

Field Methods and Ethics ANTH-3500 (3 credits)

India: Public Health, Gender, and Sexuality

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 Field Methods and Ethics course provides students with the concepts and methodological skills to conduct fieldwork in a cross-cultural setting. In particular, this course helps students negotiate additional barriers and boundaries faced while conducting research or doing fieldwork in a public health context, specifically in navigating power dynamics in conducting interviews and writing objective analyses. During this course, students learn how to consolidate and apply the knowledge imparted during other semester courses. The first-hand experience conducting fieldwork that each student gains during this course will prove valuable at the culmination of the semester during the completion of the four-week Independent Study Project (ISP) or Internship.

Concepts and skills introduced in Field Methods and Ethics reinforce all other program components and are heavily utilized during the ISP/Internship period. This course will help students develop competence in orientating themselves amidst a new academic and social environment. It will also teach students how to assess and minimize ethical risks while working/pursuing research with human subjects or participating in an internship in a public health context, including working with NGOs, hospitals, or clinics. This course will provide students with an overview of fieldwork methods, allowing them to gain familiarity with a variety of potential methodological approaches to choose from for their ISPs/ internships. The fieldwork skills and background in ethics gained from this course should prove particularly useful for students who plan to pursue a career in the fields of medicine/public health/gender/sexuality after the program.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to

- Demonstrate the ability to do a cross-cultural study by using basic fieldwork methods and skills such as interviewing and focus groups learned during the class and field visits.
- Synthesize information gathered from primary and secondary sources and integrate them to produce a sound paper/report as a material product.
- Produce a methodologically and ethically sound proposal for fieldwork/internship on a specific topic related to public health in India.

- Apply skills in research ethics and assessment of the impact of a fieldworker/intern on local people and cultures being studied, using sensitivity and awareness.
- Show critical insights on a particular topic/organization/public health module in an oral presentation.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well.

Instructional Methods

Seminar activities encompass both excursions to field sites and classroom lectures on practices in the field. Reading materials will be assigned and discussed to prepare and enhance understanding of the course and assignments.

Required Texts

- Jacobsen, K.H. (2020). Reviewing Literature (3), Defining Specific Aims (4), Study Design (7) Qualitative Studies (13), in *Introduction to Health Research Methods: A Practical Guide* (3rd ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Ratcliffe, J.W. and Gonzalez-del-Valle, A. (1988) Rigor in health-related research: Toward an expanded conceptualization, *International Journal of Health Services*, 18(3), pp. 361-391.
- Tolley, E.E. Ulin, P.R. Mack, N., Robinson, E.T., Succop, S.M. (eds.) (2016) Chapter on Collecting Qualitative Data (4). In *Qualitative Methods in Public Health: A Field Guide for Applied Research* (2nd ed., pp. 85-142). Wiley Josey-Bass.
- Green, J. and Thorogood, N. (2004) *In-depth Interviews in Qualitative Methods for Health Research* (4th ed., pp. 79-104).
- Jacobsen, K.H. (2020) Chapters on Collecting Qualitative Data (23) and Qualitative Analysis (32). In *Introduction to Health Research Methods: A Practical Guide* (3rd ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Tolley, E.E. Ulin, P.R. Mack, N., Robinson, E.T., Succop, S.M. (eds.) (2016) Chapters on Qualitative Data Analysis (6) and Putting it into Words (8). In *Qualitative Methods in Public Health: A Field Guide for Applied Research* (2nd ed., pp. 173-218; 255-294), Wiley Josey-Bass.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

For this course, students are required to complete four assignments: Formulating a Research Question and Design, Tool Design, the Three Interviews Assignment, and a Research/Internship Proposal. These assignments feed into building a review of literature and proposal for the ISP

or Internship. They offer an opportunity to articulate research questions, operationalize data collection, design, pre-test, and refine tools, and engage in a reflective practice while undertaking these various steps in a research process. Assignments also allow students to practice the observation and interviewing skills essential for conducting fieldwork, specifically in medical/public health contexts that may parallel situations they'll encounter while completing their ISPs/internships.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

(1) Formulating a Research Question and Review of Literature	15%
(2) Tool Design	15%
(3) Three Interviews Assignment	25%
(4) Research/Internship Proposal	35%
(5) Attendance, Participation and Completion of Assigned Readings	10%

Evaluation Components

1. Formulating a Research Question and Review of Literature (15%)

Students are asked to identify 2-3 research topics of interest and select one that they would like to work on.

