



Field Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
China: Health, Environment and Traditional Chinese Medicine

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 *Field Methods and Ethics* course 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 China. In particular, the course enhances students' skills at building rapport; initiating purposeful dialogue in the cultural context of China; gathering, recording, and analyzing primary data; and writing an 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 China and of global and environmental health. Broadly, the course introduces students to both qualitative and quantitative approaches of social science fieldwork.

The main emphasis of the course is on the development of empirical tools and ethics of interactive fieldwork skills involving the collection of primary data. The course includes lectures on qualitative methods of research in social sciences and in particular in global health and environment fields, 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 fieldwork 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) that is largely based on the data gathered from primary sources, or an internship at a local organization.

Learning Outcomes

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

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- 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 health and environment OR demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of China;
- 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 Requirements

The students have to participate in all components of the program, which will provide them with the skills and knowledge on the ethnographic methodology and will be able to analyze the primary data for their final ISP or internship paper. The students must participate in all activities assigned for the field methods and ethics.

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: 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, especially in China. 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.

Session 1: Intercultural Communication and Cultural Adjustment Cycle

During orientation period in Beijing, students are immediately exposed to life in a traditional and historically important city, where students visit a university and a hospital and attend lectures delivered by China's top academics. Students emerge from their four days in Beijing with cultural do's and don'ts and what they may expect from the experiential learning and field studies on which they are about to embark. The experiential components arranged in this section include:

Visit Tsinghua University and attend lectures by Tsinghua University and other university professors

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Meet international students and exchange ideas and experience
Visit a hospital and communicate with health professionals
Explore Beijing and collect information of health and environmental issues

Reading Assignments:

Ostrowski, P. & Penner, G. (2009). *It's All Chinese to Me—An Overview of Culture and Etiquette in China*. USA: Tuttle Publishing.

Session 2: Kunming Drop-off Exercise

This exercise, common to all SIT study abroad programs but different in each program location, introduces students to the program base in Kunming through small group explorations which encourage the use of local public transportation and empowers students in the skills acquisition required to move about in what is, to many, an unfamiliar language, culture and environment. Creates a collective knowledge of areas of interest within Kunming. Establishes the role of independent or small group exploration and responsibility for one's own learning through field-based exercises. To explicate the drop-off in greater detail would undermine the very nature of the drop-off itself.

Reading Assignment:

Colvin, M. (2015). *Fieldwork in China, or a Huge, Frustrating, Dynamic, Messy Learning Process*. Retrieved from: <http://voices.pomona.edu/2015/fieldwork-in-china-or-a-huge-frustrating-dynamic-messy-learning-process/>

Session 3: Cross-Cultural Discussion with Students at the Universities in Kunming

This discussion is an informal meeting between students at nearby universities, including our own campus at Yunnan Minzu University. SIT students interact and form friendships with Chinese students and within the host culture. Integrates students into the local university community. Gain greater insight into the Chinese educational system and Chinese student life

Reading Assignment:

Lafayette De Mente, B. (2009). *The Chinese Mind*. USA: Tuttle Publishing.

Session 4: Homestay as a Cultural Experience and Site of Learning

An urban and a rural homestay are arranged for our students to integrate the experience of participating in the lives of a Chinese family, frequently associated with the academic community in the case of Kunming, with all other components of the China: Health, Environment and Traditional Chinese Medicine program, including direct experience of, and the chance to discuss, elements of the thematic seminar and gain first-hand knowledge about how Chinese culture functions within an urban and rural context. Enhances Chinese language acquisition. Engages students in Chinese daily family life. Homestay family members are often chosen as informants for the Life History interview assignment and are valuable resource for students' ISPs.

In Shaxi, students will directly confront the realities of the lives of China's rural agricultural and ethnic peoples, through 同吃,同住,同劳动 (eating together, living together and working together). The homestay enables recognition of the very different levels of society that exist side-by-side in modern China through the combination of homestays in urban Kunming and rural Shaxi.

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Session 5: Doing Field-Based Research in a Study Abroad Context

This lecture covers the anthropological field study methods developed in China, both in theory and in practice. Useful field study skills are introduced. Possible difficulties and challenges that could occur in field study are discussed.

Reading Assignments:

Heimer, M. and Ogersen, S. (2006). Doing Fieldwork in China. Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press.

Module 2: Field Methods and Ethics in health and environmental studies

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. This module includes in-depth readings and discussion of the importance of ethics in the context of fieldwork, including the history of ethical guidelines in the social sciences and the processes of Human Subjects Review. It also provides useful information on field work ethics in the Chinese context so that students will be accepted by local communities when conducting their projects in China.

Session 1: Field Methods and Ethics in health and environment studies

Session 2: Selecting Topics, Formulating Research Questions, and Literature Review

Session 3: Data Analysis, Evaluation, and Interpretation

Reading Assignments:

Campbell, J. (2010). The 'problem' of ethics in contemporary anthropological research. Anthropology Matters, 12 (1).

