

Research Methods and Ethics ANTH-3500 (3 credits)

Switzerland: Banking, Finance and Social Responsibility

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 (RME) seminar gives an overview of major international players, international organizations / NGOs, transnational companies, and think-tanks in the field of ethical banking and sustainable finance in the Geneva Lake region and Switzerland. It introduces students to the conceptual and practical tools for gathering primary data by doing inter-active field research and interviews with local experts. The seminar enhances students' skills in analyzing primary data and writing an Independent Study Project (ISP) or Internship project proposal. The overall aim is to introduce students to experiential learning based on qualitative research methodology and learning in the natural setting. Students will gather data while interacting with local communities, businesses, public agencies or think tanks. Students doing internship will be exposed to the workflow of the local institution, start-up, or scientific organization.

While learning about Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) students gain an understanding of what the PPPs entail, their key principles, and how they differ from other types of partnerships. Students explore innovative financial tools and models, such as green bonds and impact investing, to fund sustainable PPP initiatives.

This seminar incorporates a study trip to Switzerland with visits to governmental agencies, enterprises, universities, and think-tanks in the field of ethical banking and sustainable finance. During the excursion, students will also learn about Swiss history, culture, and identity, and will visit museums such as the Einstein Museum in Bern.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Analyze and compare the process of primary data gathered in the field of sustainable finance by engaging into inter-active field research; do interviews on the finance industry, environment and technology and draw valid and ethical interpretations of the data and assessments on the subject matter;
- Assess how Public Private Partnerships may offer innovative policy solutions for current and future challenges of ethical banking and sustainable finance;

- Produce a Project Proposal seminar paper for the Independent Study Project (ISP) course in finance that is in strict observance of professional ethical, academic standards and local values. The Project Proposal includes a research question and tentative working hypothesis, a sample review of the relevant literature, outline of the research methods, and anticipates ethical challenges and ways of addressing them.
- Produce a Project Proposal seminar paper for the Internship in Finance course that includes a description of the host organization and their activities, an outline of the expected learning outcomes that students will gain from this experience, a proposed timetable, and write an academic paper;
- Present their ISP or Internship seminar paper in class and engage in discussion with their classmates and the program leadership on the results of their research.

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.

Required Texts

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming Qualitative Researchers* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson Education

Roncalli, Thierry. (2023). *Handbook of Sustainable Finance*. Paris: Thierry Roncalli.

<http://www.thierry-roncalli.com/download/HSF.pdf>

Miscellaneous Website for economics and management free books. Retrieved from: www.free-management-ebooks.com.

Assignments and Evaluation

Seminar papers will be graded on style and structure, depth of analysis, and synthesis of primary sources, secondary sources and media documents.

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

The Practice Interview Assignment (PIA), the Independent Study Project (ISP) Proposal or Internship Proposal, and Participation constitute the course requirements. In all exercises, students are asked to reflect critically and to integrate the briefings, lectures, readings, and field visits.

Practice Interview Assignment (PIA): Seminar Paper and Presentation (30%)

The PIA seminar paper project (1,500 words + bibliography / appendix) consists of four parts:

Part I:

Students conduct interviews -3 unstructured ('brainstorm') and/or semi-structured interviews ('open questions')- with the local population in Switzerland on their views and experience of the effects of the current health, financial, and energy crisis. Students use the qualitative research techniques to explore firsthand the effects of the crisis on the lives of ordinary citizens and households in Switzerland. Based on this exploration, students reflect on what could be a possible research focus.

Part II:

Students define a tentative research topic and formulate their research question(s). They decide what further sub-questions need to be discussed and draft a working hypothesis of their PIA in the form of research statement, series of questions, or combination of both. This represents the foundation of their seminar paper and start to write their manuscript.

Part III:

In their conclusion section, students reflect about their positionality to the local population in Switzerland experiencing the health, financial and energy crisis, and address the issue of ethics and social responsibility. They also consider how sustainable finance and social responsibility may offer a potential solution to these crises.

Part IV:

In their bibliography, students use APA style and reference primary sources, secondary sources, and media sources. In their appendix, they include interview transcripts, statistics, charts, and any other materials to support their seminar paper.

ISP Proposal: Seminar Paper and Presentation (60%)

Part I:

Students doing the ISP use the information offered during class to first explore the research topic such as: What are the main issues of the topic? What is the relevant literature? What

relevant theory, concept, model can be found? And based on this exploration: What could be a possible research question(s)?

