with a foreign language, interpreters and informants.

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How these objectives will be met

- This course consists of a series of activities to help the students meet the above objectives. These will begin with basic observation exercises and the completion of a Cultural Observation Journal that asks students to describe events, interpret them and finally evaluate their own judgments and feelings about them. Students will also collect a variety of information both in urban and rural settings. They will collect information from organizations in the town area and design surveys to collect data in the village. They will also complete a mapping exercise and kinship diagrams in the village as well as collecting life histories and learning how to complete/perform traditional tasks such as cooking, weaving or planting.
- Students will present findings in brief oral presentations. Students will walk through the full research process from topic idea to completed product in a Mini-ISP project. They are encouraged to select a topic of interest directly related to their ISP but may also chose a completely different topic. They will use various techniques including firsthand data collection in the process. They then present a 15-minute oral presentation and submit a written abstract and bibliography. FSME concludes with the Mini-ISP presentations.

Course overview by week:

WEEK 1: Observing other cultures

LECTURES: Intercultural skills; Journaling and cross cultural learning

ACTIVITIES: Orientation activities, drop-offs in Honolulu and Samoa; First journal entries

WEEK 2: Collecting information

READING:

Hess, D., "Journal Keeping" in *The Whole World Guide to Culture Learning*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1994.

LECTURE: Learning styles

ACTIVITIES: Learning style inventory; Information gathering tasks in Apia, brief oral presentation

WEEK 3: Using Research Techniques

READINGS:

Batchelder, Donald. "The Green Banana." *Beyond Experience*, second edition. Theodore Gochenour, ed., xiii–xv. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1993.

"Designing a Survey" in Crane, Julia G., and Michael V. Angrosino. *Field Projects in Anthropology: A Student Handbook*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1992.

Tsuda, Takeyuki. "Ethnicity and the Anthropologist: Negotiating Identities in the Field" in *Anthropologist Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No 3. The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research: Jul. 1998 107-124 <http://www.jstpr.org/stable/3318081>.

Miner, Horace. "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema" in *American Anthropologist*. June 1956 <https://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/miner.html?pagewanted=al>.

LECTURES: Ethnicity and the Anthropologist

Planning Village Studies

Making and Using Surveys

ACTIVITIES: Plan a survey for village

WEEK 4: Collecting Information in a Village Setting

ACTIVITIES: Kinship diagrams; village study activities; Conduct a short survey in Samoan;

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READINGS:

“Making Maps,” “Charting Kinship” in Crane, Julia G., and Michael V. Angrosino. *Field Projects in Anthropology: A Student Handbook*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1992.

WEEK 5-6: Beginning the research process

ACTIVITIES: Collect the life history of a Pacific student on campus; present the results of village study in pairs; Research a legend; identify and use local library resources.

READING:

“Collecting Life Histories” and “Interviewing Informants” in Crane, Julia G., and Michael V. Angrosino. *Field Projects in Anthropology: A Student Handbook*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1992.

WEEK 6: Conducting Research

ACTIVITIES: Research methods and information gathering seminar; ethics discussion; Information gathering and oral report on activities of an organization or ministry;

LECTURES: Ethics/ Methods Seminar

READING:

Andrews, M., Corinne Squire, and Maria Tamboukou, (eds.) *Doing Narrative Research*. SAGE Publications Ltd., London 2008.

WEEK 7: The Product: Mini-ISP

ACTIVITIES: Complete and consolidate research and prepare oral presentation; present a 15-minute Mini-ISP presentations evaluated by peers; submit written abstract and bibliography
Declare ISP topic in writing.

LECTURES: Writing Proposals/ Writing Abstracts/ Analyzing surveys

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Student assessment

The Academic Director will evaluate students based on their participation in course activities, completion of course exercises and required readings, and the appropriate use of methodology in the Independent Study Project as documented in their work journal and presented in the ISP paper.

Final grade will be assessed on the following criteria:

- D-I-E Journal 20%
- Village Study 20%
- Information Gathering 15%
- Mini-ISP 25%
- Work Journal 20%

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

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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 accordingly 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 (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). 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. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.

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