



Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Switzerland: Global Health and Development Policy

PLEASE NOTE: We continuously develop and update our syllabi; therefore, actual course content is slightly modified from semester to semester. Thus it is likely that the contents listed below will not coincide with exactly the same lectures and readings of consecutive semesters.

Description

The Research Methods & Ethics seminar (RME) provides the theoretical, conceptual, and practical tools for conducting field research in a new cultural environment. The main emphasis of the seminar is on the development of interactive research skills involving the collection of primary data. The theoretical part of the seminar includes lectures on qualitative methods of research in social sciences, development policy, and public health, interactive research techniques, and the development of a research proposal. The seminar also includes a number of practical exercises such as the organization and conduct of interviews with experts in Switzerland and Morocco, preparation of an application for review of research with Human Subjects, a local case study and the integration of interviews into a research project. The ethical implications of field research will be examined throughout. The seminar helps develop the skills necessary to navigate both the local and international institutional environments of Geneva and Rabat, the capital city of Morocco. Students undertake a number of field visits to learn the specificities of local and international cultures and institutions. The overall aim is to enable students to master experience-based learning processes and prepare them for the development of an Independent Study Project (ISP), which takes into account data gathered from primary sources. The RME course is also thematically supporting and corresponding with select Development Policy and Health (IPBH 3005) and Perspectives on Global Health (IPBH 3000) modules, including on Qualitative Research in the field of Public Health; Data, Research and Evidence; Health & Anthropology.

Learning outcomes:

The *Research Methods and Ethics* course comprises 45 hours of instruction (3 credits). Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate awareness of the impact of researcher's positionality on the research projects;
- Develop capability to formulate a clear research problem and question, carry out a literature review and identify relevant experts for primary data collection;
- Develop networking and organizational skills for interactive research in the local and international environments in Geneva;
- Apply qualitative research techniques such as participant observation and advanced interviewing to collect data;

- Demonstrate capacity to synthesize information gathered from primary and secondary sources and integrate it into the research project;
- Demonstrate awareness of ethical issues in the context of field research in local and cross-cultural settings, taking into account the special needs and concerns of vulnerable human subjects and focus groups, including in the area of public health;
- Produce an Independent Study Project proposal and an application for review of ISP research with Human subjects to be approved by the Local Review Board (LRB) /SIT Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Language of Instruction

The seminar is taught in English, but students will be simultaneously learning French. Students are expected to read the French press and academic articles in French related to the seminar.

Schedule

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.

Module 1: Experiential Learning and Positionality in Field-Based research/ Discovering Swiss Culture and International Geneva

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. In this context, students will participate in a number of field visits, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and its humanitarian museum, the United Nations office in Europe (Palais des nation), the Maison de la Paix, the Graduate Institute, the Biotech center of the University of Geneva,, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its museum based in Lausanne, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), as well as the Swiss Federal Capital City of Bern, including the Federal Parliament building and its UNESCO cultural heritage registered medieval city.

Session 1: Introduction to Advanced Libraries and Research Facilities of International Affairs

Students participate in two site visits of two distinguished libraries for research in, global health, and development policy. The first library to which they are being introduced is the United Nations Office in Geneva, which also contains the Archives of the League of Nations; the second library is the one of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, based at the recently established Maison de la Paix, which has become a major research and policy competence center of the international community of Geneva, and as the Graduate Institute also provides for a specialized department on Global Health. This Module further corresponds with a one-day field visit and training organized in the thematic course on Development Policy and Health (DPH) exploring Geneva's rich history and tradition linking Global Health with Humanitarian Action.

Recommended links to the library search engines:

At the Graduate institute : <http://libguides.graduateinstitute.ch/index.php>

At RERO : network of the Geneva libraries : https://explore.rero.ch/en_US/ge/advanced/search

At the UN Library : go to the « Global Search » page at <https://bit.ly/2TR6Trr>

Session 2: Introduction to the Swiss Confederation: Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy

Students participate in a lecture on Switzerland, taking into account geographical, demographic, historical, economic, political, institutional and socio-psychological parameters of their host country, and with attention to the specific geopolitical factors shaping Swiss national identity, its political independence from regional institutions such as the European Union, and the country's neutral status and posture within the international system as it has developed over the past five hundred years. A major goal of this training will be to introduce students into the distinguished Swiss political culture and the country's con-federal institutional system characteristic of a high level of decentralization and local autonomy across four national language communities. Against this background, students are enabled to more effectively interpret and comprehend the specific and comparative features of the Swiss Public Health System. They will also gain further insights into the meta-geopolitical role that both Switzerland as a country and Geneva as a free city states in a historical perspective have been assuming over time, along the lines of the country's neutrality, to host and co-initiate lead international organizations and peace conferences, provide good diplomatic services to third states, including the great powers, and to take leadership in the mediation of international conflicts. The student will be given a lectures on the Geopolitical factors of Switzerland by the program director. They will also visit the Federal Parliament in Bern and the Federal Department of Foreign affairs and its development agency.