- a) Write in about 250 words why they chose the topic and its significance for their own selves, for knowledge generation or policy or intervention.
- b) Develop a problem statement and formulate it into research question(s).
- c) Develop a 1500-word review of literature on the theme

Deadline: by the end of Week 3

2. Three Interviews Assignment (25%)

Canvas the interview guide developed in the previous assignment and compose two sets of 10-12 questions – one in English and its translations in Hindi (translated with the help of the Hindi instructors). Using these two distinct sets of questions, students will conduct one Hindi and two English interviews about their topic and write up their results in a 750-1000 word summary, focusing on a description and analysis of the interview process. Two interviews must be conducted outside of each student's homestay during the workshop period. Students should include transcripts of both sets of interview questions as appendices to the paper. Each student should keep in mind the limitations and possibilities of language when composing Hindi questions. English questions should be rethought and rephrased in a manner appropriate to Hindi language levels.

Working on this assignment will be a cumulative process ending with a written summary on a topic of each student's interest which should include a description of the topic, interviewees, interview location, and the process and lessons learned from the interview. The goal of this assignment is to orient students to the interview process and prepare them for ISP.

Deadline: In Week 6

3. Tool Design (15%)

Drawing lessons from your Three Interviews Assignment

a) Design an interview schedule or a checklist with probes (8-10 questions) to collect data to answer the research question through interviews in a sample of 8-10 respondents.

OR

A survey questionnaire (15 questions) to be canvassed among 50 participants to answer the research question.

b) The tool should be accompanied by a note explaining the rationale for the questions/Items on the checklist and their sequence.

Deadline: by the end of Week 8

4. Research/Internship Proposal (35%)

All students must develop a research or internship proposal on a theme related to the program. The ISP proposal should include research question(s) and objectives, theoretical framework, and 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.

Deadline: After Week 10

(5) Attendance and Participation (10%)

Students are expected to fully participate in all course activities, complete all required readings and enthusiastically participate in classroom discussions and field activities.

Participation is not the same as attendance. Full participation means asking pertinent questions to the course's guest lecturers, and engaging in discussion and analysis during the question-answer section of lectures, group discussions, and while on an excursion. Students are expected to read the assigned readings, complete and submit assignments on given deadlines and demonstrate their knowledge through reflection, writing, and discussion.

Participation includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions and excursions using the following criteria:

- **Attendance** - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- **Active Listening** - paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, entertaining contradictory perspectives, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language) and taking notes.
- **Involvement in Class Discussions** - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge and information. Students should challenge themselves to step outside

their comfort zones to ensure the best discussion possible: speaking up if they're usually quiet or allowing other classmates a chance to speak if they tend to dominate class discussions.

- **Group Accountability** - participate positively as a part of a group during field excursions and classes.
- **Respect** – students should engage in culturally appropriate interactions with their host families, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and local communities. This includes appropriately greeting people when entering offices and classrooms and saying thank you.

Expectations

With the exception of journals and field notebooks, all assignments should be typed and double-spaced. Careful proofreading and editing are essential parts of the writing process; spelling and grammar will be graded. Compliance with a standard format of citation is expected for both primary and secondary sources. Most importantly, concise and logical arguments should be clear throughout assignments.

Please note: *description is not analysis*. While there is a place for the description of people, events, or organizations in assignments, be aware that extensive description is not a substitute for critical analysis based on independent thinking and understanding. The more writing reflects a creative synthesis of theory, observation, and reflection, the more successful it will be.

Academic Policies: While SIT prides itself on providing students with an experientially-based program we hold ourselves and our students to the highest of academic standards. Students are asked to 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.

Late Assignments

Late papers will be marked down one step (B- to C+, e.g.) for each day they are late.

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 have 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). SIT Respect differences of opinion (classmates, lecturers, and local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across differences 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, the 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

Module 1: Starting Points of Research: Approaches, Ethics and, Research Questions

This module focuses on the approaches to quantitative and/or qualitative field research in observance of the ethics and value systems of the local community. This module also addresses the methodological and ethical challenges and considerations in health research on vulnerable populations.

Week 1: Introduction to Health Research- Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches and Positionality, Power, and Subjectivity in Research

This session introduces students to health research and the specific features differentiating qualitative and quantitative research in health, their uses, and methods. The session focuses on exploratory, descriptive, observational study designs in qualitative and quantitative approaches. Students will also be introduced to positionality, power, and subjectivity in health research and the ethical dilemmas arising from vulnerabilities and power hierarchies along the axes of age, caste, gender, sexual orientation, and poverty.

Required Reading:

Bowling, A. (2014). Investigating Health Services and Health: The Scope of Research. In *Research methods in health: investigating health and health services*. (pp.1-5). (4th ed.). McGraw Hill Education-Open University Press.

