Course Syllabus

Research Methods and Ethics
ANTH 3500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Tunisia: Emerging Identities in North Africa

Course Description
Research Methods and Ethics is a qualitative research methods course designed to provide an overview of methodological approaches in a short time and within the local cultural context. The course offers students the basic tools necessary to conceive and conduct field research in Tunisia. Similarly, the seminar is designed to provide students with the theoretical concepts essential for translating lived experience into learning experience. As part of the larger SIT Study Abroad intercultural learning experience, the research tools which will be emphasized require extensive interaction with your primary resource - the people of Tunisia. To that end, the course will not only introduce field-based research skills (such as interviewing, and participant and non-participant observation), but will also strengthen student cultural awareness through exercises and discussions about researcher positionality and the ethics of field work in Tunisia. In so doing, Research Methods and Ethics provides students with the cultural understanding and critical acumen necessary for the successful completion of the Independent Study Project (ISP).

Together with specific methodological skills, the course comprises three phases, articulated around the developing perceptions of emerging Arab identities through the conflict between modernity and tradition in the Tunisian environment: “orientation,” “acculturation,” and “ISP preparation.” These phases are designed to help students understand the nature and degree of the pressure exerted by globalized modernity on Arab culture today, with special emphasis on Tunisia. In addition, they also enable students to gain an increased awareness of their own cultural adjustment within the host community. With its emphasis on ethics, the course also strengthens cultural awareness through exercises and discussions about student positionality and the ethics of field work in Tunisia. Research ethics and the Human Subjects Review process form a core component of the course.

Course Objectives
Research Methods and Ethics has an interdisciplinary, integrative, and critical focus encompassing 45 academic hours (3 credits). Its main objectives are to:

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.
Expected Outcomes
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
- Operate independently, using cultural sensitivity, language skills, and local networks of trust they have been built or otherwise accessed during the course of the semester;
- Develop a culturally-appropriate and intellectually-rigorous ISP grounded in current debates and relevant literature;
- Conduct field research using appropriate methods in an ethical manner;
- Analyze data gathered in the field, and make valid interpretations and conclusions.

Course Requirements
Students are expected to prepare for, attend, and participate in all lectures, discussions, and field visits. You are likewise expected to complete all assignments in a professional and timely manner. Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Two self-selected journal entries: 40%
ISP proposal: 30%
Participation & attendance: 20%
Human Subjects Review application 10%

One of the requirements of Research Methods and Ethics is the field study journal. The journal is a "work journal" containing field notes, charts, maps, interviews, contacts, visit descriptions and interpretations, as well as all activities in preparation for the Independent Study Project. A good field journal contains both facts and thoughts, though typically in an incomplete and unpolished form. Organization, analysis, interpretations, and, finally, evaluation are important stages in journal keeping. However, during the analytical stage, it is useful for the researcher to separate observations from feelings and interpretations. While attempts to link observations and reflections to personal experiences are not erroneous, it is nevertheless important to transcend selfhood and to regard cultural phenomena from other viewpoints, namely those prevalent in the host culture. Students will be assigned journal entries during the course, but they are also expected to develop their own entries on the basis of their own observations, research needs and academic interests.

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.
**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**
Evaluation of the course will be based on two journal entries of the student’s choice (40%), a short paper constituting the Independent Study Project proposal (30%), the Human Subjects Review application (10%), and the quality of engagement in activities and discussions (20%).

**Grading Scale**
The grading scale for the course 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

**Grading Criteria**
An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance - in terms of structure and organization - of both the written paper and oral presentation, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence.

**Student Expectations**

**Class Participation**
Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, educational excursions and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

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. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.*