

Research Methods and Ethics ANTH-3500 (3 credits)

Vietnam: Culture, Social Change and Development

This syllabus is representative of a typical 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

The Research Methods and Ethics course introduces students to the conceptual and practical tools for gathering primary data. Students also gain 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 cultural context of Vietnam. In particular, the course enhances students' skills at building rapport; initiating purposeful dialogue in the cultural context of Vietnam; gathering, 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 the Culture, Social Change and Development program in Vietnam. The main emphasis of the course is on the development of empirical 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, 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

The Research Methods and Ethics course comprises 45 hours. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Develop 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 & inequality, or demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of Vietnam.
- Analyze and process primary data gathered in the field and draw valid and ethical interpretations and conclusions;
- Produce an Independent Study Project (ISP) 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 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.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

Assignments and Evaluation

Journal writing and Participation You are required to keep a research journal on the following:

1. Seminars & Readings: Keep notes on your thoughts on the readings to assist you in contributing in class. Feel free to make these notes on the hard copies.
2. Site visits in Can Gio, Cu Chi, Ben Tre & NGO visits in Ho Chi Minh City: Use your journal as a place to keep 'field notes' – observations, your own responses and reactions, and thoughts about the process.
3. Grand Excursions to Central and Northern Vietnam: Keep notes on what you are observing and learning, and reflexively think about how your own position is influencing, how you as an individual are making meaning, and how the group is making meaning to what they observe.
4. Rural projects in Mekong Delta and Dalat: Use your journal to keep field notes, both of what you are observing and your own responses, comfort, discomfort, difficulties, and enjoyments.
5. ISP proposal preparation: Keep notes on your thoughts about your research topic, how you might want to go about doing it, how you are changing your mind and refining it and input from your one-one-one meetings. Work through the worksheets provided in the ISP handbook to help you prepare.

You are required to hand the journals in twice. You will not be assessed on the content of your journaling, but rather on how you are using the process. Keep up-to-date with your journal and do not leave it until the due date.

Assignment 1: Impression and Observations

Descriptions: Write a letter to yourself on your first impressions of Vietnam since your arrival. You should confine your impressions to the first two weeks of your time in Vietnam.

You will not be marked on the content of the letter; your completion of the exercise will give you a pass/fail grade.

Assignment 2: Initial ISP Topic and Research Questions

The ISP Topic & Internship assignments are designed to encourage you to think about your interest and plan to conduct your Independent Study Project or Internship period that will be in the last month of the semester. You also need to develop questions around your topics and observed learning, integrate information from disparate sources. It is designed to serve as an important basis for developing the theoretical background for your Independent Study Project or framework for your Internship, and can also be an important source of ongoing learning and thinking about the chosen topic in which you are interested and internship that you plan to conduct in Vietnam.

Format:

Three questions and your initial positions. These are designed to get you to refine your thinking, in terms of your personal interest or independent study project possibilities. From your discussions with the AD and your intensive studies from the beginning of the semester, you are asked to discuss about your ISP topic or the Internship and to prepare the main research question and sub-research questions. The topics are related to about the Vietnamese culture, social change and development. Please focus your ideas into questions that you could design an Outline for Independent Study Project or Internship Project later in the semester.

Assignment 3: Rural Research Report

For the report, you may work in pairs for the field work and present the findings in pairs, but each student must write on a different issue. All write-ups must be done independently.

Objectives:

- i. To encourage an appreciation for the realities of rural life, and how this differs from urban life;
- ii. To provide more situations to practice Vietnamese language and communication skills;
- iii. To practice a field study methodology and other skills such as note-taking and data analysis;
- iv. To work effectively to define, select, and refine a topic, using the ISP headings; conduct data collection; write a report and make a short presentation on your findings;
- v. To enable you to tailor an assignment to suit your own interests and learning style; and
- vi. To gain insight into obstacles encountered when doing fieldwork.

The rural excursion is the first extended experience in the rural field. Among other things it is an opportunity for students to put into practice all that they have learned, so far, about primary research. Once in Mekong Delta students will determine a question to be answered. After this five-day excursion students can continue to do the same topic in Dalat of Central Highlands with comparative perspectives OR students may focus on one topic in one location. Due to the limits of time and potential language barriers, along with considerations drawn from the postcolonial critical reflexive lens, please ensure that you do not write as though you are:

1. Discovering or uncovering the truth
2. That your findings represent the community of Hoa An in Mekong Delta or in Dalat of Central Highlands as a whole or some imagined entity called 'Viet culture'

Rather, ensure you are clear that you are exploring the subjective opinions of a few residents and/or your own subjective observations.

