

Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
The Netherlands: International Perspectives on Sexuality and Gender

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 the Netherlands. In particular, the course enhances students' skills at building rapport; initiating purposeful dialogue in the cultural context of the Netherlands; 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 the Netherlands and the program's critical global issue, Migration|Identity|Resilience. 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.

The seminar includes lectures on qualitative methods of research in social sciences and in particular in the area of gender and sexuality, development of a research proposal or internship proposal, and preparation of an application for review of research with human subjects.

Students can choose whether they want to do a qualitative research on a topic that is relevant to the program's theme, or write a paper based on their internship in a specific organization. All students will participate in an overview of research design and methodological approaches to program themes. Separate sessions will be scheduled for the preparation and support of students who opt for an internship and for students who do a more traditional research for their ISP.

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, including feminist and queer theory methods, and in the critical global issue of Migration|Identity|Resilience OR demonstrate awareness of the ethics of interning in the context of the Netherlands and of the ability to work constructively with a local association or grassroots community;
- Use research skills and techniques, such as formulating research questions, reviewing relevant literature, locating research subjects, and conducting interviews in strict observance of local ethics and value systems and show understanding of techniques used in conducting oral history interviews and analyzing personal narratives;
- 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 internship timetable, and projected outcomes such as a paper or business plan.

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 1: 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. Students will 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.

Session 1: Field Work Session: Doing Field-Based Research in a Study Abroad Context

This session provides an introduction to field-based research in a study abroad context. Students explore how experiential learning can be used as a tool to explore and interact with their new cultural environment and reflect on their own positionality in relation to the

host community, most particularly their homestay neighborhood and homestay family. In order to enhance skills of observation and experiential learning, students are assigned the construction of an “experience collection” in which they connect to the new environment; make observations through a gender and sexuality lens with the help of all the senses (sight, sound, smell, etc.); collect items, pictures, overheard conversations, small interviews, time observations, etc.; and keep a journal. At the end of the semester, students have to create their own portable “experiential museum” from their experience collection and their field notes, which will reflect their unique way of experiencing and perceiving a new city and a new culture and the ways in which they succeeded in “making the unfamiliar familiar—and the familiar unfamiliar.” This experiential museum is an assignment that will be graded.

Required Reading:

Glesne, C. (2006). ‘Being there: Developing understanding through participant observation’ and ‘Making words fly: Developing understanding through interviewing.’ *Becoming Qualitative Researchers (3rd Ed.)* (pp. 49-78 / 79-106). Boston: Pearson Educators.

Smith, K. (2008). *How To Be an Explorer of the World: Portable Life Museum (1st Ed.)*. New York: Penguin.

Field Work Exercise 1: Homestay Neighborhood Exploration

In this field study exercise, students are asked to explore their new cultural environment, most particularly their own homestay neighborhood through a gender and sexuality lens. The aim is to examine if and how the physical, social, and cultural aspects of the homestay neighborhood challenge any preconceptions the student might have held of the Netherlands. Students will present their observations and reflections during a debrief session. Students are asked to keep on exploring their own neighborhood throughout the semester and add items to their experience collection and eventually to the experiential museum.

Required Reading:

Smith, K. (2008). *How To Be an Explorer of The World: Portable Life Museum (1st Ed.)*. New York: Penguin.

Field Work Exercise 2: Duo Excursion: Exploring the Netherlands

In this session, students are assigned to a city in the Netherlands that they explore in pairs through a gender and sexuality lens by making (participant) observation and conducting short interviews. During a debrief session, students are asked to provide a short presentation based on their field notes, observations, the photos they took, quotes from two short interviews, and at least one item they collected for their experiential museum. Following the homestay neighborhood exploration, the aim of the duo excursion is for students to broaden their horizon and challenge their stereotypes and expectations of the Netherlands outside the borders of Amsterdam. In this sense, this field excursion makes the students aware of the cultural diversity in the Netherlands.

Field Work Exercise 3: Experiential Museum

This session builds on students’ field exercise experiences and explorations of Amsterdam and the Netherlands. In the first part of this session, students present their portable experiential museum to their peers. In the second part of this session, students are encouraged to reflect on that experience collection and explore how their own positionality may impact their unique representation of the host culture. From there, we

broaden the discussion by looking at how their positionality may shape their own research or participation in an internship, most particularly their research question and focal point, their relation with the research subjects or co-workers, their approach in data collection, and the representation of their research subjects or program themes in their final ISP or internship. The session is followed by a gathering where colleagues, friends, and hosts are invited to visit the experiential exhibition.

