

## Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
Jordan: Refugees, Health, and Humanitarian Action

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* course (RME) introduces students to the conceptual and practical tools for gathering primary data, and the knowledge and skills that are essential for writing an Independent Study Project (ISP) or Internship proposal in a topic on refugee health and humanitarian action in the cultural context of Jordan. In particular, the course enhances students' skills at building rapport and constructive relationships with organizations and/or individuals; gathering, recording, and analyzing primary data; and writing a scholarly academic report or internship paper. 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 Jordan and humanitarian and social studies. Broadly, the course introduces students to both qualitative and quantitative approaches of social science field research. The course includes lectures on qualitative methods of research in social sciences and in particular in global 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 ISP or an Internship paper, 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 3 credits (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 global health and humanitarian action and demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of Jordan;
- Demonstrate understanding of the methodological and ethical considerations, guidelines, and the researcher's responsibilities when conducting research on vulnerable populations including women, children, and refugees;
- Conduct field research on issues of refugees, health, and humanitarian aid using appropriate methods in an ethical manner;
- 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 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: 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.

#### Session 1: Cultural Adjustment Cycle and the Development of Intercultural Competence

This session will discuss intercultural competence development, ways of involvement, and reflections on intercultural experiences. The session also discusses the potential of using homestay as a cultural experience and site of learning.

#### *Required Reading*

Jackson, J. (2005). Assessing intercultural learning through introspective accounts.

*Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 11, 165-186.

Bennett, M. (2004). Becoming intercultural competent. In J.S. Wurzel (Ed.), *Toward multiculturalism: A reader in multicultural education*. Newton, Ma: Intercultural Resource.

Schmidt-Rinehart, B. C., & Knight, S. M. (2004). The homestay component of study abroad: Three perspectives. *Foreign Language Annals*, 37, 254-262.

Knight, S. M., & Schmidt-Rinehart, B. C. (2010). Exploring conditions to enhance student/host family interaction abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43, 64-79.

### Session 2: Experiential Learning Philosophy and the Politics of Culture in Jordan

This session provides an overview of Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and its key concepts: the cycle and spiral of learning. The session will also offer guidance to study abroad students on the use of these concepts to maximize their learning and development.

#### *Required Readings*

Kolb, A.Y and Kolb, D.A. (2005). *Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education*. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 4(2), 193-212.

Hesser, G. (Ed.). (2013). *Strengthening experiential education: A new era*. Mt. Royal, NJ: National Society of Experiential Education.

### Session 3: Doing Field-Based Research in a Study Abroad Context

This session includes an orientation about conducting culturally appropriate research in the context of Jordan, taking into consideration religious, political, and cultural realities and sensitivities as well as prevalent social norms. The session also grapples with positionality and outsider/insider research and the potential impact of positionality on the collected data its analysis. Skills for networking, time management and productivity in the context of Jordan will be discussed.

#### *Required Reading*

Wahsheh, M., Geiger, B., and Hassan, Z. (2012) Considering Cultural and Religious Perspectives when Conducting Health Behavior Research with Jordanian Adolescents. *Annals of Behavioral Science and Medical Education*, 8 (1). 14-20.

## **Module 2: Research Methods and Ethics in Health and Humanitarian Action**

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 also addresses the methodological and ethical challenges and considerations in health and humanitarian action research on vulnerable populations with special focus on refugees and displaced populations. The module looks at issues and circumstances of vulnerabilities (as arising with children, gender and refugees) and explores the cultural and social norms that should be considered when conducting research on refugees.

### Session 1: Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Research-Selecting Topics and Formulating Research Questions and Hypothesis

This session introduces qualitative research and the specific features differentiating qualitative and quantitative research uses and methods. The session also discusses in more detail the major qualitative research genres and mixed methods. The process of identifying research interest, researching conceptual/theoretical frameworks, selecting and narrowing down a research topic, and writing the statement of problem will also be explored. This session also addresses the purpose and significance of the research and phrasing research questions and a hypothesis.