Some topic areas for the rural report you may want to consider:

The geography of the village you are living in: Layout of the area, relationship of buildings and housing, significance of this vegetation, geography-principal physical features: rivers, roads, fields, sacred sites, tombs, vegetation etc.

Cultural Environment: Name of the community and meaning of the name; important people; places of interest; taboos, rituals, spirituality, religion. (Recording children's games. Music: on phones, in a church, pagoda, temple, local songs, traditional songs).

People: Family structure; population: age breakdown, gender representations, ethnic groups (Are there only Kinh ethnicity or any other ethnicities living here?), Gender roles (What is the process of getting married?) Traditional and current value systems. (How do clan names work?)

Economy: Primary occupations, economic indicators (expressions of wealth), organization of economic system: types of markets, goods available, external trade jobs/labor; sources of labor; available technologies.

Ecology: Waste disposal (water, household trash. What was in the trash in the home environment you stayed in and what happened to it?); natural resources of the area; water sources and value; relationship of people to the environment.

Communication and transportation: Information dissemination in the community; access to outside information; primary transportation means, frequency of use, value placed on transportation means. (What happens in emergencies? What does the government provide?)

Social: Community groups and organizations; special events or activities -what, when, who, where, why- leisure activities, sports, concept of "fun".

Assessment

This paper is a 'practice' paper for your ISP and will be graded as a learning exercise. Your paper will be marked for clarity (the quality of your writing and communication), consistency (do you keep to your topic, explain yourself well) and coherence i.e., what have you asked as your central research question, how have you gone about gathering information to answer it (methodology / literature review), what are your findings, what do they tell you about your question. Particular attention will be paid to your relational and pragmatic ethics, and your reflexivity

Assignment 4: Simple Survey or Questionnaires

Steps to writing a good survey

1. Establish the goals of the project - What do we want to learn?
2. Determine your sample - Whom do we want to interview? How will we choose who we want to interview? How many people should we each interview?
3. Choose interviewing methodology - How will we conduct the interview? Will the survey be oral? Written?
4. Create your questionnaire – What kinds of questions should we ask? How many questions should we ask?
5. Pre-test the questionnaire, if practical
6. Conduct interviews and enter data - Ask the questions
7. Analyze the data – How should we analyze our data? How should we communicate our results?

Assignment 5: NGO Visit Oral Description and Analysis

Direction:

Get to know the organization and identify whether this NGO belongs to one of the following types of NGOs:

- *Advocacy, Analysis and Awareness Raising* – acting as a voice for people both on a representative and self-appointed basis; researching, analyzing and informing the public about issues, mobilizing citizens action through media campaign;
- *Brokerage*: acting as an intermediary between different sectors and groups
- *Conflict Resolution*: acting as a facilitator and mediator
- *Capacity Building*: providing education, training and information
- *Delivery of Services*: operational delivery of essential humanitarian, development and or social services
- *Evaluation/Monitoring*: serving as " watch dog" or " third party"/independent "auditor" both invited or uninvited, of government and corporate performance, accountability and performance

Depending on the time availability and the willingness of the NGO staff, you may get into conversation about the main work and activities of the organization. If time is allowable, you might get their opinion on the NGO activities.

Below are some suggested interview questions asked in NGO interviews might include:

- What are the most important points of this organization?
- How do you measure the impact of a project, which tools do you use?
- How does this organization deal with donors in general and how does it work with different donors?
- What do you think about its influence toward beneficiaries and community?
- Please prepare and expand more questions at your disposal.

Assignments 6: ISP Proposal OR Internship Plan

Objective:

To outline your course of action for the independent study period, as checked and approved by the academic director. This proposal functions as a guideline for what you do in the field, and, hopefully, serves as a springboard for other purposes (e.g., grad school, fellowships, etc.).

