Description
The Research Methods and Ethics course serves three main interrelated objectives. First, the course equips students with a toolkit for living and working within the Kenyan cultural context. Second, the course equips students with knowledge and skills for gathering primary data in Kenya and on documenting, interpreting, and analyzing this data. Research ethics are a third focus of the course, with special attention devoted to the processes of human subjects review, especially in health care settings. These three objectives are essential to successfully completing the Independent Study Project (ISP) or internship.

Students work with the academic director (AD) and local experts to develop feasible research questions related to health and human rights in the Kenyan context, to formulate appropriate methods based on the research questions, and to design an initial proposal to address a selected issue. Emphasis is placed on ways of navigating and interpreting cultural difference. Field assignments provide students with opportunities to practice cross-cultural communication approaches and develop new skills in preparation for gathering primary data in Kenya.

The fieldwork skills, navigating ethical concerns, and cross-cultural methodological training gained from this course should prove particularly useful for students who plan to pursue a career in public health and other medical fields.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course students will be able to:
• Interpret positionality, perspectives and independence, using cultural sensitivity, language skills, and local networks of trust built over the course of the semester;
• Identify appropriate methods and ethics used in field research in the critical global issue of global health OR apply the ethics of internship in the context of Kenya;
• Use analytical skills on data gathered in the field and draw valid and ethical interpretations and conclusions; and
• Draft an Independent Study Project proposal that complies to ethical academic standards and local values OR an internship proposal that provides a detailed description of the host organization.

Language and methods of Instruction

This course is taught in English by Kenyan experts complemented by assigned readings and discussions facilitated by the academic director. Students are expected to prepare for, attend, and participate in all classes, discussions, activities, and field visits and to complete assignments in a professional and timely manner.

Course Schedule

Module 1: Introduction, experiential learning and cultural adjustment

First, this module introduces unique aspects of SIT’s experiential learning pedagogy and how it shapes SIT Kenya’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 Kenya
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/aleeextra/American_values.html (accessed 24 November 2010).


Kenya’s major daily newspapers: *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard*.

**Recommended Reading:**


**Module 2: Research Methods and Ethics in Global Health**

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. Students will learn the principles that guide application of each of these research techniques as well as their strengths and limitations. Students will prepare interview and observation guides and apply them during *Bachillerato Popular*, Simenya and Gikombaa Market excursions.

**Lecture Topics**

Research Methods and Global Health
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:**


Recommended Reading:


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:


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:


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 Kenya

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

Assigned Reading:


Session 2: Work-based Norms and Practices in Kenya
This session explores work-based norms and practices related to research in Kenya, 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:**


**Session 3: ISP Applied Methodology**

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

**Assigned Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Module 5b: Internship in the Context of Kenya**

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

**Session 2: Work-based Norms and Practices in Kenya**

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

**Session 3: The Ethics of Participating in an Internship in Kenya**

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:  


**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:**

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<td>IDI Methodology Paper</td>
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<td>Research/Internship Proposal</td>
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**Grading Scale:**

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**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 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.