

Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH-3500 (3 credits)

Morocco: Human Rights, Social Justice, and Cultural Transformations

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 (RME) introduces students to the conceptual and practical tools for gathering primary data and the knowledge and skills that are essential to forming constructive relationships with organizations and/or individuals, which are necessary for completing an academic project in the cultural context of Morocco. In particular, the course enhances students' skills at building rapport; initiating purposeful dialogue; 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 Morocco and the global critical issues of peace, human rights and social movements. Broadly, the course introduces students to both qualitative and quantitative approaches of social science field research.

The main emphasis of the course is on the development of methods, 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 and in particular in peace, human rights, and social movements. Development of a research proposal or internship proposal, and preparation of an application for review of research with human subjects are all components of the course. 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), which is largely based on the data gathered from primary sources, or an internship at a local organization.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize 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 peace, human rights and social movements. OR demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of Morocco;
- 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 through in-country expert lectures and field visits to 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.

Course Schedule

**Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs*

Module 1: Experiential Learning and Positionality in Field-Based Research

This introductory module is designed to introduce students to field-based research in a study abroad context. Students learn how to relate to local communities and individuals. Most particularly, this module allows students to discover the power of experiential learning and use

it as a tool to connect to local communities and individuals and develop into reflexive researchers who are attentive to their own positionality in relation to the local communities in which they engage for their research or internship.

Session 1: Doing Field-Based Research in a Study Abroad Context

This session provides an introduction to field-based research in a study abroad context. Students explore how experiential learning can be used as a tool to explore and interact with their new cultural environment and reflect on their own positionality in relation to the host community, most particularly Rabat NGOs working in the area of human rights.

Required Readings:

Glesne, C. (2006). 'Being there: Developing understanding through participant observation'. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers* (3rd Ed.). Boston: Pearson Educators, 49-78.

Spadola, E. (2013). Forgive Me, Friend: Mohammed and Ibrahim. In Crawford, D., and Newcomb, R. (Eds.), *Encountering Morocco*. Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 77-98.

Recommended Reading:

Green, N. (2008). Formulating and Refining a Research Question. In Gilbert, N. (Ed.), *Researching Social Life*. London: Sage Publications, 145 – 161.

Session 2: Reflections on Positionality and Representation

This session builds on students' field exercise experience. Students reflect on their own positionality and 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 subjects, approach in data collection, data processing, and the representation of their research subjects in their final ISP.

Required reading:

Sultana, F. (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. Retrieved from: <http://english6.net/download.php?id=15231>

Recommended reading:

Ganga, D., & Scott, S. (2006, May). Cultural "insiders" and the issue of positionality in qualitative migration research: Moving "across" and moving "along" researcher-participant divides. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 7, No. 3). Retrieved from: <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/134>.

Session 3: Experiential Learning Philosophy in the Moroccan Context

This session will first go over some of the most salient characteristics and the ideological underpinnings of the philosophy and pedagogy of experiential education and the ways it constitutes the defining element of SIT and study abroad education approach. It will then move to a discussion of some of the pitfalls entailed in the mainstream conceptualizations of

experiential learning and study abroad. The session will then consider the ways in which articulation of experiential learning on the program takes place.

Required reading:

Dewey, J. (1997). The Need of a Theory of Experience. In *Experience and Education*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 25 – 31.

Silberman, M. (Ed.). (2007). Part 1: Foundations of Experiential Learning. In *The Handbook of Experiential Learning*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 11 – 80.

Recommended reading:

Dewey, J. (1997). Traditional vs. Progressive Education. In Dewey, J. *Experience and Education*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 17 – 23.

Silberman, M. (Ed.). (2007). Part 2: Experiential Learning Methodologies. In *The Handbook of Experiential Learning*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer. 81 – 238.

Module 2: Research Methods and Ethics in the Global Critical Issue of Peace, Human Rights and Social Movements.

This module focuses on the tools and methods required for conducting quantitative and/or qualitative field research in observance of the ethics and value systems of the local community.

Session 1: Selecting Topics, Formulating Research Questions

This session provides an overview of the module on research methods and ethics. It highlights the main elements of conducting a research project and walks students through the different steps of writing a research proposal. Special attention is given to choosing a research topic and formulating a research question.

Required Readings:

Glesne, C. (2006). Pre-study tasks: Doing what is good for you. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers* (3rd Ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc., 1-20.

Mason, J. (1996). *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage Publications. Chapters 1 and 2.

Writing a research proposal. Retrieved from:

<http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=83009&sid=2319840>

Literature Reviews. Retrieved from: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-reviews/>

Session 2: Participant Observation and Interviewing

Field research often involves participant-observation of a recurring event, a group of people, a repeated practice or habit, or a place. It requires grasping social action as it happens as well as diligent description and summary of your observations after the fact (“fieldnotes”). The best

participant-observers cultivate curiosity, attention to detail and pattern, a disciplined memory, and of course, openness to the unexpected.

In addition, you will be expected carry out interviews--to interact informally or formally with people involved in what you observe. The purpose is to understand what meaning, if any, they assign to what you have observed.