There are four steps to complete the ISP Proposal:

1) Three to Five Sentences

Starting during orientation and during the one-on-one meeting with the academic director, develop three sentences that explain and encapsulate your research project or internship plan. This on-going assignment is designed to develop your ability to deliver a “pitch” for an ISP project succinctly and concisely. You will be expected to deliver revised and more sophisticated versions each time you meet with the AD or advisor to discuss your ISP proposal. Generally, you should start off describing the general problem or issue (academic, practical, etc.) followed by the particulars in a specifically Vietnamese context (2nd sentence) and then a nice, neat sentence that describes exactly what you’re going to do over the ISP period (e.g., methodological plan).

2) Research Topic and Research Questions

This is the first shot at crafting a proposal that will be both competitive and which will serve you well during your ISP. Just because it is a draft, do not think you can whip it up just before it is due: this will serve as the basis for further revisions that will eventually become a proposal that could win you a fellowship.

Follow the outline of a proposal as described in the RME readings. All students must discuss their projects in depth with the AD before handing in the proposals. Below is a brief review to serve as a checklist. Remember that this assignment is also mostly about *process* – systematically thinking about and planning a fieldwork project of your own.

The outline will include the following:

- i. Research Topic and Research Questions
- ii. Statements of research purposes: Hypothesis/expectations/theoretical models, definitions of key terms and ideas, advisor
- iii. Brief literature review – analytical summary of previous work in your field

3) First Draft of ISP Proposal or Internship Plan

- i. Title of project (even if it changes later, give your proposal a title)
- ii. Introduction – hypothesis/expectations/theoretical models, definitions of key terms and ideas, advisor
- iii. Literature review – analytical summary of previous work in your field (note: this is very different from an annotated bibliography)
- iv. Methods – how you plan to conduct the study and analyze your findings
- v. Discussion – significance, limitations, relevance to others
- vi. Logistics – budget, work plan/schedule, travel, room & board arrangements, translation, communication
- vii. Bibliography

4) Final Draft – One Week Before ISP OR Internship

This is the FINAL proposal for your ISP or internship and will be reviewed for approval. Think of this as an application package, as it includes not only the proposal but all supporting documentation. The following should be included:

Title of project

Abstract – 150 words max

Introduction

Literature review

Methods – be very detailed for IRB review

Discussion

Logistics – budget, workplan/schedule, travel, room & board arrangements, translation, communication

Bibliography

SIT Ethics Policy, Signed

ALL IRB application materials (IRB Application, IRB Action Form, informed consent statement)

ISP Logistics and SIT Site Information (in detail!)

Assessment

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| First Impression/ Observation/ | 5% |
| Journaling Participation | 10% |
| ISP Topics and Research Question | 10% |
| Presentation on Case Study | 10% |
| Rural Research paper | 20% |
| NGOs Study | 10% |
| Survey Exercise | 10% |
| Ethical Exercises | 10% |
| ISP proposal OR Internship plan | 15% |

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Example: Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

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 |

Program Expectations

- 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. All the exercises and examinations will be evaluated according to the fulfillment of instructions, organization, analytic quality, depth, argumentation, and evidence presentation.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer.
- Comply with academic integrity policies. No plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical.
- Respect differences of opinion. This includes the opinions of classmates, lecturers, and local constituents that you interact with during 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.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

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 Research Methods (5 hours)

This introductory module is designed to introduce students to research methodology 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.

Session One: Cultural Adjustment: Challenges and Coping Strategies

In pairs with local students in Ho Chi Minh City, students are assigned a drop-off exercise with a view to preparing them to navigate the urban center. The topics assigned are based on the key aspects of life that students engage with. The topics include but are not limited to: transport, banking, religious places, markets, communications, restaurants/eating, museums, clinics and hospitals, and entertainment. This field activity is intended to provide students with hands-on experience with the adjustment process and cross-cultural coping skills. It is also designed in a way that helps students gauge or test their data collection methodologies in a new urban setting in Ho Chi Minh City. This session introduces unique aspects of SIT's experiential learning pedagogy and how it shapes SIT's program structure as well as student and faculty engagement. Secondly, working with the academic director and local research experts, students discuss strategies for effective adaptation to the Vietnamese socio-cultural context and to various cultural and social norms related to food, hygiene, and dress as well as their gendered, age, and power dimensions.