Recommended Reading:

- Kälin, W. (2000). Decentralized government in Switzerland. *Institute of Public Law, University of Bern, Switzerland, March. Available online at http://www.bhutan-switzerland.org/pdf/Kaelin_Switzerland.pdf.*
- Kriesi, H., & Trechsel, A. H. (2008). "Direct Democracy" (Chapter 4): *The politics of Switzerland: Continuity and change in a consensus democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- The Swiss Confederation: A Brief*. Federal Chancellery, 2012.
- Swiss Neutrality* (4th edition) (2010). Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. A brochure published by the Federal Department of Defense, Civil Protection and Sports (DDPS) in conjunction with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).
- Al-Rodhan, N. (2015). *The Meta Geopolitics of Geneva 1815-2015*. International Relations and Security Network, ETH Zurich. <http://www.css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/publications/publication.html/188954>

Session 3: Local Case Study Project Proposal and Individual Advising Meeting

The Local Case Study (LCS) is the main and written take-home assignment in the RME course. The LCS typically addresses a theme related to local issue to the extent that students are enabled to engage in interactive field research on a theme pertinent to the local host country or society they visit. Given the geographical locations and overall exposure of students throughout the semester, these themes may relate to either Switzerland, Morocco, or to some extent Europe, e.g. if they'd wish to investigate into comparative analysis among various countries in this particular world region, in the heart of which the main program site is placed, or if they wish to draw a comparative assessment of a regional country with either Switzerland or Morocco. In order to appropriately design their research design for the LCS, students will submit a written research proposal and have individual advising sessions with program staff and faculty.

A separate assignment sheet will be distributed to students on the LCS.

Module 1: Assignments:

- LCS research proposal: is a one-page research proposal based on the interactive research and focusing on the interview practice.
- LCS advising sessions: individual meetings with an advisor to review the proposal, check the research question, and go over all the requirements (deadline, format, etc.)

Module 2: Research, Methods and Ethics in Global Health and Development Policy

This module further elaborates on the technical parts of module I, focusing on the tools and methods required for conducting field research in observance of the ethics and value systems of the local community. The module will also walk the students through the preparation process of their ISP proposal, the LRB (Local Review Board) process, and the application for review of research with human subjects (HSR application). Training takes into account scheduled lectures with faculty and a workshop in the context of which students work on individual and group assignments.

Session 1: Introduction to Qualitative Research Method and Positionality

This session provides a comprehensive introduction to qualitative research methods. The session covers criteria in social research, theoretical, epistemological, and ontological considerations in research, and further discusses values and positionality of the researcher. During this session, students reflect on their own cultural and societal positionality and ways in which it can impact their representation of the host culture and /or a sample population group of their investigation. Attention is given to ways in which positionality shapes their research questions, relation with their research subjects, approach in data collection, data processing, and the representation of their research subjects in their final ISP. It provides an overview of the step by step process in developing a research project from the formulation of a research question, conducting a literature review, and the identification of appropriate research methods. Students learn a selection of approaches to data collection and analysis and the formulation of conceptual and theoretical frameworks and research designs.

Required reading:

Bryman, A. (2012). "The Nature of Qualitative Research" (Chapter 17); in: Bryman: *Social Research Methods (4th ed.)*. New York: Oxford University. 380-409.

Bryman, A. (2012). "Ethnography and Participant Observation" (Chapter 19); in: Bryman: *Social Research Methods (4th ed.)*. New York: Oxford University. 431-453.

Description – Interpretation – Evaluation. (2003). In Intercultural Communication Workshop SIT. Brattleboro

Holmes, A. G. (2012). *Researcher Positionality*. University of Hull: Centre for Educational Studies.

Barakso M, Sabet D. M., Schaffner B. (2014) "The research question" in *Understanding Political Sciences Research Methods, the Challenge of Inference*. (36-55; 56-80) Taylor & Francis 2014.

Session 2: Designing a Research Project

This session provides a practical introduction on how to design and develop a research project. It involves the formulation and refinement of the research question(s), the description of the problem, preparation of a literature review with the use of critical and analytical methods and the integration of interview quotes into the research project. The session also covers the project management basics, and the preparation of a work journal and of an HSR application.

