New African Diasporas: Frameworks and Fieldwork
ANTH-3000 (4 Credits / 60 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Senegal, Italy, and France: New African Diasporas

Course Description
This course introduces students to the various methods of conducting research in Africana studies with a particular focus on New African Diasporas. It explores the ways power, race, and ethnicity have shaped the construction of knowledge as it relates to new and old African diasporas and examines the methods that propose counter narratives to the traditional Eurocentric discourses. Developed from the perspective of Africana Studies, the course provides students with the basic tools to conduct independent research, while reflecting on the effects of Eurocentric epistemic traditions that pervade the social sciences. Students will learn how to develop sound research and writing skills as they survey the major research designs and techniques as they relate to contemporary approaches to diaspora studies. A core focus for this course is the development of a feasible research proposal and the writing of a 20-page research paper, including the ethical considerations necessary in the research process, topic development, selection and execution of methodologies, final write up.

The course is primarily designed as a field-based course and draws upon SIT’s in-country professional network and academic and socio-cultural resources to structure assignments and field activities through which students practice and hone their skills in gathering, managing, and analyzing primary data. Field activities are complemented by assigned reading and class discussions facilitated by the academic director and guest lecturers.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Analyze the epistemic particularity of the New African Diaspora;
- Describe the Eurocentric nature of mainstream social science research methods;
- Conduct field research independently, ethically, and effectively;
- Demonstrate an acute sense of positionality and perspective and operate independently; and
- Analyze and process primary data gathered in the field and draw valid and ethical interpretations and conclusions.

Language and methods of Instruction
This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to local vocabularies related to course content through in-country expert lectures, field assignments, and activities. The field is a central component of the course, with half the course made up of field assignments and activities and the other half of lectures, assigned reading, and discussion sessions. Assigned and recommended readings are listed in the course schedule section below. Readings prepare students for field assignments, generate questions for class discussions and deepen student knowledge and skills for primary data collection. Students are responsible for all the required readings and should be prepared to bring them to bear in class discussions. Students may submit assignments in either English or French and are expected to complete assignments by the due date. Assignments will be assessed on level of organization, analytical quality and depth of understanding, argumentation, and presentation of evidence, where it is required, citation and formatting.

**Required Texts:**


Additional material will be provided at the start of the program.

**Course Schedule**

Topics covered in each lecture will draw on site visits, guest lecturers and other activities, in addition to the assigned readings. The order of the lectures may be rearranged to respond to activities or opportunities presented in each location of the program.

**Module I: The Rhetoric of Modernity and the Specter of the “Uni-“versal Gaze**

The rhetoric of modernity has offered the epistemic foundation of the ways in which we think of our contemporary world. This rhetoric understands the world as the linear progression towards a more civilized and a more rational mode of being. This same logic has presented Europe and Western European cultures as the center of irradiation of humanness and others, African descended peoples in particular, as less human because of their differences with Europeans. This paradigm, based on a white supremacist epistemic structure, has pervaded social sciences methods since the advent of modernity. And yet, even though disciplines such as Africana studies have attempted to go beyond the limits of this White Supremacist structure, the very foundations of this paradigm, that is, the pervasiveness of coloniality, has seldom been questioned. This module will think critically about the limits of this colonial logic and envisage the possibility to think of the world from a decolonial perspective.

**Required Reading**


**Module 2: Decolonizing Research Methods in Africana Studies**

This module pushes further the critique of the White Supremacist epistemic structure that dominates the social sciences. It looks at the ways the methodology offered by Africana Studies allows for the possibility of an inquiry that has the potential to decolonize the social sciences through a less colonial relation to non-mainstream knowledges and beings. Students will critically examine the limits of the discipline of anthropology, revisit “black epistemologies,” and imagine possibilities to invent a more fluid and equitable relation to knowledge, being, and becoming in a pluriversal world.
Required Readings:


Recommended Reading


Module 3: New Africana Diaspora and the Praxis of Decoloniality?

This module continues the two first modules as it shows how New Africana Diasporas such as those of the Mourid question the colonial matrix of modernity by proposing a decolonial philosophy and praxis that leads to a completely different understanding of the world.

Required Reading:


Module 4: Positionality, Social Reality, and Variables

While the three first modules look at the underlying limits of coloniality as pervasive to social science research methods, this Module focuses on the researcher/student’s positionality. Students will be asked to think about unconscious biases and preconceived understandings of reality as they engage with New African diasporas.