Required Reading:

Sultana, Furhana. (2007). Reflexivity, Positionality and Participatory Ethics: Negotiating Fieldwork Dilemmas in International Research. In *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 6:3, 374-385.

Recommended Reading:

Ganga, Deianira & Scott, Sam. (2006). Cultural "Insiders" and the Issue of Positionality in Qualitative Migration Research: Moving "Across" and Moving "Along" Researcher- Participant Divides. In *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 7:3. Retrieved from: <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/134>.

Session 2: Conducting Qualitative Interviews

This session focuses on the art and skills of conducting qualitative interviews, including life story interviews (oral history). The quality of our data depends highly on the quality of our interviews. Our interviews, in turn, depend highly on our quality and ethics of the interviewer. We will therefore start our discussion on the art of qualitative interviewing by paying careful attention to the ethical dimension of qualitative interviewing, most notably its intersubjective nature, and our own role as an interviewer. By critically assessing footage of personal narrative interviews, students will develop an awareness of their own role as an interviewer and what skills they need to develop in order to become an ethical interviewer. Apart from interview ethics, we will also look into practical issues such as how to prepare for an interview, and how to design an interview guide. We will explore the different types of questions that are needed in different stages of the interview in order to establish a safe and ethical interview setting.

Assignment:

By the end of this session, students are invited to design an interview guide, conduct a pilot interview, and write a short practice interview reflection. These are due at the end of the week.

Required reading:

Bell, J. (2011). Planning and conducting interviews. *Doing Your Research Project* (5th Ed.) (pp. 160-176). Berkshire: Open University Press.

Maynes, M. J., Pierce, J. L., & Laslett, B. (2008). Introduction. *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (pp. 1-14). Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.

Session 3: Connecting to the Field

The goal of this session is twofold. In the first part, we will revisit the topic of interview ethics through a group discussion and reflection on the interview assignment. In the first half of this session, we will debrief the pilot interview exercise and explore what insights students gained from conducting the interview, most notably in terms of the interactions between interviewer and interviewee and power differentials between interviewer and interviewee. We will connect the experiences and insights to the specifics of field-based

research in a Dutch context. The second half of this session is more practical in nature. It will walk students through the different stages of setting up an oral history project, from preparing an interview guide and conducting interviews, to analyzing and presenting the interviews in a paper.

Required Readings:

Sultana, Furhana. 2007. Reflexivity, Positionality and Participatory Ethics: Negotiating Fieldwork Dilemmas in International Research. In *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 6:3, 374-385.

Maynes, M. J., Pierce, J. L., & Laslett, B. (2008). Personal narrative research as intersubjective encounter. *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (pp. 98-125). Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.

Recommended Readings:

Bourke, Lynsey, Butcher, Sian, Chisonga, Nixon, Clarke, Jumani, Davies, Frances, and Thorn, Jessica. (2009). Fieldwork Stories: Negotiating Positionality, Power and Purpose. In *Feminist Africa*, 13, 95-105.

Yow, V. (2006). Don't I like them too much? Effects of the oral history interview on the interviewer and vice versa. In R. Perks and A. Thomson (Eds.). *The Oral History Reader* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 54-72). New York: Routledge.

Module 2: Research Methods and Ethics in the Context of the Netherlands

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 will also walk the students through the preparation process of their ISP proposal, the LRB process, and the application for review of research with human subjects.

Session 1: Introduction to Research Methods and Ethics

This session will provide an overview of the module on research methods and ethics. It will highlight the characteristics of qualitative research, as well as the main elements of conducting a research project. Attention will be given to the tentative ISP proposal and the internship.

The focus will be on choosing and exploring and contextualizing the research topic. We will address effective ways to search for literature and the SIT guidelines for referencing. Brief attention will be given to formulating a tentative research question.

Assignment:

By the end of the week you have chosen your ISP topic and started with identifying the main theories/concepts/literature/debates regarding this topic. You have also formulated a tentative research question.

Required readings:

Glesne, C. (2006). Pre-study tasks: Doing what is good for you. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers (3rd Ed.)* (pp. 21- 36). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Silverman, D. (2005). Writing a research proposal. *Doing Qualitative Research* (pp. 139–146). Retrieved from <http://www.uk.sagepub.com/managementresearch/Easterby-Smith Online ReadingLinks/Chapter2/Silverman Doing Qualitative Research pp139-146.pdf>

Recommended readings:

- Glesne, C. (2006). Meeting Qualitative Inquiry. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers (3rd Ed.)* (pp.1-11). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Bell, J. (2010). "Literature searching". *Doing Your Research Project* (5th/ 82-102). Berkshire: Open University Press.