Assigned Reading:

Lutterman-Aguilar, A., & Gingerich, O. (2002). Experiential Pedagogy for Study Abroad: Educating for Global Citizenship. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 8(1), 41–82. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v8i1.94>

Murray, G. (2021). *Vietnam: the essential guide to customs & culture* (2nd ed., pp. 5–35). Kuperard.

Assignment: First Impressions

Session 2: Foundations of Social Research and Experiential Learning

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

Assigned Readings:

Ragin, C. C., & Amoroso, L. M. (2018). *Constructing Social Research* (pp. 1–30). SAGE Publications.

Bailey, C. A. (2018). Chapter 1: Introduction to Qualitative Field Research; Chapter 3: Prelude to Qualitative Field Research; Chapter 4: The Infrastructure of Qualitative Field Research. In *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Session 3: Reflections on Positionality and Representation

This session builds on students' field exercise experience. Students reflect on their own positionality and the ways in which it can impact their representation of the host culture. Particular attention is given to ways in which positionality shapes the research question, relation with the research participants, approach in data collection, data processing, and the representation of research participants in the final ISP.

Assigned Reading:

Sultana, Furhana. (2007). Reflexivity, Positionality and Participatory Ethics: Negotiating Fieldwork Dilemmas in International Research. In *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 6:3, 374-385.

Ganga, D., & Scott, S. (2006). Cultural "Insiders" and the Issue of Positionality in Qualitative Migration Research: Moving "Across" and Moving "Along" Researcher-Participant Divides. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-7.3.134>

Session 4: Site Workshops at the Can Gio Mangro Forests and Cu Chi Tunnel

This session takes place during the program's excursion to Mangrove Biosphere Reserve located in the coastal district southeast of Ho Chi Minh City. The reserve provides opportunities to advance environmental protection across a continuum of habitats, ranging from coastal areas to the boundaries of Ho Chi Minh City, the biggest industrial city in Viet

Nam. The mangrove forest hosts the highest diversity of mangrove plant species, mangrove-dwelling invertebrates and mangrove-associated fish and shellfish species in the sub-region and is regarded as the 'green lungs' of the city. For the site workshop at Cu Chi, students will visit the tunnels that are an immense network of connecting underground tunnels located in the [Củ Chi District](#) of [Ho Chi Minh City](#) and are part of a much larger network of tunnels that underlie much of the country. The Củ Chi tunnels were the location of several military campaigns during the [Vietnam War](#), and were the [Viet Cong](#)'s base of operations for the [Tết Offensive](#) in 1968.

Assigned Reading:

Bailey, C. A. (2018). Chapter 6: Observation. In *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Hand-out readings about Can Gio Biosphere reserve and selected readings about Cu Chi Tunnels.

Field Assignment: observation and discussion in Can Gio and Cu Chi

Module 2: Theoretical Foundations and Research Methods and Research Ethics (10 hours)

The module introduces students to basic research theory with the focus on infrastructure of major Research Paradigms, Methodology and Ethics with additional reflection on cross-cultural description, interpretation, and reflections.. Students will then be introduced to research methods most widely used by past students while completing their ISPs. Students' capacity to develop a competent and ethically 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.

Session 1: Research Design and Planning a Research Project

This session covers different kinds of research designs. 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.

Assigned Readings:

Babbie, E. R. (2012). *The Practice of Social Research* (13th ed., pp. 88–118). Cengage Learning.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed., pp. 35–50). SAGE Pub.

Session 2: Research Topics, Research Questions and Initial Outline of Research Plan

This session aims to help students focus on choosing research topics, formulating research questions and initial outline of a research plan.

In-class Exercise:

Students choose a topic and rehearse how to develop a research question and interview questions for their intended ISP projects.

Readings:

Bryman, A. (2012). Chapter 4: Planning a research project and formulating research questions; Chapter 5: Getting started: reviewing the literature. In *Social Research Methods* (4th ed., pp. 79-79, pp. 97-128). Oxford University Press.

Writing a research proposal. Available online:

[A sample proposal with comment.pdf \(uh.edu\)](#)

Literature Reviews. (n.d.). The Writing Center • University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-reviews/>

Session 3: Research Ethics

This session will discuss ethical dimensions when conducting a research project. Special attention is given to reflexivity and positionality and their impact on the ethics of the representation of participants in the research and the host community. This session also 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.

