

## Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH-3500 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
Cameroon: Development and Social Change

**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

Drawing upon the myriad of in-country experiences, cultural encounters, conversations in homestays, and community observations, this research methods and ethics course is primarily designed as a field-based course, complemented by classroom lectures, assigned readings and discussions facilitated by the academic director. The course relies on 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.

A series of structured field activities and assignments provides the material for class discussions, complemented by scheduled lectures and assigned readings. Students learn qualitative and quantitative approaches of gathering, managing and analyzing data from primary sources. The course puts particular emphasis upon the culturally appropriate ways of building rapport, initiating purposeful dialogue, forming constructive relationships with organizations and/or individuals, 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 context of Cameroon.

Along these lines, a core focus for this course is development of a feasible research or internship project proposal, including the ethical considerations necessary, topic development, selection and execution of methodologies, final write up, and reciprocity or civic engagement issues, while sensitizing students to power asymmetries, the politics of subjectivity, and devoting attention to local dynamics in pursuit of ethically sound research in Cameroon. As students will engage with Cameroon communities as they

conduct their research projects or internship, the course will place emphasis on local context in the delivery of course materials, identifying potential cross-cultural issues where appropriate.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end 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 development, economy, and inequality OR demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of Cameroon;
- 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 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.

### **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 I: Introduction, experiential learning and cultural adjustment**

First, this module introduces unique aspects of SIT's experiential learning pedagogy and how it shapes SIT Cameroon's program structure, student and faculty roles. 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.

### Lecture Topics

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 Cameroon

Positionality and Outsider/Insider Research

Skills for Networking, Time Management, and Productivity

### *Assigned Reading:*

Kohls, Robert. "The Values Americans Live By."

[www.claremontmckenna.edu/math/alee/extra/American\\_values.html](http://www.claremontmckenna.edu/math/alee/extra/American_values.html) (accessed 24 November 2010).

Marx, Elisabeth. (1999). "The Culture Shock Triangle." *Breaking Through Culture Shock: What You Need to Succeed in International Business* (pp. 3-18). London, England: Nicholas Brealey Publishing. ISBN: 978-1857882216.

Miner, Horace "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema". *American Anthropologist*, 1956, 58(3), 503-507

Weaver, Gary R. (2000) *Culture, Communication and Conflict: Readings in Intercultural Relations* 3rd ed. London: Pearson. Chapter 3: "Understanding and coping with cross cultural adjustment stress."

### *Recommended Reading:*

Gupta, Khadija Ansari. (2004). "Travails of a Woman Fieldworker: A Small Town in Uttar Pradesh," in *The Fieldworker and the Field*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 103- 114.

Ritzer, George. (1983). "The McDonaldization of Society." *Journal of American Culture*, 6 (1), 100-107.

## **Module 2: Research Methods and Ethics in Development, Economy, and Inequality**

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.

### Lecture Topics

Research Methods and Development, Economy, and Inequality

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

### *Assigned Reading:*

Wilson, Ken. (1993). "Thinking about the Ethics of Fieldwork," in *Fieldwork in Developing Countries*, Ed. by Stephen Devereau, Boulder: Lynn Pierner Publishers, pp. 179-199.

Glesne, Corrine (2005) *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Chapter 6: "But Is It Ethical? Learning to Do Right"

SIT/World Learning, Human Subjects Review Policies and Procedure.

Salinas S., S. Rance, M. Serrate, & M. Castro (2000). Unethical ethics? Reflections on intercultural research practices. *Reproductive Health Matters*, 8(15), 104-112.

Glesne C. (2006). Being there: Developing understanding through participant observation. In *Becoming Qualitative Researchers. An introduction* (pp. 49-79). Boston: Pearson, Allyn and Bacon

Glesne, C. (2006). Making words fly: Developing understanding through interviewing. In *Becoming Qualitative Researchers. An introduction* (pp. 79-109). Boston: Pearson, Allyn and Bacon.

#### *Recommended Reading:*

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications. Chapter One.

Bourdieu, P. (2000). Participant observation. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 9(2), 281-294. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9655.00150/abstract>

Bernard, H. Russell (2006) *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* 4th ed. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. Chapter 3: "Preparing for Research."

