



Field Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 credits/45 contact hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:

Vietnam: Culture, Social Change and Development

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

This *Field Methods and Ethics* course (FME) is designed to prepare students to undertake independent field-based research or a practicum experience within a development organization setting in Vietnam. The course provides the theoretical and practical frameworks to facilitate successful adjustment to life in Vietnam and to enhance students' capacity to accomplish challenging tasks in new and unfamiliar settings, while conducting independent field-based research or engaging in a practicum that is ethically, methodologically and analytically sound.

The course prepares students for either a research-based Independent Study Project experience. Readings, class-based discussion and activities are designed to build skills in qualitative research methods and the utilization of primary resources. Lectures and hands on learning activities are designed to familiarize students with developing hypotheses, methodologies, and analytical approaches to field based investigations in the social sciences. Finally, students consider the norms and expectations of ethical field engagements and reciprocity, while reflecting critically on their role as "outsiders" in the development process.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to function effectively and comfortably in a range of social, cultural and institutional contexts within Vietnam;
- Apply knowledge of different research approaches and research tools needed for development studies in Vietnam;
- Exhibit awareness of the practical considerations and challenges inherent in development work in the Vietnamese context;
- Develop a culturally-appropriate and intellectually-rigorous ISP proposal grounded in current debates and relevant literature; and

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- Engage in an Independent Study Project (ISP) in Vietnam using appropriate methods and in an ethical manner.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well as the nuances of economic change and development through in-country expert lectures and field visits in 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.

This course contains three modules: Theoretical Foundations and Fieldwork Methods and Skills, Field Practicum, ISP Proposal, Ethics & Sensitivity in Cross Cultural Study.

Module I: Theoretical Foundations and Fieldwork Methods and Skills (10 hours)

The module introduces students to basic research theory with the focus on Infrastructure of Field Methods with additional reflection on cross-cultural description, interpretation and evaluation. Students will then be introduced to fieldwork methods most widely used by past students while completing their ISPs. Students' capacity to develop a competent and ethical sound ISP proposal will be enhanced by training them on proposal design; locating relevant and evidence based secondary information, conducting literature reviews; and practice in the synthesis and analysis of primary and secondary information.

Orientation Week: Orientation and Introduction of Field Methods and Ethics Course

Drop-off activities in downtown of Ho Chi Minh City, de-briefing, team building and learning with local students.

Discussion on pre-departure readings

Assignment FME #1: Learning Goal

Session I: Foundations of Social Research and Experiential Learning

This session provides students theoretical foundations of social research and key components of experiential Learning.

Required Readings:

Bailey, A. Carol. 2007. *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. Pine Forge Press: CA.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Qualitative Field Research

Chapter 3: Prelude to Qualitative Field Research

Chapter 4: The Infrastructure of Qualitative Field Research

Lutterman-Aguilar & Orval Gingerich. 2001. *Experiential Pedagogy for Study Abroad: Educating for Global Citizenship*. download from *Frontiers* at http://www.frontiersjournal.com/issues/vol8/vol8-07_luttermanaguilargi, access on 7/25/2012, 11:16am.

Suggested Reading:

Babbie, E., 2012. (13rd edition) *The Practice of Social Science Research*. NY: Thomson Wadsworth. Chapter 1: Human Inquiry & Science, pp.2 - 29.

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Session 2: Site Workshop at the War Remnants Museum and Cu Chi Tunnel on Field Observations

Required Reading:

Bailey, A. Carol. 2007. *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. Pine Forge Press: CA. Chapter 6: Observation.

Assignment FME # 2: Observation Techniques

Session 3: Research Design and Planning a Research Project

This session covers different kinds of research design that are employed in field methods. This session also provides the main steps that are involved in planning and designing a research project and offers advice on how to manage this process.

Required Readings:

Babbie, E., 2012. (13rd edition.) *The Practice of Social Science Research*. NY: Thomson Wadsworth. Chapter 4 on Research Design, pp.88-118.

Creswell, W.J. 2007. (2nd ed.) *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication. Chapter 3, pp. 35-50.

