



## Public Health Research Methods and Ethics

IPBH3500 (3 credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
Chile: Public Health, Traditional Medicine and Community Empowerment

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 seminar (RME) 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 Chile. In particular, the course enhances students' skills at building rapport; initiating purposeful dialogue in the Chilean context; gathering, recording, and analyzing primary data; and writing a scholarly 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 parameters of Chile and public health and traditional medicine. Broadly, the seminar introduces students to both qualitative and quantitative approaches of social science field research.

The main emphasis of the seminar is on the development of empirical tools and ethics of interactive research skills involving the collection of primary data. The seminar includes lectures on qualitative methods of research in social sciences, and with a particular focus on public health and ethnographic research, the 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 Independent Study Project (ISP), 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 of 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 public health and traditional medicine belief systems OR demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of Chile;
- 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 Spanish, and 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.

### **Required Readings:**

*Métodos de Investigación en Salud Pública y Ética (2017)*. Programa Chile: Salud Pública, Medicina Tradicional, y Empoderamiento Comunitario.

### **Suggested Readings:**

Bernard, H. Russell (2006). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

### **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.

#### Sample Sessions

Cultural Adjustment Cycle

Homestay as a Cultural Experience and Site of Learning

Doing Field-Based Research in a Study Abroad Context

Experiential Learning Philosophy and the Politics of Culture in Chile

Positionality and Outsider/Insider Research

Skills for Networking, Time Management, and Productivity

### **Module 2: Research Methods and Ethics the Health Sciences**

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.

### Sample Sessions

Research Methods and Ethics in Chile

Selecting Topics, Formulating Research Questions, and Literature Review

Data Collection: Participant Observation and Interviewing

Mixed Methods Research

Data Analysis, Evaluation, and Interpretation

SPSS Practical Session

### **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).

### Sample Sessions

Critical Review of past ISPs or Internships

Introduction to the LRB/IRB Process and HSR Application

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.

### Sample 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 Peers and Roundtable Discussion

***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 Chile**

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

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to research in Chile, 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.

### Session 3: ISP Applied Methodology

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

#### *Required Readings:*

Bell, Judith. (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 Chile**

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

#### *Recommended Readings:*

Switzer, Frederick and King, Mary (2013) *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole (chapters 2 and 3)

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

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

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, Francis (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. 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 II

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.

#### 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 three 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:

Practice Interview	15%
Assignment II	15%
Field Work Journal	20%
Research/Internship Proposal	40%
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 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.

**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>.