

Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
South Africa: Community Health and Social Policy

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 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 individuals in the South African context. In particular, the course serves three main interrelated objectives, each essential to successfully completing the Independent Study Project (ISP) or Internship. First, it equips students with a toolkit for living and working within the South African cultural context. Second, it equips students with knowledge and skills for gathering primary data in South Africa — building rapport, initiating purposeful dialogue in the cultural context of South Africa, gathering, recording, and analysing primary data, documenting, interpreting and analysing this data, and writing a scholarly academic report. Research ethics are a third focus of the course, with special attention devoted to how to satisfy, in the South African context, US higher education ethical standards and protocols for protecting human subjects.

Students work with the academic director (AD) and local experts to develop feasible research questions related to community health in the South African context, to formulate appropriate methods based on those research questions, and to design an initial proposal to address a selected issue. Emphasis is placed on ways of navigating and interpreting cultural difference. Field assignments provide students with opportunities to practice cross-cultural communication approaches and develop new skills in preparation for gathering primary data in South Africa. The fieldwork skills, navigating ethical concerns, and cross-cultural methodological training gained from this course should prove particularly useful for students who plan to pursue a career in public health and other medical fields.

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 global health OR demonstrate awareness of the ethics of participating in an internship in the context of South Africa;
- Whether opting for the qualitative or quantitative track, students will learn how to analyse and process primary data gathered in the field and draw valid and ethical interpretations and conclusions; and
- Produce an Independent Study Project 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 in South Africa through expert lectures and field visits to a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Course Schedule

*Please be aware that topics, sessions 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.

Sessions

Experiential learning

Skills and recommendations for homestay adaptation

Positionality and representation of knowledge gained from communities

Introduction to ethics of research and ethics of internships

Required reading

Adams, T. (2008) A Review of Narrative Ethics. *Qualitative Enquiry* 14 (2), 175-194 Batchelder, D. (1993).

The Green Banana. In D. Batchelder, & E. Warner (Eds.), *Beyond experience: the experiential approach to cross-cultural education*. (pp. xiii - xv). Brattleboro: Intercultural Press.

Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. Denzin, & Y.

Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.), 651-679. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Module 2: Overview of research methods and ethics in community health

This module focuses on the tools and methods required for conducting ethical and culturally appropriate quantitative and qualitative field research in the local communities of South Africa.

Sessions

Critical reading of a medical paper using mixed methodologies

Graphical representation of descriptive data

Introduction to observation, media and literature review, surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, ethnography, case studies, auto-ethnography, heuristic inquiry, narrative enquiry

Class practical workshop – interview and questionnaire design

Co-creating meaning through narrative, auto-ethnography and heuristic inquiry

Practical implementation of survey, interviews and focus group discussions

Collaborative analysis and presentations

Required reading:

Eisner, E. (2001). Concerns and aspirations for qualitative research in the new millennium. *Qualitative Research*, 1(2), 135-145.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). Insider accounts: listening and asking questions. In M. Hammersley, & P. Atkinson, *Ethnography: principles in practice* (pp. 105-126). London: Routledge.

Jewkes, R., Nduna, M., Levin, J., Jama, N., Dunkle, K., Wood, K., & Duvvury, N. (2007). Evaluation of Stepping Stones: A gender transformative HIV prevention intervention. In Witwatersrand: South African Medical Research Council.

Descriptive Statistics. (2017). Retrieved from Social Science Statistics:
<http://www.socscistatistics.com/descriptive/Default.aspx>

Module 3: Quantitative OR Qualitative Methods

In this module students select one of two tracks for in-depth study, qualitative methods or quantitative methods. Thus, students are able to hone in on quantitative or qualitative methods.

Option A – Quantitative methods workshop

Sessions

Testing and refining research questions

Methodologies and basic statistical tools for analysis

Class example of coding responses from interviews and focus groups

Exploring relationships among variables

Required reading

Statistical Calculator. (2017). Retrieved from Social Science Statistics:
<http://www.socscistatistics.com/descriptive/Default.aspx>

Levels of Measurement. (2017). Retrieved from Research Methods Knowledge Base:
<https://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/measlevl.php>

Option B – Qualitative methods workshop

Rooting in theory and substance – identifying the human issues through scholarly research

The practice of initiating and sustaining narrative conversations and conveying people's lived experiences.

Required reading

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/2>

Bleakley, A. (2005). Stories as data, data as stories: making sense of narrative inquiry in clinical education. *Medical Education*, 39, 534-540.

Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.), 651-679. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hendry, P. M. (2010). Narrative as inquiry. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 103, 72-80.