Required readings:

Silverman, D. (2005). Writing a research proposal. *Doing Qualitative Research*, 139–146.

Retrieved from <http://www.uk.sagepub.com/managementresearch/Easterby->

[Smith%20Online%20Reading%20Links/Chapter%202/Silverman%20Doing%20Qualitative%20Research%20pp139-146.pdf](#)

- Barakso, M., Schaffner, B., and Sabet, D. (2014). "The Research Question / Linking Theory and Inference". In: *Understanding Political Science Research Methods*, Routledge. 36-55; 56-80.
- Reynolds, H., G., G. (2015). "Designing Research" (Chapter 2), in: Guest, Greg & Namey, Emily (eds.), *Public Health Research Methods*, SAGE Publications, 33-49.
- Bell, J. (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.

In-class Exercise:

- Students assess a sample of research questions considering and identifying the criteria for a good research question
- Students choose a topic and rehearse how to develop appropriate research questions for their ISP projects

Session 3: Writing a Literature Review

During this session, students will learn how to write a literature review. We will define what the literature review is (and what it is not), its role in a research, and what are the different goals that can be assigned to a literature review. We will define the specific materials for a literature review. Students will get some advices to find and select relevant sources for their literature review. Then, we will show how we can concretely analyze the existing sources, and how to organize the review.

Required reading:

Imel S. (2011) "Writing a literature review" chap 11 in Rocco T. *The Handbook of Scholarly Writing and Publishing*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 145-159.

In-class Exercise:

- Students practice bibliographic search
- Apply a referencing style to different sources

Session 4: Designing and Processing with Scholarly Writing

In this session, students will concretely learn effective writing habits. We will show them how to manage the conventions of scholarly writing. We will differentiate academic writing from other types of writings, like journalistic writings, persuasive writings, etc. Students will learn good writing habits both in terms of form and substance. Three different methods of using sources will be presented.

This session also introduces students into the management of bibliographic research and citation and referencing styles. They will learn how to correctly reference different kinds of sources (books, monographs, journal articles, audiovisual materials, articles on the internet, newspaper articles, etc.) according to a specific style (APA, NLM, etc.) both for in-text citations and in the bibliographic list.

This session produces an ISP proposal, providing a practical introduction on how to design and develop a research project. It involves the formulation and refinement of the research topic, the problem statement, and a research question.

Recommended Readings:

Rocco, T.S., Hatcher, T.G., (2011) *The Handbook of Scholarly Writing and Publishing*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Module 2: Assignments:

- Initial ISP Proposal

Module 3: Conducting Field Research on Global Health and Development Policy

This module provides a comprehensive overview of field research techniques with a particular focus on interviewing techniques and looks at the practical application of research in the field of global health and development policy. It focuses on the case of research in Geneva and the challenges of connecting with experts at international organizations and health, humanitarian, and development professionals. It presents the ethical implications of interviewing. Students learn how to prepare and conduct interviews, and analyze data. Ethical considerations are presented in regards to the Human Subjects Review Application.

Session 1: Introducing Ethics

The session provides an in-depth introduction to ethical issues in research and obligations to Human Subjects. It guides 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 student group meetings and individual student meetings with program staff and faculty.

Required Readings:

World Medical Association. (2001). World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 79(4), 373. Jacobsen, K. H. (2012). "Primary Studies: Ethical Considerations" (Chapter 21), in: Introduction to Health Research Method: A practical Guide. Sudbury: Jones & Bartlet Learning, 2012, 151-168.

Session 2: Conducting Interviews

The three phases of an interview are presented: the preparation, the conduct, and the analysis of transcript. To be very well prepared, students will get practical advises.

In-class exercise:

- The do's and don'ts of an interview

Recommended readings:

O'Leary. Z. (2004). The essential guide to doing research. London: SAGE. 194-207.
Bryman A. (2012) Interviewing in Qualitative Research, in: Bryman: Social Research Methods (4thed.). New York: Oxford University. 469-487.

Session 3 Individual ISP Advising Sessions

The objective of the two individual ISP advising sessions is to allow students on a case to case basis to have an opportunity to discuss the ISP topic, the research question and the interactive research strategies with the Academic Director, the Academic Advisor and faculty, guiding them in the process of preparation of a coherent ISP final proposal. A third, collective/group meeting with the academic director and the academic advisor will be organized during the ISP period to discuss the research progress.

Session 4: Conducting Field Research in Morocco

The objective of this workshop is to allow students to share best practices and to debrief on their experiences with the Group Field Research Projects in Morocco (see also the assignments below).