#### *Required Reading:*

Rossman, G. and Rallis, S. (2003). *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California, (Chapter 5: "Planning the Research").

Bowling, A. (2014). *Research methods in health: investigating health and health services*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK), Chapter 1: The Scope of Research, Chapter 7: The Principles of Research.

### Session 2: Methodological and Ethical Consideration of Research with Vulnerable Populations

This session addresses the methodological and ethical challenges and considerations in social sciences and health research on vulnerable populations. The session discusses the rationale for and objectives of conducting research on vulnerable populations, the challenges faced by researchers, and viable approaches to reduce and contain potential emotional harm to participants. In particular, the session addresses the political, economic, and social circumstances which increase the vulnerability of refugees and the ethical and research guidelines and obligations for conducting research with this group.

#### *Required Reading:*

Pittaway, F, Bartolomei, L. Hugman, R. (2010). Stop Stealing Our Stories: The Ethics of Research with Vulnerable Groups. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 2(2): 229-251.

Voutira, E. and Dona, G. (2007). Refugee Research Methodologies: Consolidation and Transformation of a Field. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(2): 163-171.

Leaning J. (2001). Ethics of Research on Refugee Population. *Lancet*, 357: 1432-1433.

Jacobsen, K. Landau, L.B. (2003). The Dual Imperative in Refugee Research: Some Methodological and Ethical Considerations in Social Science Research on Forced Migration. *Disasters*, 27(3): 185.

### Session 3: Data Collection: Participant Observation and Interviewing

This session is focused on participant observation and interviewing for individuals and focus groups. The session addresses preparing an interview guide and interviewing skills and techniques. This session combines a lecture and a hands-on session to practice developing an interview guide as well as conducting a mock interview.

#### *Required Reading:*

Ulin, P. R., Robinson, E., and Tolley, EE. (2004). *Qualitative Methods in Public Health: A Field Guide for Applied Research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (Chapter 4: Collecting Qualitative Data: The Science and the Art).

Bernard, R. (2011). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press. (Chapter 14: "Direct and Indirect Observation").

### Session 4: Data Analysis, Evaluation, and Interpretation

This session combines theoretical back ground and a practice hands-on session to analyze and interpret interview data using content analysis and coding techniques.

#### *Required Reading:*

Bernard, R. (2013). *Social Science Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (Second Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (Chapter 17: Analyzing Qualitative Data I: Applying Logic to Text).

### Session 5: Quantitative Data Analysis, Evaluation, and Interpretation

This session addresses methods of quantitative analysis most likely to be used in data processing and for finding patterns in data such as regression analysis, univariate analysis, and bivariate analysis. The session will also address evaluation and

interpretation. The session will combine theoretical background and a practice hands-on session on field data using SPSS.

*Required Readings:*

Bernard, R. (2013). *Social Science Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (Second Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (Chapter 20: Univariate Analysis).

Bernard, R. (2013). *Social Science Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (Second Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (Chapter 21: Bivariate Analysis: Testing Relations).

### **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: Introduction to the LRB/IRB Process and HSR Application

This session will introduce students to the process of HSR and will take the students through the HSR application forms and process.

*Required Reading:*

SIT/World Learning, Human Subjects Review Policies and Procedure.

#### Session 2: Critical Review of Past ISPs or Internships

This session will provide the opportunity for students to get acquainted with the requirements and rubric of ISP reports, through a hands-on exercise to critically assess past ISPs or internship projects.

#### Session 3: Identifying an ISP Advisor and Securing an Internship Placement

One-on-one meetings with the Academic Director to discuss preliminary ISP or Internship ideas.

### **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

This session will explain the process of writing an ISP or internship proposal. The session will set the expectations for the proposals including the format/ template and other proposal associated forms.

*Required Reading:*

SIT/World Learning, Human Subjects Review Policies and Procedure.

Bowling, A. (2014). *Research Methods in Health: Investigating Health and Health Services*. Milton Keynes: McGraw-Hill Education (Chap 7: "The principles of research")

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

One-on-one meetings with the Academic Director and/or ISP advisor occurs at different stages of the proposal preparation period. The first meeting takes place during the first week of the program to discuss the research topic. The second meeting takes place before preparation of the research tools, other meetings are planned according to need.