Required Reading:

- McDougal, “Ch. 6, Measuring Social Reality”

Module 5: The Ethics of Doing Research

After the in-depth study of the epistemic and political limits of the colonial matrix of power that students engage in during the first four modules, the rest of the program will introduce students to practical methodology of research from an Africana Studies perspective.

This session outlines the responsibilities of the student for an ethical and significant research project that can serve the objectives of the researcher while respecting the integrity of New African Diasporic communities. The module also reviews best practices for a successful research and encourages students to acknowledge the way their positionality may affect the results of their study.

Required Reading:

Module 6: Citation and Formatting

This module is designed to teach students the meaning of plagiarism and to help them avoid it. Students will be introduced to the APA style as they learn to format in-text citations, footnotes and endnotes, and reference lists and bibliographies.

Required Reading:

- What is Plagiarism? http://www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-plagiarism

Module 7: Research Design

This module introduces students to methods of designing research. It will enable students to discuss the best research methods to study New African Diasporas. Students will also have the opportunity to discuss ways to develop a project from an interest to a topic, from a topic to questions, and from questions to a focused research project.

Required Reading:

- McDougal, S. (2014), Ch. 4 “Research Design”

Module 8: Research Paradigms & Approaches

Session 1: Quantitative and Qualitative Research

This session offers an examination of the usefulness of qualitative and quantitative methods in the study of New African Diaspora. A particular focus will be reserved to a critical and practical study of interview design and conduct, survey research, and participant observation. We will also identify appropriate statistical methods to conduct analyses to answer research questions using quantitative data.

Required Reading:


Session 2: Non-Reactive Methods

Students will explore the potential benefits of unobtrusive research methods and its potential to facilitate data collection. They will also explore the ways such methods allow a more faithful analysis of physical evidence, secondary analysis, and content analysis.

Required Reading:
Module 9: Choosing a Topic, Writing a Question, Reviewing the Literature

This module continues the precedent as it gives students the tools to carry on their project, receive permissions to take on their research, and establish a network that allows them to go to the field. Students will also be invited to think about the timing and duration of their projects.

Required Reading:

- McDougal, S. (2014). Ch. 5 “Choosing a Topic, Writing a Question, Assignment: Reviewing the Literature”

Module 10: Writing a Research Paper in Africana Studies

This module is designed to teach students the particularities of the research paper in Africana Studies with a focus on topics such as choosing a subject, organizing notes, outlining papers, and writing the first draft. This module will also insist on the importance of interdisciplinarity and intersectionality in the discipline of Africana Studies.

Required Reading:


Assignments

Participation

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, written questions for class, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. In addition, the following are expectations of all participants:

Come to class prepared. Be on time, have your assigned 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 accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner. Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak. Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical). Respect differences of opinion (classmates’, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

Daily Reflections

Every student is required to keep a journal that they will submit every two weeks. These must be daily reflections on any aspect of the program (homestay, classroom, cite visits, etc.). These reflections are particularly important as they allow us to constantly engage in critically thinking about our experience. Rather than a simple
Literature Review

Every student is required to submit a literature review including major findings and theoretical and methodological contributions to their research topic. This literature review should include at least 20 sources sorted and classified according to the ways they help frame your research question. The review should introduce the topic of your study and provide the intellectual context that allows the reader to understand it. Your review should clearly describe your findings from articles that have paved the way for your inquiry and/or offer answers to your inquiry question. It is important that your findings be organized in clearly organized themes with descriptive titles that you explain accordingly.

Final Paper

Each student chooses a research topic that they will develop throughout the semester into a 20-page final paper. This paper is the culmination of several steps, namely, a research proposal 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. Progress on the final paper is discussed frequently with the academic director.

Interviews and Observation

Each student will be assigned to conduct a series of interviews and observation reports in Dakar and in Europe. The assignments will be announced in due time.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

All students will be evaluated based on the following assignments.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fieldnote Diaries</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation Interview and Observation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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**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
Grading Criteria

An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of class participation, an “A” grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, evidence of having completed assigned reading, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, field visits and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students’ participation will be monitored and taken into account.

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.

Expectations and Policies

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all academic lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

Note that all assignments must be complete in due time.

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. Information regarding the student handbook can be found at https://studyabroad.sit.edu/documents/studyabroad/Student-Handbook.pdf