Jones, S. H. (2005). Auto-ethnography: making the personal political. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., pp. 763-791). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Module 4: Quantitative and qualitative methods revisited: rigor and representation

Following the concentration on quantitative or qualitative methods in module 3, students discuss strategies for achieving methodological rigor in qualitative and quantitative approaches, which enhance data validity and reliability within presentation strategies that ensure that research reports are accessible to communities and community health practitioners.

Module 5: Completing the independent study project or the internship project

Students select either the ISP track or the Internship track.

5A. ISP option: Completing the independent study project

This module will describe the ISP processes and help students brainstorm ideas and set goals for their 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. The module will include a review and critique of past ISP 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).

Sample Sessions

Preparations for ISP:

Critical Review of past ISPs or Internships

Introduction to the LRB/IRB Process and HSR Application

One-on-one meetings with the academic director to discuss preliminary ISP ideas

Timelines and practical steps for implementing the project - networking strategies, and problem solving research challenges

5B. Internship option: completing the internship

This module will describe the internship processes and help students brainstorm ideas and set goals. The module will include a review and critique of past internship papers. The module will also walk the students through the Local Review Board (LRB) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols and the application for Human Subjects Review (HSR application). The module 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 exploring issues such as how best to describe the internship experience and purpose to potential internship hosts and others, gender norms, issues of language, and workplace expectations.

Sessions

Critical review of past internships papers

Internships in South Africa

Work-based norms and practices related to internships and work in South Africa

Introduction to the LRB/IRB process and HSR application

One-on-one meetings with the academic director to discuss internship ideas

Timelines and practical steps for implementing the project

Module 6: Developing the ISP project proposal or internship project proposal

For module 6 students are still split into the two groups, ISP and internship. 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.

6A: ISP option: Developing the ISP proposal

Sessions

Writing an ISP or internship proposal

One-on-one meetings with academic director and/or ISP advisor or internship supervisor

Peer review of ISP or internship proposal drafts

Writing the HSR application

ISP or internship proposal presentation to Local Review Board

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.

6B: Internship option: Developing the internship project proposal

Based on learning and engagement in the preceding course modules, this module focuses on internship proposal development, 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.

Sessions

Writing an internship proposal

One-on-one meetings with academic director and/or internship supervisor
Peer review of internship proposal drafts
Writing the HSR Application
Internship proposal presentation to Local Review Board

Required reading:

Strong, A. (2016). Volunteerism or Voluntourism? A Case Study of NGO Motivations & Success in South Africa.

Perold, H., & Graham, L. A. (2017). The Value of Volunteers in Community-Based Organisations: Insights from Southern Africa. In Perspectives on Volunteering (pp. 115-127). Springer International Publishing.

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)

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Description of Assignments:

Assignment 1: (10 marks):

Question construction option: Provide three demographic questions that you hypothesise will usefully disaggregate determinants of alcohol use, four questions that are better suited to surveys and four good questions better suited to interviews. Ask Cato family members to help you to ensure that the questions will be easy for Cato residents to understand.

OR

Conversation Plan Option: In an essay of 300 to 500 words describe how you will create an environment in which conversations about alcohol use can take place, then list five social context questions and five issues that you will try to steer the conversation towards, to co-construct meanings from yours, and your conversation partner's experiences with alcohol.

Assignment 2: (30 marks):

Write a paper that explains the use of mixed methodologies and articulates the implementation and findings of the Cato Manor community alcohol use survey. Your article should be segmented into: Title, Introduction, Methodologies, Findings, Analysis, Opinions and Conclusion, and should be written in an academic format. Your paper must be 1500 to 2000 words using academic writing conventions.

Assignment 3 (20 marks):

Human Subject Review Assignment. Fill out the Human Subject Review Form concisely and accurately. Where details are unknown at present please state this, but go on with what you anticipate the situation will be like. The form will be graded according to how it succeeds in covering anticipated ethical issues, and explaining how vulnerable groups will be protected. Bullet form insertions are allowable in this assignment. (Lengths vary)

Assignment 4 (40 marks) ISP/Internship Proposal:

Complete a proposal for your Independent Study Project or internship, including Title, Abstract, Problem Statement, Design and Methods, Literature Review, Preliminary Findings, Conclusion and Bibliography (lengths vary depending on complexities).

Assessment:

Question Construction/Conversation Plan	10%
Community Research Paper	30%
Human Subject Research/Interaction Application	20%
ISP/Internship Proposal	40%

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.

If the research has been funded by a U.S. government agency, or if the student plans to take this research back to the home school or community for further dissemination, then the student may be required to follow standards from their home institutions in addition to the Local Review Board and those of the Office for Human Research Protections, with which SIT is registered. For applications that require a full review, the academic director will forward any questions or concerns that cannot be resolved at the program level (through the Local Review Board) to SIT's Institutional Review Board.

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>.