Session 4: Research Topics, Research Questions and Review the past ISPs

This session aims to help students focus on choosing research topics, formulating research questions and reviewing the past ISPs.

Required Readings:

Bryman, Alan. 2012. (4th ed.) *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 4: Planning a research project and formulating research questions pp.79-95

Chapter 5: Getting started: reviewing the literature, pp. 97-128

Session 5: One-on-One Meeting with the Academic Director on initial ISP topics, see the weekly schedule

Module 2: Field Practicum in Mekong Delta and Ho Chi Minh City (20 hours)

This module encourages students to apply classroom learning in their search for information in an outside context. During this module, students will engage in group discussions, participant observation, transect walk and individual and group interviews that will occur during workshops and excursions in Mekong Delta and Ho Chi Minh City. These activities will allow students to gain a solid understanding of the process and application of fieldwork methods. Maintaining a field journal from the beginning through the end of the semester will chart the development of their cross-cultural learning. Writing assignments in the course will enable them to develop critical analysis and writing skills and since the field process will be actively reflected in regular debriefing, synthesis and thematic conclusions, student will gather an in-depth understanding of conducting cross-cultural field studies ethically and sensitively.

Assignment FME #3: Field Investigation Study in Hoa An and My Khanh villages of Mekong Delta. Written reports on interview process due at the end of Mekong Delta excursions.

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Session 1: Site Workshop on Research Instruments and Selection of Techniques for collecting data; Qualitative Field Research and Basic Methodology: Observation & Interviews.

This session takes place during the village study in Mekong Delta - and includes structured observations and semi-structured interviews.

Required Readings:

Bailey, C. 2007. (Second Edition). *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Pub. Chapters 5: Methodology; Chapter 7: Interviews; pp. 95-110.
Cross-Cultural Interviewing. In *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns* edited by Holtein & Jaber Gubrium. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication. Chapter 21, pp. 430-448.

Reflection on interview process and issues of cross-cultural translation.

Session 2: The Art of Field Work: Population, Sample Size and Research Strategies

This session presents research strategies in the field setting, including population, sample size and research strategies.

Required Readings:

Wolcott, H. 1995. *The Art of Field Work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. Chapter 4-5, pp. 65-117
Fink, Arlene. 2009. *How to conduct surveys*. SAGE Pub.
Chapter 1: Conducting Survey
Chapter 2: The Survey Forms
Chapter 4: Samplings

Suggested Readings:

Creswell, John W. (2007) *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Session 3: Oral Presentation on Village Case Study in Mekong Delta

Students present their findings from Village Case Studies in pairs or individually.

Session 4: Field Visit at NGOs or Meetings with Potential ISP Advisors in Ho Chi Minh City

Assignment FME #4: Field Journal and Applying DIE Format during homestay period in Ho Chi Minh City. Based on their initial ISP topics and after the one-on-one meeting with the AD, each student will conduct a field visit with NGO, Research Institutes or Professors/ Lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City to gather more preliminary information for their intended ISP topics

Session 5: Survey Research and Data Analysis/Interpretation

This session presents main steps of conducting survey research and issues of data analysis.

Required Readings:

Bailey, A. Carol. 2007. *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. CA: Pine Forge Press.
Chapter 9: Coding, Memoing, and Description, Chapter 10: Typologies, Taxonomies, Visual Representation and Themes and Chapter 11: Story Telling. Critical Events and Analytical Induction; pp.125-178.
Rossman, G. and Rallis, S. (2003). *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research 2nd ed*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 10. Analyzing Data.

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Fink, Arlene. 2009. *How to conduct surveys*. SAGE Pub. Chapter 6: Analyzing and Organizing data from survey; Chapter 7: Presenting the Survey Result.

Session 6: ISP topics and Research Questions

After the field visit with NGOs and meeting/contacting with potential ISP Advisors, students are asked to write down the Initial ISP topics and research questions.