Part II:

Students formulate their research question(s) in the form of a working hypothesis. They decide what sub-questions need to be answered and what methods are most effective to answer the sub-questions. Students hypothesize about their working hypothesis by using data and arguments from the primary and secondary sources. This represents the foundation of their future ISP.

Part III:

In their bibliography, students reference primary sources, secondary sources and media sources. They describe and analyze their selected sources and explain which other sources they may consider in their ISP. The bibliography should contain at least 10 references (a combination of primary and secondary sources, and media documents). The reading materials and documents should reflect their field of research and/or theoretical framework.

Part IV:

Final ISP Proposal seminar paper must be submitted with the application for Human Subjects Review.

Internship Proposal: Seminar Paper and Presentation (60%)

Part I:

Students who opt for an internship course explore the field in which they are interested to perform their interactive learning and research activity (ILRA), or the internship experience. Students start to make connections with institutions they would like to collaborate with as an intern; they send their applications and do interviews with their potential mentor. They can start working on their Internship Proposal once they have secured their internship placement.

Part II:

Students develop their Internship Proposal seminar paper by working on a first draft introduction, choosing a focal point as part of their interactive learning and research activity (ILRA). They look to answer the following questions: What are the main institutions in this sector locally? What are their main objectives and/or activities? Based on this exploration, they hypothesize what they could possibly contribute to this institution. Students further develop their Internship Proposal by looking at the institution's profile, mission, activities, and geographical outreach, and assess their partners and competitors.

Part III:

Students address the issue of methodology and hypothesize on information acquisition: What is the relevant literature? They also reflect on what they can learn from the activities of the institution, academically and professionally. Students reflect on the ethics and social responsibility of the performance of the institution and assess their impact within the local community.

Part IV:

Students include a theoretical framework for assessing the organization and its activities. They may use various tools to evaluate the success of that institution (such as SWOT). Students who do the internship must include in their seminar paper at least 10 reading materials (combination of primary and secondary sources, and media documents) reflecting the broader context in which their research is situated.

Part V:

The final Internship Proposal seminar paper must be submitted with the application for Human Subjects Review. Students should also complete and submit the Internship Convention and Three Parties Agreement stating tasks and goals of the internship, signed by the internship mentor, the student and the AD.

Participation (10%)

This 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, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.
- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; not keeping others waiting.
- Displaying Respect – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

Assessment

Practice Interview Assignment (PIA)	30%
ISP Proposal or Internship Proposal	60%
Participation	10%

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. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Course Communication: Course documents and assignments will be posted on the learning management system, Canvas or One Drive. Although the course calendar

provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be posted at the course site. You will need to check the course site regularly. You are responsible for letting me know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.

- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.
- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

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*

Each week this course covers major themes in a classroom seminar setting or through field visits, followed by a discussion session. Guided by SIT faculty, the discussion sessions are facilitated by students. Selected course readings for each module are available on the Canvas or OneDrive, and students should read them in advance and be prepared for each class session. Instructors' notes and slides are regularly uploaded on the Canvas or OneDrive. Beyond what is listed in the syllabus, supplemental articles are also distributed to students based on current events and relevancy, by the conference speakers, during the field visits, or by the program leadership.

Module 1: Research Methods and Ethics in the Context of Switzerland

This module introduces students to an understanding of the particularities of Swiss culture within the larger European historical, political, and economic context. Besides in-class lectures, students will have field visits and learn about the development of Geneva as a financial center and international hub of multilateral cooperation. Students learn through briefings about local business practices in Switzerland and especially in the Geneva Lake region bordering with France. The interactive field research approach based on experiential learning helps students to pursue an internship course or complete an ISP.

Session 1: Swiss History, Identity and Culture

This session presents Switzerland, its history, identity and culture from the time of the mythical William Tell until the modern age. The students are also introduced to the Swiss political and economic system including its federal system, stability of the financial system, multilingualism, and policy of neutrality and how they have evolved over time.

Required Text:

Culture Smart, & Hunter, K. (2021). *Switzerland - Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Kuperard.

Recommended Text:

The Swiss Confederation: A Brief Guide (2023). Bern: Federal Chancellery.

Session 2: Walking Tour and Lecture in the Geneva Old Town

This walking tour will take place in the old town of Geneva with visit to various landmarks from Medieval to 19th century periods with the special emphasis on Geneva's role in the Reformation, which contributed to the rise of Geneva as banking and financial hub.

