

Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH-3500 (3 credits)

Australia: Sustainability and Environmental Action

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

Research Methods and Ethics (RME) provides conceptual preparation and skill development for all other program components. Beginning with sessions during orientation week, and continuing throughout the semester, Research Methods and Ethics provides the skills and fosters the ability to observe, interpret, and appropriately function within the Australian environment. This is initially done through a series of discussions designed to break down stereotypes and sensitize students to the values assigned to behaviors and customs based on each individual's cultural heritage. Later, lectures, projects and discussions will focus on various methods of field research to prepare students for the Independent Study Project (ISP) or Internship. Most classes are taken by both ISP and Internship students but as the course progresses some classes focus on just one stream.

The Course is divided into five modules:

1. Cultural Comparison
2. Introduction to the Independent Study Project/Internship
3. Research Methods & Ethics
4. Developing a Proposal
5. Writing a research /internship paper

Learning Outcomes

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

- Recognize a wide range of field study methods and their appropriate uses;
- Compare Australian and North American cultures;
- Apply an appropriate selection of research methods to a specific topic;
- Employ cultural sensitivity and an appropriate ethical stance in field study / internship;
- Appraise previous research and literature on a topic of interest and reference it appropriately;
- Design an independent study project or organize an internship and write a project proposal;

- Demonstrate increased confidence to engage with another culture.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English.

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

See course schedule for a full listing. Additional readings and articles as assigned.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) ISP/Internship Proposals (35%)

Includes development of topic ideas, methods, written proposal and learning agreement.

2) Exercises in research methods (20%)

Choose 2 of the following options:

- Intensive Interviewing Exercise
- Content Analysis Exercise
- Observation Exercise
- Survey Exercise

3) Work Journal (15%)

4) Participation (10%)

The objective of this element of assessment is to give students credit for the ability and the effort made to independently undertake the Study Project in an ethical and culturally

appropriate manner, and the effort made to engage Australian culture throughout the semester. Students will be graded based on what the AD has observed, what has been reported by the ISP advisor and homestay family, and the evidence contained in the ISP journal and report. The following will be considered in determining the grade:

- Did you take steps to engage Australian culture away from the group?
- Did you make the most of the opportunities for cultural immersion offered by your homestay?
- To what extent did you use initiative in developing an ISP topic / Internship and establishing contacts in a timely manner?
- Did you maintain an appropriate attitude throughout the process (e.g. did you accept the limitations placed by SIT on ISP topics / Internships? Did you deal well with adversity during the ISP/Internship process? Did you display cultural sensitivity when necessary? Did you follow the ethics guidelines?)
- Did you turn up on time for all classes and ISP/Internship appointments?
- Did you fill out the ethics and contact forms correctly and submit them on time?
- Did you put the appropriate amount of effort into the ISP/ Internship?
- Did you put the interests of the people studied and worked with before your own and give proper acknowledgement and thanks to all who helped? Did you provide the organization you worked with a copy of the paper and any data needed from the ISP/Internship?
- Did you keep the required contact with program staff during the ISP/Internship, submit all information on time and keep them informed of your whereabouts?
- Did you fulfill your obligations to your SIT advisor?

5) Open-book exam (15%)

6) Reflection on the ISP/Internship process (5%)

Assessment

1. ISP/Internship Proposals

Topic ideas	5%.
Topic and Methods	10%
ISP Proposal/Internship Learning Agreement	20%

2. Choose 2 of the following 4 exercises in research methods: 20%

- 2a. Intensive Interviewing Exercise
- 2b. Content Analysis Exercise
- 2c. Observation Exercise
- 2d. Survey Exercise

3. Work Journal	15%
4. Participation	10%
5. Open-book Exam	15%
6. Reflection on the ISP / Internship process	5%

Attendance and Participation

You are expected to attend and fully participate in all class sessions. You must submit all assigned work to get a passing grade. You must get a grade of D or above for each assignment in order to get a passing grade for the class. You should familiarize yourself with the policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process that are contained in the SIT Study Abroad Student Handbook. Breaches of academic integrity such as cheating and deliberate plagiarism will result in severe penalties. Assignments must be properly referenced using the APA system.

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.

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*

Week 1: Cultural comparisons (5 hours)

Discussions: How to minimize environmental and social impact while studying in Australia
Cultural stereotypes and expectations of Australians
Australians' stereotypes and expectations of Americans

Lectures: Preparing for homestays: expectations and cultural practices in Australian homes

Required Reading:

Howitt, R. & Stevens, S. (2005). Cross-cultural research: Ethics, methods, and relationships. Chapter 3 in I. Hay (Ed.), *Qualitative research methods in Human Geography*.

Week 2: Preparing for the ISP / Internship (10 hours)

Lectures: What is an ISP or Internship?
Expectations of Advisors and Internship Supervisors
Keeping a Work Journal
Developing ISP topics / Organizing and applying for an internship
Social Science report writing
APA referencing and plagiarism

Required Readings:

- Rogers, Z. & Bragg, E. (2012). The power of connection: Sustainable lifestyles and sense of place. *Ecopsychology*, 4 (4), 307-318. doi: 10.1089/eco.2012.0079
- Hay, I. (2002). Referencing and Language Matters. In I. Hay (Ed.) *Communicating in Geography and the Environmental Sciences*. Second Edition. Pp195-200. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Switzer, Frederick and King, Mary (2013) *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole (chapters 2 and 3)

Week 3: Research methods (12 hours)

- Lectures:
- Introduction to research methods
 - The Interview Process
 - Sampling a Population
 - Developing and conducting a survey
 - Indirect and Observational Methods of Data Collection
 - Participant Observation
 - Content Analysis
 - Analyzing and displaying data

Discussion: Homestay: Cultural differences, sense of place, environmental ethics

Required Readings:

- McGuirk, P. & Stevens, S. (2005). Using questionnaires in qualitative Human Geography. Chapter 10, in Iain Hay, (Ed.), *Qualitative research methods in Human Geography*. Second Edition. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- True, J. (1989). Indirect and observational methods of data collection. Chapter 5 in J. True, *Finding Out: Conducting and evaluating social research*. Second Edition. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Hay, Iain. (2002). Communicating with figures and tables. Chapter 6 in Iain Hay, *Communicating in Geography and the Environmental Sciences*. Second Edition. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Lockie, S. (2006). Capturing the sustainability agenda: Organic foods and media discourses on food scares, environment, genetic engineering, and health. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 23, 313–323. DOI 10.1007/s10460-006-9007-3

Week 4: Research ethics and techniques (6 hours)

- Lectures:
- Research Ethics
 - Library Skills
 - Writing a good title

Week 8: Writing a Proposal (5 hours)

- Lectures:
- Proposal Writing
 - Reviewing the Literature
 - Referencing

Week 9: Presenting Research (5 hours)

Lectures: Writing an Abstract
Report Writing
Giving an Oral Presentation

Required Reading:

Hay, Iain. (2002). Preparing and giving a talk. Chapter 8 in Iain Hay, *Communicating in Geography and the Environmental Sciences*. Second Edition. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Exam

Week 15: Cultural Reflection (2 hours)

Discussion: What have we learnt about culture, the USA, and us?