Jacobsen, K.H. (2021) Chapters 7, 9 & 13 Overview of Study Designs, Cross Sectional Studies and Qualitative Studies . In *Introduction To Health Research Methods: A Practical Guide*. (3rd ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Hamer, B. (Director) (2003) 'Kitchen Stories'[Motion Picture] BulBul Films. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0Oan6gGnVI> (Accessed on 20th January 2023)

Recommended Reading:

Said, E. (1979). Orientalism. Vintage. pp 1-57

Ratcliffe, J.W. and Gonzalez-del-Valle, A. (1988) Rigor in health-related research: Toward an expanded conceptualization. *International Journal of Health Services*, 18(3), 361-391.

Week 2: Formulating Research Questions and Review of Literature

In Week 2 students will be taken through the initial steps in the research process - identifying research interest, selecting a topic, writing the statement of problem and formulating a research question. This session also addresses the significance of a review of literature in situating the research question in the landscape of existing knowledge; conceptualizing developing its theoretical and conceptual underpinnings, articulating, refining and operationalizing it.

Required Readings:

Flick, U. (2015). From Research Idea to Research Question. In *Introducing Research Methodology: A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. (2nd ed.). (pp.45-56). Sage.

Flick, U. (2015). Reading and Reviewing the Literature. In *Introducing Research Methodology: A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. (2nd ed.). (pp. 59-69). Sage.

Jacobsen, K.H. (2020). Reviewing Literature (3), Defining Specific Aims (4). In *Introduction to Health Research Methods: A Practical Guide*. (3rd ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Module 2: Methods of Data Collection

This module introduces students to a range of research methods while focusing a select set of qualitative and quantitative methods and tools of data collection including participant observation (research journal), interviews (interview guides and checklists), focus group discussions, and surveys (questionnaires).

Week 3: Qualitative Methods: Participant Observation and the Contextual Interpretation of Data

This session introduces students to a typology of observational methods based on the researcher's role in the process of data collection ranging from non-participant observation through Rapid Rural Appraisals to the ethnographic method. The technique of Description, Interpretation, and Evaluation (DIE) will enable students to distinguish between the steps of recording observational data, its interpretations, and their evaluations by the researcher. Students will learn about the importance of situating the data in the context of existing knowledge and of the human subject under consideration before interpreting it.

Required Readings:

Thorogood, N. and Green, J. (2014) Observational Methods. In *Qualitative Methods for Health Research*. (4th ed.). (pp.84-98). Sage.

Tolley, E.E. Ulin, P.R. Mack, N., Robinson, E.T., Succop, S.M. (eds.) (2016) Collecting Qualitative Data: The Science and the Art. In *Qualitative Methods in Public Health: A Field Guide for Applied Research* (pp.84-98). (2nd ed.). Wiley Josey-Bass.

Assignment Due end of 3rd Week: Formulating a Research Question and Review of Literature (15%)

Week 4: Semi-structured Interviews, Group Interviews, and Focus Group Discussions

Week 4 will focus on semi-structured individual and group interviews and focus group discussions used in qualitative health research. Students will learn how to develop an interview guide, pretest the guide, and refine it. They will learn the practical steps of setting up an interview, introducing the self and the study, obtaining informed consent, starting and closing the interview, and techniques of interviewing to simultaneously maintain flexibility and focus during the interview. Teaching will combine a lecture, and a facilitated hands-on exercise to develop an interview guide and conduct a mock interview.

Required Readings:

Bowling, A. (2014). Unstructured Interviewing and Focus Groups. In *Research methods in health: investigating health and health services*. (pp.391-399 & 410-414). (4th ed.). McGraw Hill Education-Open University Press.

Tolley, E.E. Ulin, P.R. Mack, N., Robinson, E.T., Succop, S.M. (eds.) (2016) Collecting Qualitative Data: The Science and the Art. In *Qualitative Methods in Public Health: A Field Guide for Applied Research* (pp. 98-127), (2nd ed.). Wiley Josey-Bass.

Week 5: Quantitative Data: Survey Method and Questionnaire Design

In week 5 students will be introduced to the use of the survey method as a quantitative method to collect data in a clearly defined sample from a specified population in a defined time period. The session will help students acquire the skills to design a survey questionnaire- identifying the sociodemographic data and themes to be covered, types of questions and responses, considerations about the wording and sequence of questions, obtaining informed consent, pretesting, and revision. They will learn of issues in the canvassing of questionnaires and ways of addressing concerns of the reliability and validity of survey instruments

Required Reading:

Jacobsen, K.H. (2021) Questionnaire Development. In *Introduction To Health Research Methods: A Practical Guide*. (3rd ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Module 3. Data Management, Analysis and Writing

The module addresses the methods and challenges in systematically managing data after its collection. It takes students through steps of data cleaning and filling gaps while generating codes from narratives or creating frequency tables and performing simple correlations for quantitative data. It underlines the importance of interpretation in context and alongside theoretical issues of representation and language offers practical suggestions for strategizing writing.