Required Text:

Kuntz, Joëlle (2011). *Geneva and the Call of Internationalism: A History*. Editions Zoe, Carouge, Geneva, 11-44

Session 3: Walking Tour and Lecture on Geneva International

This walking tour will take place at the Place des Nations in front of the buildings of the UNHQ in Europe, the WIPO, the UNHCR, the ILO, and the WTO.

Required Text:

Kuntz, Joëlle (2011). *Geneva and the Call of Internationalism: A History*. Editions Zoe, Carouge, Geneva, 47-88

Session 4: Field Visits and Briefings of Geneva-based businesses, start-ups and NGOs

The thematic visits and briefings introduce students to local business practices, local and international hubs and institutions such as Fongit, Trust Village, Impact Hub, Globethics, International Brigdes to Justice, among others.

Required Readings:

Website of the institutions where students will get briefings (TBC, as they may change from semester to semester)

Module 2: Interactive Field Research and Interview Techniques

This module highlights the main elements of conducting a qualitative research project based on collecting data through interviews. Students learn how to formulate a tentative research question and build a working hypothesis by using primary and secondary sources, and media documents. They reflect on conducting research and collecting data in an ethical way and discuss ethical questions when doing research in ethical banking and sustainable finance.

Session 1: Doing Field Research in a Natural Setting

This session provides a comprehensive overview of field research techniques with a particular focus on multidisciplinary research in an international setting of Geneva and trans-border context between Switzerland and France. The focus is on qualitative research methodology and interview techniques in the Geneva Lake region.

Required Text:

Glesne, C. (2006). "Pre-study tasks: Doing what is good for you". *Becoming Qualitative Researchers (3rd Ed.)*. (pp. 21-36). Pearson Education, Inc.

Recommended Texts:

Sustainable finance in Switzerland: Areas for action for a leading sustainable financial centre, 2022–2025 (2023). Bern: Federal Council.

AI and sustainable development (2023). Digital Watch. Geneva: Diplofoundation.

Retrieved from: <https://dig.watch/topics/sustainable-development#ai-and-sustainable-development>

Session 2: The Ethics of Fieldwork

The session provides an introduction to ethical considerations in research and responsibility to human subjects participating in the research. Students discuss the SIT's policy on the research in a natural setting and completing a Human Subjects Review (HSR).

Required Texts:

Blokdyk, Gerardus (2022). *Ethical Banking Complete Self-Assessment Guide*. 5STARCOoks.

AI and sustainable development. Digital Watch; Diplofoundation . Retrieved October 25, 2023, from <https://dig.watch/topics/sustainable-development#ai-and-sustainable-development>

Recommended Texts:

Cevik, Serhan & Jalles, João Tovar (2020). *This Changes Everything: Climate Shocks and Sovereign Bonds*. IMF Working Paper 20 (79). International Monetary Fund.

Bolt-Lee, C. and Moody, J. (2010). Highlights of Finance and Accounting Ethics Research. <http://www.journalofaccountancy.com/Issues/2010/Oct/20102896.htm>

Session 3: Introduction to the ISP and Internship: Student Positionality and Ethics

This session describes the ISP and Internship processes and helps students brainstorm ideas and set goals for their ISP or Internship. It emphasizes the element of student positionality and ethics during the ISP/Internship activity. The session includes a review and critique of past ISP/Internship papers. Under the guidance of Academic Director, students identify an ISP advisor or secure an internship placement. Group and individual meetings are scheduled with the Academic Director / Academic Advisor to discuss preliminary ISP/Internship questions, concerns and ideas.

Required Text:

Gary, Andrew & Holmes, Darwin (2020). Researcher Positionality – A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research - A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, vol. 8, no. 4. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1268044.pdf>

Recommended Text:

Stitham, Kate. (2022). *How Bias Influences Perception: Three Lenses of Positionality*. Integrative Inquiry. Retrieved from: <https://www.integrativeinquiryllc.com/post/how-bias-influences-perception-three-lenses>

Module 3: Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in Sustainable Finance - Bridging the Collaboration Gap

Explore the dynamic realm of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and their pivotal role in shaping the future of infrastructure development, public services, and economic growth. In this module, we delve into the multifaceted world of PPPs, where the public and private sectors converge to create innovative solutions to pressing societal challenges with the emphasis on social responsibility and sustainable finance.

Session 1: PPPs and Innovative Technologies

This session explores multistakeholder coalitions between governments, the private sector and civil society as a tool for promoting the circular economy and sustainable development.