Fluehr-Lobran, C. (2008). Collaborative anthropology as twenty-first century ethical anthropology. Collaborative Anthropologies, 1, pp 175-182.

Module 3: 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. 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: One-on-one Meetings with the Academic Director or internship program coordinator to Discuss Preliminary ISP or Internship Ideas

Session 2: Critical Review of past ISPs or Internships

Researchers in Yunnan or former SIT students are invited to talk to the new group of students about their experiences of studying in China and provide their suggestions/advice for current students on conducting field study in China.

Session 3: Introduction to the LRB/IRB Process and HSR Application

Session 4: Identifying an ISP Advisor and Securing an 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

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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

Session 2: One-on-one Meetings with Academic Director and/or ISP Advisor or Internship Supervisor

Session 3: Peer review of ISP or Internship Proposal Drafts

Session 4: LRB meeting to discuss students' ISP or internship proposals

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 China

This module prepares the student for the ISP experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to conducting research in China. 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: Work-based Norms and Practices in China

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to research in China 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:

Heimer, M. and Ogersen, S. (2006). *Doing Fieldwork in China*. Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press.

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

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

Module 5b: Internship in the Context of China

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

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the internship, and stages of student growth in the internship. Students will review the internship rubric.

Required Readings:

Wrigley, S. (2010). Experiential Learning in China. Retrieved from: <https://kennedy.byu.edu/experiential-learning-in-china/2010>.

Recommended Readings:

Switzer, F. and King, M. (2013). Chapters 2 and 3. In Brooks and Cole (Eds.), *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning*. Belmont: Brooks and Cole.

Session 2: Work-based Norms and Practices in China

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to internships and work in China, 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.

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

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.

Recommended Readings

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:

Assignment I: Practice Interview

Students are asked to conduct a practice interview with one of the members of their host family or the local community. They are asked to write a life history paper including 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.

Acquire the skills to overcome methodological hurdles faced in the interview process, including the use of translators, interviewing in Chinese or in English and the cultural barriers that often crop up in this standard anthropological exercise. The Life History Interview and paper prepare students for their Community Study Project interviews and are of particular importance for those students who choose to pursue an Independent Study Project. Raises awareness of the diversity to be found at all levels of contemporary Chinese society. This exercise equips students with appropriate and successful interviewing techniques and skills. In evaluating this exercise, cultural analysis is emphasized and over simple detail and description.

Reading Assignments:

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Goodson, I. (2008). A Guide to Life History Interviews. *Investigating the Teachers' Life and Work*. USA: Sense Publishers.

Assignment II: Group/Individual Exploration

This assignment, which contains a group or individual exploration project in Yunnan or nearby provinces in China, is one of empowerment. Requires language and cultural learning. Utilizes basic skills required for life in China. Evaluates personal experience of increasing empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, and flexibility. Develops self-confidence in ability to conduct fieldwork in China. Prepares students for logistical difficulties that may be encountered during future assignments outside the classroom. Students who study intensive language during ISP period are asked to make good use of their FME training skills in their language assignments by communicating with local people in a culturally appropriate way.

On their return and in the broader context of course readings, lectures and discussion, students give small-group presentations and write individual journals detailing and reflecting on the "critical incidents" during the project that led to greater understanding of some aspect of Chinese and ethnic minority social practices and cultures. Students are encouraged to record their progress made through this activity, in terms of language skill development, ISP development and personal development. In addition, in this exercise students often reflect upon differences between the cultures and societies they observe during this project and the societies from which they themselves are emerging, and explore their own interior journeys and what they learned about themselves along the way.

Reading Assignments:

Link, G. (2016). Yunnan Exploration Project - Trip to Nuodeng, Yunlong County, Dali Prefecture. SIT China assignment

Warren, S. (2016) Yunnan Exploration Project. SIT China assignment

Assignment III: Community Study Project

Possible choices for the Community Study Project are virtually endless. They include gender roles in the community, waste water management, the yearly agricultural cycle, the advent of tourism and its effects on Shaxi, religious life. In effect, any subject of relevance and interest to the student and valuable for the group discussion about the community is possible. Provides direct fieldwork experience for those students pursuing an Independent Study Project or any future fieldwork. Compels a focused analysis of some aspects of local Shaxi society. Leads all involved towards a greater comprehension of the intricate dynamics which exist within even small local communities.

Reading Assignment:

Cornet, C. (2010). Fieldwork among the Dong national minority in Guizhou, China: Practicalities, obstacles and challenges.

Depending on the nature and objectives of the program, the methods used may be qualitative or quantitative. The assignments developed for this course have the objective of assessing the use of these field methods in different cultural, political, and economic environments. The skills developed in the assignment aim to prepare students to carry out their Independent Study Project or internship with high ethical considerations.

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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 two 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:

Assignment I	15%
Assignments II & III	30%
Field Work Journal	15%
Research/Internship Proposal	30%
Participation	10%

Grading Scale

The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

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.

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- 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>.

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