Required reading:

Seidman, I. (2013). Technique Isn't Everything, But It Is a Lot. In *Interviewing as Qualitative Research 4th ed.* New York: Teachers College, 81-96.

Mack, N., Woodsong, C., et al. (2005). Participant Observation. In *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide.* Research Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International, 12-28.

Session 3 : Focus Group Methods

This session will take up the challenges of deploying the focus group method in the context of researching the global critical issues of human rights, peace and social movements in Morocco.

Required reading:

Mack, N., Woodsong, C., et al. (2005). Participant Observation. In *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide.* Research Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International, 51-82.

Module 3: Introduction to the ISP and Internship

This module will describe the ISP and internship processes and help students brainstorm ideas and set goals for their ISP or internship. The module will include a review and critique of past ISP and/or internship papers. The module will also walk the students through the SIT Study Abroad Review Board (SARB) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and the application for Human Subjects Review (HSR application).

Session 1: Introduction of the SARB- IRB Process and HSR Application

This session will address the ethical principles that inform the work of the IRB– respect for persons, beneficence, and justice as they play themselves out in the critical issues of peace, human rights and social movements. The principle of respect for persons recognizes that people are autonomous and capable of deciding for themselves whether to participate in a research study and that those who are incapable of such self-determination observe additional protections. The second principle, beneficence, echoed the sentiment of the Hippocratic Oath in which medical doctors pledge to “do no harm.” Beneficence required that researchers strive to protect their subjects from suffering, and minimize [the] possible harms” of their projects. The final principle in the *Belmont Report* is justice. The principle of justice addresses equal distribution of both benefits and burdens of research and underlies the additional regulatory protections for pregnant women, children, and prisoners. The session will also reflect on the three levels of IRB

review: exempt- no risk, expedited- minimum risk, full- greater than minimal risk.

Required readings:

Oliver, P. (2003). Introduction: Ethics and Research. In *The Student's Guide to Research Ethics*. Mainland: Open University Press. 3 – 25.

De Laine, M. (2000). The Moral Career of the Qualitative Fieldworker. In *Fieldwork Participation and Practice Ethics and Dilemmas in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage. 16 – 37.

Session 2: Setting the Stage

This session reviews objectives for the internship. Students meet with the academic director following confirmation of their internship placement and discuss expectations, timeframes and other logistics, structural components of the final internship paper, content, layout, and general guidelines.

Required reading:

Switzer, F. and King, M. (2013). Chapter 12. In *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Session 3: The Internship Experience: Review and Reflection

Central to the successful internship experience is the development of the Internship Learning Agreement. The academic director will work with students individually and as a group to review the purpose of the Internship Learning Agreement. He or she will discuss student strategies for working with the internship supervisor to design the contents of the Internship Learning Agreement in adherence to internship learning objectives and in collaboration with the internship supervisor at the host organization. The Agreement also helps to ensure a clear understanding of the objectives of the internship among the student, academic director, and internship supervisor.

Required reading:

Bordat, S.W., Davis, S.S., and Kouzzi, S. (2011). Women as Agents of Grassroots change Illustrating Micro-Empowerment in Morocco. *Journal of Middle East, Women's Studies*, 7(1). Retrieved from:
http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/Academic/ser_womenasagentsofgrassrootschange_winter2011.pdf

Examine Your Lens: A Tool for Cross Cultural Understanding. Retrieved from:
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1062113.pdf>

The Global Human Rights Education and Training Centre (HREA). (2004). Moroccan Family Code of "Moudawana". Retrieved from <http://www.hrea.org/moudawana.html>

Module 4: Project Proposal Development

Based on learning and engagement in the preceding course modules, this module focuses on ISP and internship proposal development and guiding students through the development of the Human Subjects Review (HSR) application for review by the SIT Study Abroad Review Board (SARB). This critical phase in the course involves both large student group meetings and individual student meetings with the academic director and the ISP advisor or internship supervisor.

Session 1: Designing your ISP or Internship Journal

This session will center on identifying potential problems encountered and providing practical tips and suggestions regarding ISPs and internship journals.

Your ISP Journal must include:

1. A compelling topic;
2. An clearly stated and answerable question;
3. A bounded site, group, habitual practice, or event;
4. Method for producing ethnographic material (field notes, interview records, maps, etc.).

The Internship Journal should contain:

1. Description of the tasks undertaken and the lessons learned;
2. Reflections on the experience;
3. Dates and tasks undertaken to gauge whether responsibilities grow in importance as the internship progresses;
4. The skills and tools used to fulfil the tasks.

Required reading:

Angrosino, M. (2005). *Projects in Ethnographic Research*. Illinois: Waveland Press, 23-31.

Arter, M. Wallace, N., and Shaffer, T. (2015). The Use of Reflective Journals to Stimulate Critical Thinking in the Academic Internship. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 27:1, 140-156. Retrieved from:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10511253.2015.1109132>

Chenail, R. (1997). "Keeping things plumb in qualitative research," *The Qualitative Report* 3(3). Retrieved from; <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-3/plumb.html>.