Assigned reading:

SIT/World Learning, Human Subjects Review Policies and Procedures. In *VNR - Students Handbook*. (Vol.2, pp. 30-34).

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

Bell, J. (2010). Ethics and Integrity in Research. In *Doing Your Research Project*. (pp. 44-62). Open University Press.

Session 4: One-on-One Meeting with the Academic Director on Initial ISP topics (see the weekly schedule)

Each student will share with the academic director about her and his intended ISP topics for the ISP or internship. Based on their interests and the local resources, the AD will consult each student on relevant and meaningful ISP topics and research sites OR local organizations that offer one-month internships to students. After this meeting, each student will draft the written outline of the ISP topic, possible research questions, and purpose of the research or internship plan.

Assignment: first draft of ISP plan with ISP topic and research questions OR first draft of Internship Plan

Module 3: Rural Research in Mekong Delta and Dalat in Central Highlands (10 hours)

This module encourages students to apply classroom learning in their search for information in practical context. During this module, students will engage in group discussions, participant observation, and individual and group interviews that will occur during workshops and excursions in Mekong Delta and Dalat in the Central Highlands. 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 ethical and sensitive cross-cultural field studies.

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

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

Readings:

Bailey, C. A. (2018). Chapter 5: Methodology; Chapter 7: Interviews. In *A guide to qualitative field research* (pp. 95-110). Sage Publications, Inc.

Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (Eds.). (2007). Cross-Cultural Interviewing. In *Inside interviewing: new lenses, new concerns* (pp. 430–448). Sage.

Ragin, C. C., & Becker, H. S. (1992). *What Is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry* Cambridge University Press.

Session 2: Learning in the Field

This session presents research strategies in the field setting, including population, sample size and research strategies. This session emphasizes on interviewing as a method for data collection, reviews different types of interviews, and walks the students through observation as a method in field-based study and the processes of developing interview questions (in accordance with the research question).

Field Assignment themes: Students join one of the following thematic groups:

- Microfinance and poverty
- Women and development
- Migration and human rights
- Youth and entrepreneurship
- Cultural centers
- Poverty and microfinance
- Health care and community health center
- Education and school system
- Religions and spirituality

Session 3: Oral Presentation on Rural Studies in Mekong Delta and Dalat

At the end of their excursions in Mekong Delta and Dalat, students present their findings from Village Case Studies in pairs or individually. Students will also reflect on the interview process and issues of cross-cultural translation.

Assignment: Presentation and Written Paper on Rural Research in Hoa An village of Mekong Delta and Dalat in Central Highlands.

Module 4: Survey Research and Data Analysis/Interpretation (10 hours)

The purpose of this session is twofold. Firstly, we look at survey research with particular attention to theories of culture and development as tools for analysis. Secondly, we analyze the different elements of writing the ISP paper, with particular attention to literature review and theoretical framework.

Session 1: Conducting Survey Research

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

Assigned Readings:

Fink, A. (1998). Chapter 1: Conducting Survey; Chapter 2: The Survey Forms; Chapter 4: Samplings. In *How to conduct surveys: a step-by step guide*. Sage Publications.

Session 2: Data Analysis

This interactive group-work-based workshop will cover:

- i. Some theoretical frameworks for data analysis
- ii. A practical exercise working with your findings
- iii. Setting up a basic structure to work with for your findings section

Assigned Readings:

Bailey, C. A. (2018). Chapter 9: Coding, Memoing, and Description; Chapter 10: Typologies, Taxonomies, Visual Representation and Themes; Chapter 11: Story Telling. Critical Events and Analytical Induction. In *A guide to qualitative field research* (pp. 125-178). Sage Publications, Inc.

Fink, A. (1998). Chapter 6: Analyzing and Organizing data from survey; Chapter 7: Presenting the Survey Result. In *How to conduct surveys: a step-by step guide*. Sage Publications.

Optional Readings:

Rossmann, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2017). Analyzing Data. In *An introduction to qualitative research: learning in the field* (4th ed.). Sage.

Session 3: NGOs Visits

This session addresses access to information within Vietnamese associations and governmental organizations. Based on their initial ISP topics and after the one-on-one meeting with the AD, the student will conduct a field visit with an NGO, research institute or professors/lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City to gather more preliminary information for their intended ISP Proposal.

