



Field Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Malaysia and China: International Relations and New Economies

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

Course Description

The *Field Methods and Ethics* course 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 context of Malaysia. In particular, the course enhances students' skills at building rapport; initiating purposeful dialogue in the cultural context of Malaysia; gathering, recording, and analyzing primary data; and writing an 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 Malaysia and address the best strategies in gaining primary data in the fields and recognize the challenges which might come up while carrying out field work related to the program theme and Critical Global Issue – Development | Economy | Inequality – in a cross-cultural setting. Broadly, the course introduces students to qualitative and quantitative approaches of social science field research, how to prepare a research project proposal, and how to analyze research results.

The main emphasis of the course is on the development of tools and ethics of interactive research skills involving the collection of primary data. The course includes lectures on qualitative methods of research in social sciences and in particular in understanding the local ethics and norms to carry out field work, 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) that is largely based on the data gathered from primary sources, or an internship at a local organization.

Learning Outcomes

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;

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- Demonstrate awareness of appropriate methods and ethics used in primary data collection for an Independent Study Project in the context of Malaysia OR demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of Malaysia;
- Analyze and process primary data 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 key program themes the student anticipates engaging and reflecting on during the course of the internship experience.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English but students will be exposed to Malaysian language vocabulary related to course content through in-country expert lectures and field visits to a wide range of venues and regional locales. While carrying out ISP research or when engaging in an internship, students may use English, Malaysian, or Chinese language skills depending on the focus of their ISP/internship.

Course Requirements

The students have to participate in all components of the program, which will provide them with the skills and knowledge on the ethnographic methodology and will be able to analyze the primary data for their final Independent Study Project (ISP) or internship paper. The students must participate in all activities assigned for the field methods and ethics.

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.

Required Reading:

Judith L. Green, Audra Skukauskaite and W. Douglas Baker (2011). *Ethnography as Epistemology* in *Research Methods and Methodologies in Education*. indb 309.

Module Sessions include:

Session I: Homestay as a Cultural Experience and Site of Learning

This session provide the students first-hand experience by emersion with the homestay families learning about daily practices of the local religions and the art of offerings to the unseen spirits.

Session II: Positionality and Outsider/Insider Research

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The students as the outsiders should adjust themselves to be able to understand the perspectives of the local community members as the insiders.

Module 2: Field Methods and Ethics for Malaysia and China: International Relations and New Economies

This module focuses on the tools and methods required for conducting qualitative field research in observance of the ethics and value systems of the local community. The students are expected to recognize the most effective methods and strategies in gaining primary data in the field. In addition, the students will understand the ethics and norms to carry out field study in the Malaysian context of Money, Trade, and the New Silk Road.

Required Reading:

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis, The University of Minnesota Press, 1996, 229.

Module Sessions include:

Session I: Selecting Topics, Formulating Research Questions, and Literature Review

The students select their topic of their interest followed by formulating research questions to gain primary data in the field. The students should use secondary sources to support their critical analysis about their findings in the field.

Session II: Data Collection: Participant Observation and Interviewing

Students actively participate in professional and community events or activities while observing attentively the events around them. By the end of the participant observation, the students carry out informal interviews with their host families or other community members.

Session III: Data Analysis and Reflection

Using participant observation and interviewing data collected in the previous exercise, students develop skills for analyzing the data collected and reflect on ways to improve upon the participant observation and interviews when conducting the ISP or participating an internship.

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. While doing the individual brainstorming, the AD and senior faculty advisor help the students to identify an ISP Advisor and possible sites to conduct their ISP.

Required Reading:

Amit, Vered, ed. 2000 *Constructing the Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World*. Routledge.

Module Sessions include:

Session 1: Introduction to the Local Review Board/Institutional Review Board (IRB) Process and Human Subjects Review Application

Session II: Identifying an ISP Advisor and Securing an Internship Placement

Session III: One-on-one Meetings with the Academic Director to Discuss Preliminary ISP/Internship Ideas

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Module 4: Project Proposal Development and Ethics

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 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. The students should understand the issues mentioned in the Human Subjects Review application.

Required Reading:

Abu-Lughod, Lila, 1991 *Writing against Culture*. In *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, ed. Richard Fox. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, pp. 137-62.

Module Sessions include:

Session I: One-on-one Meetings with Academic Director

This session focus on individual meeting with the student about their topic, site and prospective advisor

Session II: Writing the Human Subjects Review (HSR) Application

This session is dedicated to help students to fill in the form for their Human Subject Review application.

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 Malaysia and China: International Relations and New Economies

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

Required Reading:

Geertz, Clifford. (1984). *Culture and Social Change: The Malaysian Case*. Man, New Series, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Dec., 1984), pp. 511-532 Published by: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2802324>.

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 II: Work-based Norms and Practices in Malaysia

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

Required Readings:

Jeanne M. Liedtka. (1992). *Exploring Ethical Issues Using Personal Interviews* Source: Business Ethics Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 2, The Empirical Quest for Normative Meaning: Empirical

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Methodologies for the Study of Business Ethics (Apr., 1992), pp. 161-181. Published by:
Philosophy Documentation Center Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3857569>.

Session III: ISP Applied Methodology

This session covers strategies of time management, networking strategies, and problem-solving research challenges. It is not about producing an academic paper but also about personal growth in managing personal issues; like health and emotion, financial and time management. The students should know how use their time wisely.