Sessions 2 and 3: Peer Review of ISP or Internship Proposal Drafts

These sessions will be devoted to peer review of ISP or Internship Proposal Drafts. Students will have shared their proposals before the session to enable well thought-out and pertinent comments.

After completing Modules 1-4, students will split into groups by ISP or internship. ISP students will take Module 5a, and internship students will take Module 5b. One or more sessions could be held together depending on the topic at hand.

Module 5a: ISP in the Context of Morocco

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

Session 1: Preparing for the ISP

This introductory session prepares the student for the ISP. The session covers a range of areas that include how to approach and develop rapport with research participants, how to work collaboratively with the ISP advisor, and logistics of the ISP period, including travel, materials, and timelines. Students will also review the ISP assessment rubric.

Session 2: Work-based Norms and Practices in Morocco

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to research in Morocco, exploring such issues as how best to describe the ISP to potential research participants and others, gender norms, issues of language, and expectations for behavior while conducting research.

Required Readings:

Hassi, A., Foutouh, N., & Ramid, S. (2015). Employee perception of diversity in Morocco: empirical insights. *Journal of Global Responsibility*, 6(1), 4-18.

National Council for Human Rights. (2016). Gender Equality and Parity in Morocco.

www.cndh.ma

Session 3: ISP Applied Methodology

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

Required Readings:

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, 28 – 42.

Module 5b: Internship in the Context of Morocco

This module prepares the student for the internship experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to internships in the Moroccan context. 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: The Ethics of Participating in an Internship in Morocco

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.

Required reading:

Nova Scotia Health Authority. (2016). Diversity Lens Toolkit.

Recommended reading:

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

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

Session 2: Description of the Host Institution

This session focuses on the general guidelines for the description of the host institution. The session walks the student through samples of a brief description (one page) of the host institution for the internship, the nature of the services offered, and a profile of the customers who use them. The session also highlights the importance of including brochures or collateral material that further describes the institution.

Required readings:

Mendez, D. (2014). Cultural Analysis Toolkit. The University of Texas at Austin; CIBER.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/Home/Centers/CIBER/~media/Files/MSB/Centers/CIBER/Promotional%20Resources/Cultural%20Analysis%20Toolkit.ashx>

Recommended reading:

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

Session 3: Work-based Norms and Practices in Morocco

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to internships and work in the Moroccan context 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:

Hassi, A., Foutouh, N., & Ramid, S. (2015). Employee perception of diversity in Morocco: empirical insights. *Journal of Global Responsibility*, 6(1), 4-18.

National Council for Human Rights. (2016). Gender Equality and Parity in Morocco.

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Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) Practice Interview (15%)

Students are asked to conduct a practice interview with one of the members of their host family. They are asked to write a small reflection (2-3 pages) about their role and attitude towards their research subjects and the skills they brought to the interview to establish an ethical and safe environment for the interviewee. Students are also encouraged to explore how

their own positionality along the lines of gender, sexuality, race, and class affected the set-up and wording of their questionnaire and consequently the outcome of the interview.

2) Participant Observation – Ethnographic Field Notes (15%)

Field research often involves participant-observation of a recurring event, a group of people, a repeated practice or habit, or a place. It requires grasping social action as it happens as well as diligent description and summary of your observations after the fact (“field notes”). The best participant-observers cultivate curiosity, attention to detail and pattern, a disciplined memory, and of course, openness to the unexpected. As with all of the best ethnographic field notes, your completed assignment should reflect your developing “ethnographic imagination”: your capacity to see the macro view (large-scale social forces) together with the micro view (interpersonal and individual forces). Be sure to re-read your initial observations with a careful and critical eye, being certain to include:

1. Detailed description of *external* actions and statements by your interlocutors (your “informants”) and other participants.
2. Detailed description of *internal* (subjective) perceptions, feelings, emotions, etc. of your interlocutors.
3. Explicit *observation and use* of your own sensations as participant-observer, and careful analysis of their relevance or irrelevance to the analysis.
4. *Informed description* of external social structures and forces (custom, hierarchy, gender/ethnicity norms, religious norms, law, migration, political repression, etc.) *either explicitly cited by your interlocutors, or which you theorize to be influencing the site/event/group/practice.*

3) Field Work Journal (20%)

Students are expected to keep a work journal where they will document thoroughly all the activities and assignments carried out during the course. This will also continue during the Independent Study Project or the Internship Period. The work journal is submitted for review and evaluation twice during the course of the semester.

4) Research or Internship Proposal (40%).

All students must develop a research or internship proposal. The research proposal should address a theme related to the program, include research question and objectives, theoretical framework, methodology, and comply with the ethical standards learned throughout the course. The research paper is a 20 – 40 pages paper. The internship paper is 15 -30 pages. It 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.

5) Participation (10%)

All students are expected to prepare for classes, attend and participate in all lectures, class discussions, field activities, and carry out all assignments and other activities prepared in the context of the Research Methods and Ethics course.

Assessment

- Practice Interview - 15%
- Participant Observation - 15%
- Field Work Journal - 20%
- Research/Internship Proposal - 40%
- Participation - 10%

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

Expectations and Policies

- Show up prepared. Be on time. Have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done according to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (those of classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits, etc.). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

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.