Module 3: Assignments:

- Group Field Research Project with the Integration of two Interviews during the Morocco Study Trip
 - Facilitated by the program advisor for Morocco, and prior to the departure to Morocco, students will split into groups and identify a topic for their respective group field research project, taking into account two corresponding experts or specialized agencies in Morocco whom they will contact and meet during the Morocco study trip. Themes may also relate to either the PGH or DPH seminars. They are encouraged to compile the results of their field research in a power point - or- Presi presentation which they will present in Switzerland upon return from Morocco during a group debriefing session. This session will also aim at the sharing of good practices among students in carrying out field research.

- Final ISP proposal; to be submitted jointly with the corresponding Application of Review of ISP Research with Human Subjects
 - Applying different skills developed throughout this third module, students write an Independent Study Project final proposal, which includes a title, research question(s), description of research methodology, field research design (possible interviews) and bibliography (with a minimum of 8 sources for the final proposal). Final ISP proposals must be submitted with the application of review of ISP research with human subjects.

(A separate assignment sheet will be distributed to students for the final ISP proposal and the HSR application)

- Local Case Study (LCS)
 - The purpose of this exercise is to document students' observations, interpretations, and evaluations of a local cultural phenomenon in its sociopolitical context. This final assignment requires students to apply different skills developed in this seminar to develop a 10-page research report which includes a minimum of 1 face to face interview.

MODULE 4: ISP Applied Methodology and Requirements

This module provides an overview of the requirements to an ISP. It recaps the sequence of the theoretical and practical sessions which help develop the skills necessary for a successful design and delivery of the ISP. The session covers the ISP evaluation criteria. It also explains the core requirements in relation to the ISP presentations which take place at the end of the semester.

Session 1: ISP Orientation Session on ISP / Written Project Evaluation Patterns

Held at the beginning of the ISP period, this session presents the evaluation criteria (rubrics / part 1) for the *ISP paper* and develops the content of the abstract, the introduction and conclusion. It also discusses some common mistakes and major flaws.

Session 2: ISP Follow-up Orientation on ISP / Project Individual Oral Presentation Evaluation Patterns

Held after the 2 first weeks of the ISP period, this session presents the criteria for the *ISP oral presentation* (rubrics: part 2)

Session 3: Mid-term review of ISP research process during ISP period

Held after the 2 first weeks of the ISP period, student exchange views and experiences and engage in a stock-taking question & answer session facilitated by Faculty, in order to identify opportunities and challenges of ISP research, including interactive field research.

Furthermore, students will have the opportunity to schedule individual advising sessions with Faculty to more specifically discuss their concerns and to reframe their ISP research design and methodological approach as appropriate.

Session 4: Introduction on how to publish a research paper in a periodical of public health

Held after the 2 first weeks of the ISP period, this session presents the main patterns of how research papers may be formatted and published in a standard periodical of public health. It aims at preparing students in case they'd wish to further develop and publish their ISP later on, or if they would like to pursue another research paper project upon the end of the program, including with the possible objective of getting it published by an academic editor.

Student Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Evaluation will be based upon the following:

Description of Assignments:

ISP Final Proposal with Human Subjects Review Application (30%):

Applying different skills developed throughout this second module, students write an Independent Study Project final proposal, which includes a title, research question(s), description of research methodology, field research design (possible interviews) and bibliography (with a minimum of 8 sources for the final proposal). Final ISP proposals must be submitted with the Human Subjects Review Application.

Group Field Research Project (20%):

Students form field research groups prior to the departure to Morocco and integrate the results of their group's respective field research, at least two face to face interviews, into a power point which they will present upon return from the study trip to Morocco.

Local Case Study Research Report (40%):

The purpose of this exercise is to document students' observations, interpretations, and evaluations of a local cultural phenomenon in Switzerland in its sociopolitical context. This final assignment requires students to apply all the different skills developed in this seminar to develop a 10-page research report which includes a minimum of one face to face interview.

Attendance and Informed Participation (10%):

Attendance and informed participation at all scheduled lectures, briefings, and review sessions are required. In the framework of the review sessions, each student will present one select required reading.

Assessment:

ISP Final Proposal with Human Subjects Review Application	30%
Group Field Research Project	20%
Local Case Study Research Report	40%
Attendance and Informed Participation	10%

Grading Scale

94-100%	A	Excellent
90-93%	A-	
87-89%	B+	
84-86%	B	Above Average
80-83%	B-	
77-79%	C+	
74-76%	C	Average
70-73%	C-	
67-69%	D+	
64-66%	D	Below Average
below 64	F	Fail

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 Student 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>.