Required Reading:

Bell, Judith. (2010). Planning the Project. In *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science (5th ed.)*. Berkshire England: Open University Press.

Module 5b: Internship in the Context of Malaysia and China: International Relations and New Economies

This module prepares the student for the internship experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to internships in Malaysia. 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. It is very important for the students to appropriately behave while doing some internship in the local organization.

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.

Required Reading:

Juan C. Moreno (n/d). *Entering into the Realm of "the Other": A Few Suggestions for Crossing Boundaries of Human Difference*. Office of Diversity and Inclusion, University of Minnesota Extension

Recommended Reading:

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

Session II: Work-based Norms and Practices in Malaysia

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

Required Readings:

Readings specific to the local context. The students should read the ISP papers conducted by the former students related to their topic.

Session III: The Ethics of Participating in an Internship in Malaysia

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.

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Recommended Readings:

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

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

Reference Texts

Creswell, John. 2002. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2004. Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Schutt, Russell K. 2009. Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research, 6th edition. London: Pine Forge Press.

Jackson, Sherri. 2006. Research Methods and Statistics. Belmont: Thompson Wadsworth.

Babbie, Earl R. 2001. The Practice of Social Research, 9th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Punch, K. 2007. Introduction to social research: quantitative and qualitative approaches. 2nd. Ed. London: Sage.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Participant Observation: Four Entries	40%
Positionality: Reflection on Culture/Economy Nexus	10%
Three-Interviews	
▪ 3a & 3b: Two Pre-ISP/Internship Interviews	10%
▪ 3c: Post-ISP/Internship Interview (submitted w ISP or internship paper)	10%
ISP/Internship Proposal	20%
Participation: discussions, drop-offs, all exercises	10%

Description of Assignments:

Assignment 1: Participant Observations

Introduction:

One of the main purposes of the Field Methods and Ethics course is to introduce students to the skills needed to carry out effective field study. As any practicing researcher can attest, the value of a finished work based on fieldwork depends almost completely on effective use of field journals. The process of keeping a Work Journal has two main components, an initial Participant Observations component and an on-going ISP Work Journal OR Internship Journal component for your own record.

Students are free to write in an observation journal during the orientation and seminars periods of the program. We ask students to complete (3) three participants observations entries during the eight weeks of the seminar period, and one (1) entry on a current issue in Malaysia. Each of the four entries will be graded, and so should be included in the observation journal and marked as a specific, dated entry of between 2-4 pages in length. Each entry is worth 10% towards the final grade for the FME class. We recommend that the students should keep in mind the Description-Interpretation-Evaluation (D-I-E) format for completing the entries.

Assignment 2: Positionality: Reflection on Culture/Economy/Politics Nexus

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As a follow-up assignment to Participant Observations, and incorporating course readings and other program content, reflect on the meaning and usefulness of culture in the context of economic and political analysis. They should include a discussion of positionality as a researcher or intern in a time and space distant from the student's home university or previous experiences.

Assignment 3: Three–Interviews: Pre- and Post-ISP/Internship Interview

For these assignments, we ask the students to practice their interview skills step-by-step for the entire homestay period. The first two interviews are designed help students gain experience conducting interviews and recognize the challenges and the best strategies in gaining primary data for their ISP/Internship paper.

Practice 3a: Pre-ISP/Internship Interview of in Field Related to Projected Project/Internship

In preparation for the ISP or Internship, students identify an interviewee who has expertise the field related to the students intended ISP or Internship. The goal is to compose a short life story of that individual. This will challenge the student to use their developing interview skills in Bahasa Malaysia or Chinese and will help them to become better acquainted with a professional/individual with expertise in their field of interest and the most effective strategy in gaining primary data for their ISP/Internship. The paper should be about 2-3 pages double-spaced.

Students are also asked to conduct a practice interview depending on the topic of their interest. This analytical paper can be a try-out of their ISP/Internship. Students are asked to write an analytical paper 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.

Practice 3b: Pre-ISP/Internship Interview

Students are asked to conduct a practice interview depending on the topic of their interest. This analytical paper can be a try-out of their ISP/Internship. They are asked to write an analytical paper 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.

Practice 3c: Post-ISP/Internship Interview

Students are asked to submit an Interview transcript together with the ISP/Internship paper. In the Interview we expect the students to submit the interview questions together with the transcription, and one page discussion of the challenges they faced when conducting interviews and how they overcame those challenges.

ISP/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

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contribute to the work of the host organization, and an outline of the work plan to be carried out.

Grading Scale

The grading scale for all classes 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

Expectations and Policies

- Show up prepared. 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 Field Methods and Ethics course.
- Show up and be on time. Promptness to and active participation in class. Students should have their readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Be an active listener. Students must pay attention in class and during field excursions; ask appropriate questions; display interest and enthusiasm; note-take.
- 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. Students should be involved in class discussions either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge and information. This means challenging oneself to speak up if he/she usually doesn't, and also means controlling oneself and allowing others to speak if he/she is a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group accountability. Students should participate in groups during field excursions and classes.
- 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.). Students are not expected to agree with everything they hear, but they 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.

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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, is found on the Disability Services website at: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.

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