Week 6: Coding, Data Analysis, and Interpretation

The session will introduce students to categorizing and coding themes emerging from the narrative data, and examination of patterns and associations in the narratives. It then will guide them to the interpretation of these patterns in the context built through a review of the literature and socio-demographic data of the study participants. In the context of quantitative research, they will learn about univariate and bivariate analysis, the generation of frequency tables, and a situated interpretation of the findings.

Required Reading:

Jacobsen, K.H. (2021) Descriptive Statistics. In *Introduction To Health Research Methods: A Practical Guide*. (3rd ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Thorogood, N. and Green, J. (2014). Analysing Qualitative Data In *Qualitative Methods for Health Research*. (4th ed.). (pp.173-199). Sage.

Flick, U. (2015). Analysing Qualitative and Quantitative Data Reading and Reviewing the Literature. In *Introducing Research Methodology: A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. (2nd ed.). (pp.170-192). Sage.

Assignment Due in Week 6: Three Interviews Assignment (25%)

Week 7: Writing: Language, Content, Strategy, and Process

This session will discuss strategies to approach the writing of the academic paper, planning, and structuring of the content. How should one plan and prepare for the writing process? It will highlight issues of language and representation of individuals and communities, especially in the context of vulnerabilities arising from geographical location, gender, caste, sexual orientation, and poverty. The lecture will also share pointers on effective ways to present findings in an academic paper.

Required Reading

Jacobsen, K.H. (2021) Writing Success Strategies. In *Introduction To Health Research Methods: A Practical Guide*. (3rd ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Tolley, E.E. Ulin, P.R. Mack, N., Robinson, E.T., Succop, S.M. (eds.) (2016) Research Results in Scientific Journals and Reports. In *Qualitative Methods in Public Health: A Field Guide for Applied Research* (pp. 254-260), (2nd ed.). Wiley Josey-Bass.

After completing Modules 1, 2 & 3 students will split into groups by ISP or internship. ISP

students will take Module 4a, and internship students will take Module 4b.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT

Module 4a: ISP in India

Week 8: Health Research in a Cross-Cultural Setting: Conduct in the Field and Ethics of Field Work

Which are the specific challenges that fieldworkers face and the advantages they have when they study aspects of a society different from their own? The lecture addresses issues of gender norms, language, and expectations for behavior while conducting research. It discusses the moral obligations and ethical challenges of researching in a cultural setting different from your own. Drawing implications of the power relations that shape fieldwork and data analysis, especially with marginalized subjects, it discusses the ethical approaches to address them. Students will learn about practical measures to ensure confidentiality and obtain informed consent, underlining the key maxim of “do no harm”.

Required Reading:

ISP assessment rubrics

Assignment Due end of Week 8: Tool Design (15%)

Week 9: ISP Preparatory Workshop

The workshop is being designed to facilitate and provide suggestions on ISP abstracts/proposals on a one-to-one basis. In this group exercise, the facilitators of the workshop will discuss the preliminary drafts of the abstracts and provide considered inputs on each ISP idea to facilitate the students to write a well-structured ISP proposal. This exercise will help each of them to follow their fieldwork idea pragmatically while using scientifically approved research and fieldwork techniques.

Week 10: ISP Mechanics

The lecture covers the nuts and bolts of ISP fieldwork activities, paper expectations, and all necessary details. Students are expected to learn how to prepare for the ISP logistically and be aware of the main safety and security measures they must take while in the field. It will offer insights into how a field worker can seek help from the available resources/people. During the lecture, students will also be introduced to the roles the program and staff in will play in facilitating their work and stay during the Independent Study period. This session covers strategies of time management, networking strategies, and problem-solving research challenges.

INTERNSHIP

Module 4b: Internship in the Context of India

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

Switzer, H.K., & King, M.A. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic Development in Experiential Learning (4th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, chapters 2-3.

Session 2: Internship in a Cross-Cultural Setting: Work-based Norms and Practices in India

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

Pittaway, E., Bartolomei, L., & Hugman, R. (2010). 'Stop stealing our stories': The ethics of research with vulnerable groups. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 2(2), 229-251.

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

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. This session also addresses the methodological and ethical challenges, considerations and responsibilities when providing assistance or conducting research on vulnerable populations.

Recommended Readings:

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

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

Pittaway, E., Bartolomei, L., & Hugman, R. (2010). 'Stop stealing our stories': The ethics of research with vulnerable groups. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 2(2), 229-251.

Assignment due in Week 10: Submission of the ISP/Internship Proposal