### Session 3: ISP or Internship Proposal Presentation to Peers and Roundtable Discussion

This session gives the students the opportunity to present and get their colleagues feedback on their 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 Jordan**

This module prepares the student for the ISP experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to conducting research in Jordan. 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.

#### *Required Reading:*

ISP assessment rubrics

### Session 2: Work-based Norms and Practices in Jordan

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to research in Jordan, 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. This session addresses the methodological and ethical challenges and considerations of research on vulnerable populations with special focus on refugees. The session discusses the challenges faced by researchers, and viable approaches to reduce and contain potential emotional harm to participants.

#### *Required Readings:*

- People in Aid, & Davidson, S. (2003). *Code of good practice in the management and support of aid personnel*. People in Aid. Retrieved from: <http://peopleinaid.org>
- Al Gharaibeh, F. M. (2012). Obstacles in Formulating a Code of Ethics for Social Workers in Jordanian Institutions. *Asian Social Science*, 8(1), 125-133.
- Voutira, E., & Doná, G. (2007). Refugee research methodologies: consolidation and transformation of a field. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(2), 163-171.
- Jacobsen, K., & Landau, L. B. (2003). The dual imperative in refugee research: some methodological and ethical considerations in social science research on forced migration. *Disasters*, 27(3), 185-206.
- Pittaway, E., Bartolomei, L., & Hugman, R. (2010). 'Stop stealing our stories': The ethics of research with vulnerable groups. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 2(2), 229-251.

### 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 Jordan**

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

- Al Gharaibeh, F. M. (2012). Obstacles in Formulating a Code of Ethics for Social Workers in Jordanian Institutions. *Asian Social Science*, 8(1), 125-133.
- Cross, R., & Societies, R. C. (1994). The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. *Geneva, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/index.asp>
- Switzer, H.K., & King, M.A. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic Development in Experiential Learning (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, chapters 2-3.

### Session 2: Work-based Norms and Practices in Jordan

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to internships and work in Jordan, 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 Readings:*

- Leaning, J. (2001). Ethics of research in refugee populations. *The Lancet*, 357(9266), 1432-1433.
- Pittaway, E., Bartolomei, L., & Hugman, R. (2010). 'Stop stealing our stories': The ethics of research with vulnerable groups. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 2(2), 229-251.

### Session 3: The Ethics of Participating in an Internship in Jordan

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. This session also addresses the methodological and ethical challenges, considerations and responsibilities when

providing assistance or conducting research on vulnerable populations with special focus on refugees and displaced populations.

*Recommended Readings:*

- McDonald, F. (2011). Ethical Use of Interns. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.prsa.org/aboutprsa/ethics/ethicalstandardsadvisories/documents/psa-17.pdf>
- Voutira, E., & Doná, G. (2007). Refugee research methodologies: consolidation and transformation of a field. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(2), 163-171.
- Jacobsen, K., & Landau, L. B. (2003). The dual imperative in refugee research: some methodological and ethical considerations in social science research on forced migration. *Disasters*, 27(3), 185-206.
- Pittaway, E., Bartolomei, L., & Hugman, R. (2010). 'Stop stealing our stories': The ethics of research with vulnerable groups. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 2(2), 229-251.

## **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. 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 2: Identification of a Research Topic and Designing the Research tools

Students are asked to identify a research topic, write up what is of importance and significance of the topic, and develop research questions/hypothesis. Design an interview, an observation sheet, build a questionnaire/survey, and use documents and material culture.

#### Assignment 3: Critical Analysis and Evaluation of a previous ISP/Internship report

Students are asked to work in group to examine and analyze the quality of the ISP/Internship reports according to a defined rubric.

#### 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%
Identification of a Research Topic and Designing the Research tools	25%
Critical Analysis and Evaluation of a previous ISP/Internship report	15%
Research/Internship Proposal	35%
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 Reading 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](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>.