### **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).

#### Lecture Topics

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

#### *Assigned Reading:*

Bernard, H. Russell (2006) *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* 4th ed. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. Chapter 3: "Preparing for Research."

Booth, W. C., G. G. Colomb & J. M. Williams (2003). *The Craft of Research* - Chapter 3: Planning your project: From topics to questions and Chapter 4: Finding Topics: From questions to problems, pages 40-71.

Mertens, D. (2010). An Introduction to Research (selected excerpts). In Research and evaluation in education and psychology (pp. 8, 11-12). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Neuman, W. Lawrence (2005) Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches 6th ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Chapter 10: "The Logic of Survey Research."

#### **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.

##### Lecture Topics

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

##### *Assigned Reading:*

Lamotte, Anne. (1994). "Shitty First Drafts," in Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life, New York: Anchor Books, pp 21-27.

Orwell, George. (1946) "Politics and the English Language"

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm>

***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 Cameroon**

This module prepares the student for the ISP experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to conducting research in Cameroon. The module highlights the importance of applied methodology in the ISP experience and the expectations and responsibilities of the student.

##### Session I: 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.

##### *Assigned Reading:*

Jackson, Bruce. (1987) "Interviewing" in Fieldwork, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp 79-104.

Summer, Andy and Michael Tribe, Eds. (2008). *International Development Studies: Theories and Methods in Research and Practice*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Marshall, C., & G. Rossman (2006). *The what of the study: Building the conceptual framework*. In *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

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

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

#### *Assigned Reading:*

Bailey Carol. (2007) *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Denzin, N. K, & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

### Session 3: ISP Applied Methodology

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

#### *Assigned Reading:*

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.

Emerson, R. M, Fretz, R. I, & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. 2nd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Sunstein, B., & E. Chiseri-Strater (2007). *Analyzing your fieldnotes*. In *Field working: reading and writing research* (pp. 105-107). Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

#### *Recommended Reading:*

Babbie, E. (2001). *Analysis of data*. In *The practice of social research* (pp. 364-369). Independence: Wadsworth.

Newman, W. L. (1997). *Analyzing qualitative data*. In *Social research methods. Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (pp. 418-441). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Rossman, G., & Rallis, S. (2003). *Analyzing and interpreting data (selected excerpts)*. In *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research* (pp. 267-273). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

## **Module 5b: Internship in the Context of Cameroon**

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

#### *Assigned 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 Cameroon

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

#### *Assigned Readings:*

World Bank Social Capital Assessment Tool, Annex 1B

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSOCIALCAPITAL/Resources/Social-Capital-Assessment-Tool--SOCAT-/annex1.pdf>

### Session 3: The Ethics of Participating in an Internship in Cameroon

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.

#### *Assigned Reading:*

McDonald, Francis (2011) Ethical Use of Interns. Retrieved from:

<http://www.prsa.org/aboutprsa/ethics/ethicalstandardsadvisories/documents/psa-17.pdf>

Sunstein, B., & E. Chiseri-Strater (2007). Analyzing your fieldnotes. In *Field working: reading and writing research* (pp. 105-107). Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

## **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

### Description of Assignments:

#### Assignment I: Evaluation Interview and Observation

Students will conduct a participant observation session/practice interview with one of the members of their host family and write a small reflection (1-2 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: Integrated Development Issue (IDI) Research Project

Students will carry out a research project - Integrated Development Issue (IDI) - throughout the course in order to practice different theories and methods learned in and discussed in class, and ending in a 5-8 page paper. The IDI assignment helps ISP students develop the skills and knowledge necessary for ethical and responsible research design, and internship students begin to delve into a topic of interest that they plan to pursue during the internship period.

### Case Studies in Methods and Ethics

With support and recommendation from the AD, students choose to read a case study, research paper, ethnography, past student ISP/internship report, or other text related to their potential ISP/internship interests, and write a 2-4 page critical essay on the reading, detailing the methods of the research, ethical considerations, limits of the study, and suggestions for improvement.

### 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:

Evaluation Interview and observation	30%
Case Studies in Methods and Ethics	10%
IDI Methodology Paper	40%
Research/Internship Proposal	10%
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.

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](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>.