Session 2: Research Question, Literature, and Research Methods

The purpose of this session is twofold. First, we will re-address the research topic (briefly) and research question, so as to prepare for the final ISP proposal. Second, we will analyze the interconnectedness between the research question and the choice of the relevant literature, and appropriate qualitative research methods.

Assignment:

By the end of the week, you will have chosen the methods for conducting your research. This will be a first draft of your research design and the first step towards your ISP or internship proposal.

Required reading:

- Glesne, C. (2006). Pre-study tasks: Doing what is good for you. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers (3rd Ed.)* (pp. 36-48). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Recommended readings:

- Bell, J. (2010), The review of literature. *Doing Your Research Project* (5th Ed.) (pp. 103-114). Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Bell, J. (2010), Approaches to research. *Doing Your Research Project* (5th Ed.) (pp. 5-26). Berkshire: Open University Press.

Session 3: Analyzing Data and Reporting Qualitative Research Findings

In this session we will look at various ways of coding and clustering your data and the various levels of data analysis, with particular attention to intersectionality as a tool for analysis. We walk through the ISP rubric and and the structure of a research report, management advice or business plan.

Required reading:

- Glesne, C.,(2006). Finding your story: Data analysis. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers* (pp.147-170). Boston: Pearson Educators.

Recommended readings:

- Bell, J. (2010). 'Writing the Report' *Doing Your Research Project* (5th Ed.) (pp. 238-257). Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Glesne, C. (2006). 'Writing Your Story: What Your Data Say. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers* (pp.173-192). Boston: Pearson Educators.

Session 4: Research Ethics and the HSR/LRB Process

This session uses concrete examples of social science research to address and discuss the ethical dimensions of doing research. We will look into ways of protecting the rights of research participants, such as their right to give or refuse consent, and their right to remain anonymous. Special attention is given to the protection of vulnerable research groups, such as minors and marginalized groups. In a similar vein, we will also discuss the issue of unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched, both during the research process as well as in representing research subjects in a final

research paper. The session will also cover SIT's Human Subject Review Policy and the application for review of research with human subjects (the IRB form), the LRB process, the consent form, and the ethics form.

Required reading:

Glesne, C. (2006). But is it ethical? Learning to do right. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*. (3rd Ed.) (pp. 129-146) Boston: Pearson Educators.

Recommended reading:

Bell, J. (2010). Ethics and integrity in research. *Doing Your Research Project (5th Ed.)* (pp. 44-62). Berkshire: Open University Press.

Session 5: Approaches in the Analysis of Qualitative Interviews

This session will critically review and discuss different approaches to analyzing qualitative interviews. Students will be assigned an article that represents a particular approach in oral history analysis. By critically reviewing and discussing the different kinds of oral history analysis in class, students will be able to develop and enhance their skills in analyzing their interviews and representing their research participants in an ethical way.

Required/Recommended Readings:

Students are required to review and discuss one of the following articles (to be assigned in class):

Buitelaar, M. (2008). Between ascription and assertion: the representation of social identity by women of Moroccan descent in the Netherlands. *Focaal*, 32, 29 – 50.

Marchetti, S. (2010). *Paid Domestic Labor. Narratives of Eritrean and Afro-Surinamese Migrant Women*. (Dissertation). Universiteit Utrecht.

Chesne, L. D., & Bradley, B. (2007). Rethinking the lesbian (m)other: an exploration of the construction of lesbian identity. *Gay & Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review*, 3(1), 25 - 34.

Dahl, I., & Thor, M. (2009). Oral history, constructions and deconstruction of narratives: Intersections of class, gender, locality and religion in narratives from a Jewish woman in Sweden. *Enquire*, 3. Retrieved from <http://128.243.80.167/sociology/prospective/postgraduate/enquire/enquire-pdfs/3rd-dhal-thor.pdf>

Session 6 (optional): Constructing a Questionnaire

This session is for those students who would like to conduct a survey. We will address the way questions are formulated, the various measures and the structure of the questionnaire itself.

Session 7: (optional) Analyzing and Reporting Qualitative and Life Story Interviews

In this session, we will practice analyzing the material you collected through qualitative interviewing and life story interviews (oral history). We pay attention to how to retrieve findings from raw interview data, and how interpret these interview data in a way that provides the reader with the information needed to accept your interpretation and that benefits the structure of your research report.

After completing Modules 1-4, students 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 the Netherlands

These sessions prepare the student for the ISP experience. They examine field work-based norms and practices related to conducting research in the Netherlands. Attention is also given to the importance of applied methodology in the ISP experience and the expectations and responsibilities of the student.