Preparation for NGO visit: conducting research online about the NGOs prior to the visit and prepare interview questions either semi-structure interviews or open-ended interviews.

NGO visit: Students will be visiting a variety of NGOs as a group. During the visit students will interview a staff member or members to get a better sense of what the organization does, what challenges they face, and how they see their work contributing to the country.

After the field visit with NGOs and meeting/contacting with potential ISP Advisors, students will develop the first draft of ISP Proposal.

Assigned Readings:

Yin, R. K. (2015). *Qualitative research from start to finish* (2nd ed., pp. 27–52). Guilford Press.
Turner, S. (2013). *Red stamps and gold stars: fieldwork dilemmas in upland socialist Asia* (pp. 25–72). UBC Press.

Assignment: First draft of ISP Proposal with literature review OR Internship plan

Module 5: ISP Proposal OR Internship Plan, Sensitivity in the Cross-Cultural Context (10 hours)

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

This module uses concrete examples of social science research to address and discuss the ethical dimensions of doing research. We will look into ways of protecting the rights of research subjects, such as their right to give or refuse consent, and their right to remain anonymous. Special attention is given to the protection of ‘vulnerable’ research groups, such as minors and marginalized groups. In a similar vein, we will also discuss the issue of unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched, both during the research process as well as in representing research subjects in a final research paper. Students will be given exercises on ethic cases and sensitivities in the local cross-cultural settings

Module 5a: ISP in the Context of Vietnam

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

Session 1: ISP Rubric

This session is devoted to the discussion of SIT’s ISP assessment rubric. Students are acquainted with the categories for each rubric and the general design of ISP project and presentation.

Session 2: 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 3: Work-based Norms and Practices in Vietnam

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to research in Vietnam, 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 Readings:

Turner, S. (2013). *Red stamps and gold stars: fieldwork dilemmas in upland socialist Asia* (pp. 34-65). UBC Press.

Session 4: Reviewing past ISPs

Each student will be given past ISPs. After reviewing the past ISP, the group will have to meet in order to see how each member would contribute to the assignment implementation. You will be invited to present orally your findings. These are some suggestions:

- Discuss ISP structure and introduction of research question.
- Did the author manage to relate the research question throughout the text in their data analysis discussion?
- How does the literature review support the main research question and data presented?
- Comment on the author's discussion about positionality;
- Use an alternative investigation tool to verify the validity of the study results;
- Try the same method with different profiles;
- Think about new theoretical questions;
- Use in-depth investigation of an issue or aspect of the data that was only partly covered in the original research;
- Collect data to find an answer to new questions about the ISP;
- Re-analyze the collected data from different theoretical perspectives;
- Compare the ISP's collected data with data collected on other profiles;
- Try other modes of approach that you might think about.

Module 5b: Internship in the Context of Vietnam

This module prepares the student for the internship experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to internships in Vietnam. 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 code, student objectives for the internship, and stages of student growth in the internship. Students will review the internship rubric.

Assigned Readings:

Sasges, G. (2013). Chapter 1. In *It's a living: work and life in Vietnam today*. National University of Singapore Press.

Optional Readings:

Sweitzer, H. F., & King, M. A. (2019). Chapter 2 & 3. In *The successful internship: personal, professional, and civic development in experiential learning* (4th ed.). Cengage.

Session 2: Work-based Norms and Practices in Vietnam

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

Sasges, G. (2013). Chapter 2. In *It's a living: work and life in Vietnam today*. National University of Singapore Press.

Session 3: The Ethics of Participating in an Internship in Vietnam

This session outlines the responsibilities of the student and the host organization for a productive and meaningful 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.

Optional Readings

McDonald, F. (2011, February). *Professional Standards Advisory PS-17: Ethical Use of Interns*. Public Relations Society of America; PRSA. https://www.prsa.org/docs/default-source/about/ethics/eas/ethical-standards-advisory-ethical-use-of-interns.pdf?sfvrsn=ea550bfd_2

Session 4: ISP/ Internship Group Discussions

In this session, students will share and discuss their final ISP proposal or Internship plan. Feedback provided in this session is used to enhance the final ISP proposal and Internship plan.

Assignments: Finalize ISP proposal OR Internship Plan and complete IRB/LRB Forms at the end of the Grand Excursions