Required Text:

Vassileva, A. (2022). Green Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as an Instrument for Sustainable Development. *Journal of World Economy: Transformations & Transitions*, 2(5). <https://doi.org/10.52459/jowett25221122>

Recommended Text:

AI and Sustainable Development (2023). *Digital Watch*. Geneva: Diplofoundation. Retrieved from: <https://dig.watch/topics/sustainable-development#ai-and-sustainable-development>

Module 4: Quantitative Research Methods in Finance

This module focuses on the application of statistical methods and models representing the performance of financial assets and portfolios in businesses. Students will learn to calculate loans and interest rates by using Excel. This is a practical module which consist of series of exercises and will help students to perform in ISP / Internship in finance assignments.

Session 1: Econometrics and the Modelling of Financial Data

Students will discuss different models of exponential growth.

Required Text:

Brown, R., Zima, P. (2011). "Compound Interest and Compound Discount", *Mathematics of Finance*. McGraw-Hill Education, 173-192.

Session 2: Calculation of Loans in Conventional Banks

This is a practical session which consist of series of exercises to calculate loans by using Excel.

Required Text:

Brown, R., Zima, P. (2011). "Amortization and Sinking Funds", Mathematics of Finance. McGraw-Hill Education, 124-152.

Session 3: Calculation of Loans in Islamic Financing Institutions

In this session students will learn to calculate loans in Islamic financial institutions by using Excel and compare them to the calculation of loans in conventional banks.

Required Text:

Hassan, M. K., Kayed, R.N., Oseni, U.A. (2013). "Financial Instruments of Islamic Banking" Introduction to Islamic Banking and Finance. Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 76-98.

Module 5: Review and Wrap-up of the Seminar

The module provides an overview of the main issues addressed in this course. The discussion will be framed around key reflection questions that have been approached either through guest speakers' presentations, field visits, or assigned readings.

After completing Modules 1-5, students split into groups by ISP or Internship; ISP students will take Module 6a and Internship students will take Module 6b.

Module 6a: Independent Study Project (ISP) in the Context of Switzerland

The module prepares the student for the ISP experience. They examine work-based norms and practices related to conducting research in Switzerland. Attention is also given to the importance of applied methodology in the ISP experience and the expectations and responsibilities of the student.

Session 1: ISP Proposal Presentation

This session takes place after the students have decided upon their ISP topic and formulated a tentative research question. Students are asked to pitch their research for their fellow students and our guest speakers. The aim is to improve the ISP Proposal and to explore resources (literature, relevant networks, organizations, and key individuals).

Session 2: Writing your ISP

In this session we will look at the various elements of a research paper and go over the ISP Rubric. The workshop focuses on the complex relationship between the process of conducting research and the writing process.

Required Text:

Bell, Judith. (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.

Session 3: Project Proposal Development: Guidelines and Requirements

Based on learning and engagement in the preceding course modules, this session focuses on ISP Proposal development. The focus is on structure and requirements, the research question, introduction, and the approval process. Students also learn about the roles and responsibilities of ISP advisors, documentation of data, and review ISP Proposals from past semesters. Please come to class prepared having read the ISP Proposal three stages requirements.

Required Text:

Flick, Uwe. (2009) Chapter 22. In An introduction to qualitative research (4th Edition). (pp. 293-304). Sage.

Module 6b: Internship in the Context of Switzerland

The module prepares the student for the internship experience. Attention is given to 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 Switzerland. The session covers a range of areas that include résumé and cover letter preparation, appropriate dress, student objectives for the internship, and stages of student growth in the internship. Students will review the internship rubric.

Required Text:

Switzer, H. Frederick. and King, Mary A. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning* (4th Edition). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, (chapters 2 and 3), 31-84

Session 2: Work-based Norms and Practices in Switzerland

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

McLean, C. (2012). *Etiquette in Switzerland: tips and pitfalls*. Thelocal.ch; The Local.

<https://www.thelocal.ch/20120725/3726>

Panozzo, C. (2016, February 1). *Living in Switzerland ruined me for America and its lousy work culture*. Vox; Vox Media. <http://www.vox.com/2015/7/21/8974435/switzerland-work-life-balance>

Recommended Text:

Expatriate Focus. (2018). *How to Integrate into Life in Switzerland*. Expatriate Focus.
<https://www.expatriatefocus.com/podcast/how-to-integrate-into-life-in-switzerland-5395/>