Session 1: ISP Proposal Presentation

This session takes place after the students have decided upon their ISP topic and formulated a tentative research question. We will invite lecturers, ISP advisors, hosts, and representatives of the organizations that are relevant to program theme. Students are asked to pitch their research for their fellow students and our guests, to describe their ideal advisor and their needs. The aim is to improve the proposal and to explore resources (literature, relevant networks and organizations, key individuals).

Session 2: Writing your ISP - workshop

In this session we will look into the various elements of a research report and go over the ISP Rubric. The workshop focuses on the complex relationship between the process of conducting research and the writing process. Students are asked to participate in exercises and to prepare a small test.

Required Reading:

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

Module 5b: Internship in the Context of the Netherlands

These sessions prepare the student for the internship experience. They examine work-based norms and practices related to internships in the Netherlands. Attention is given to 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 the Netherlands. 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:

Prak, M., & Zanden, J. L. (2014). The Netherlands and the Poldermodel: A response. *BMGN- Low Countries Historical Review*, Vol.129-1, 125-133.

Recommended Reading:

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

Session 2: Internship-based Norms and Practices in the Netherlands

This session explores internship-based norms and practices related to internships in the Netherlands, 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 place of internship expectations.

Required Reading:

Dekker, P., & Van den Broek, A. (1998). Civil society in comparative perspective: Involvement in voluntary associations in North America and Western Europe. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 1, No.1, 11-38.

Session 3: The Ethics of Participating in an Internship in the Netherlands

Ongoing: One-on-one Meetings with the internship coordinator

Students have the opportunity to discuss their internship with the Internship coordinator. The first 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.

Recommended Reading:

McDonald, Francis (2011) Ethical Use of Interns. Retrieved from:
<http://www.prsa.org/aboutprsa/ethics/ethicalstandardsadvisories/documents/psa-17.pdf>

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Assessment

Assignments (preparation of proposal)	10% (2x5%)
Practice interview assignment:	15%
ISP or internship Proposal	40%
Experiential Museum	25%
Participation	10%

Description of Assignments:

Two ISP assignments (10%, 2x5%):

First assignment: Students use the information offered during class to first explore the research topic: What are the main issues of the topic? What is the relevant literature? What relevant theory, concept, model can be found? And based on this exploration: what could be a possible research question?

If students opt for an internship, they need to explore the field in which they are interested to work: What are the main organizations? What are their objectives and/or activities? And based on this exploration: What can I possibly contribute to this organization?

Second assignment: Students formulate their research question. They decide what sub-questions need to be answered and what methods are most effective to answer the sub-questions. This is the foundation of their research design.

Students who opt for an internship should reflect on their talk with the AD and the coordinator of internships, and start to make a connection with an organization that they would like to intern with.

Practice Interview Assignment (15%): 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 lines of gender, sexuality, race, and class affected the set up and wording of their questionnaire, and consequently the outcome of the interview.

ISP or Internship Proposal (40%): Students write an ISP or internship proposal in preparation of their ISP. In the initial proposal, students practice their skills in explaining their field of inquiry, formulating an initial research question, and explaining their initial research/internship set up. They are required to include at least 3 readings that reflect the broader field of research in which their own research is situated. In its final version, students further develop their ISP proposal by working on a first draft introduction, choosing a focal point, establishing a research question, and describing their research design and methodology.

In the final proposal, students who do the classic ISP, must include 5 readings that reflect their field of research and/or theoretical framework. Final ISP proposals must be submitted with the application for review of ISP research with human subjects.

Students who will do an internship, must include a theoretical framework for assessing the organization and its activities. Final internship proposals must be submitted with the application for review of ISP research with human subjects. The proposal also needs to include an agreement that states the tasks and goals of the internship, signed by the organization and the student. If the student is to conduct research for the organization, than the AD must approve the research question.

Experiential museum (25%): In order to enhance skills of observation and experiential learning through fieldwork, students are assigned to build on an 'experience collection' in which they connect to the new environment, make observations through a gender and sexuality lens with the help of all the senses (sight, sound, smell, etc.), collect items, pictures, overheard conversations, small interviews, time observations, etc. and keep a field journal. At the end of the semester, students are invited to create their own portable 'experiential museum' from their experience collection and their field notes that will reflect their unique way of experiencing and perceiving a new city and a new culture.

Participation (10%): The RME module coordinator and the oral history module coordinator assess students' participation in class and during meetings.

Participation includes:

- Attendance: promptness to class and positive presence in class
- Active listening: paying attention in class, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm, entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes
- Involvement in class discussions: either in small or large groups
- Group accountability during classes

- Taking leadership roles: leading and guiding discussions in a productive direction as assigned by the lecturer

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 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>.