Module 3: ISP Proposal, Ethics and Sensitivity in the Cross-Cultural Context (15 hours)

This module asks students to develop an awareness of issues of power and representation that arise in the process of completing fieldwork. Topics addressed include ethics in conjunction with consent, confidentiality and reciprocity. Students will be made fully aware of SIT's IRB/LRB process, consent, confidentiality, and reciprocity. By reflecting on thematic lectures on Vietnamese society and culture and learning from field visits, students will be oriented to understand the influences of social and cultural values on their research process. This will bolster their awareness, responsiveness, and sensitivity for doing an ethical study project in the field while taking into consideration the dynamics of ethnicity, gender and power relations in rural and urban Vietnamese setting

Assignments FME #5 and #6: Initial ISP Topics and Research Questions and First ISP proposal due at the end the module 3.

Session 1: The Ethics of Social Research, IRB and LRB

Required Reading:

SIT/World Learning, *Human Subjects Review Policies and Procedures*

Bryman, Alan. 2012. (4th ed.) *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 6: Ethics and politics in social research, pp. 130-154.

Session 2: Exercises on Ethic Cases and Sensitivities in the cross-cultural setting during ISP process

Session 3: Discussion of ISP Proposal and Report Writing Introduce strategies for accessing different ISP research sites and for scheduling meetings with potential ISP Advisors/ISP Supporters during the Grand Excursions in Central and Northern Vietnam, as well as Human Subjects Review process and related forms.

Submit 1st ISP Proposal and Introduction to IRB/LRB Forms

Session 4: Finalize ISP proposal and complete IRB/LRB Forms at the end of the Grand Excursions

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Description of Assignments:

Field Investigation Projects on Observation and Interviews Skills (40%)

Field projects require that each student formulate and test a field question in each of the excursion sites. Although each project should be created with applicability—or possible adaptation—to each site educational excursion, guidance will be given at the onset of the project to assess the feasibility of the project. Projects may focus on the practice, comparison and/or analysis of particular methodologies, the special field methods

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used to study natural history, rapid assessment techniques, or techniques to evaluate human-environment relationships.

Field Exercises (30%)

During the educational excursions in Mekong Delta, Central Vietnam and Northern Vietnam, students will be required to complete a series of field exercises associated within each specific local context. The goals of these assignments are to introduce students to a series of methodologies utilized in these local systems and allow students to practice them individually in order to obtain direct experience.

Oral Presentation (20%)

Each student will choose favored topics either from the field trips or recommended readings and prepare a brief oral presentation on main points to his or her peers. The goal of this assignment is to identify methodological techniques of oral presentation --including visual and audio techniques appropriate to present the study to the target audience, and prepare relevant questions/responses and evaluations in regard to the presentations of others.

Field Notebook and Work Journal (10%)

Each student will be required to create and maintain a field notebook that documents, synthesizes, and processes information from the field excursions in a written or pictorial manner. Points will be given for completeness, organization, creativity, and depth and quality of analysis.

Each student will maintain a work journal during their Independent Study Projects that documents and organizes data and information gathered from observations, informants, and secondary sources. The work journal includes a condensed account, in which direct tones are taken; a daily account, which records work goals and schedules, an analysis of methodology, and personal reflections; and an expanded account, which organizes all data acquired – including interviews, observations, and secondary sources – and a section processing analytical questions raised during the investigation.

The goal of the field notebook or work journal is for students to consciously organize and process their notes in preparation for their written work, highlighting missing information and important points.

Evaluation and Assessment:

This course is graded according to SIT grading policy. To encourage creativity and individual needs, assignment format and content can be changed if previously discussed with the AD. Based on the following criteria, the Academic Director assigns students a grade assessing:

- Regularity, process, and documentation of field investigation projects, excursion field exercises and work journal;
- Quality, creativity, persistence, and consistency of Independent Study Project process;
- Observation and reflection from field notebook, reading articles and journal assignments;
- Field investigation and interview projects;
- Ability to present and debate ideas
- Ability to undertake independent study in a Vietnamese cultural context and Independent Study Project Proposal; Reflection on the Independent Study Project Process.

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Assessment:

Field Investigation Projects	40%
Excursion Field Exercises	30%
Oral Presentation	20%
Field Notebook & Work Journal	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 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.

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.

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