Research Methods & Ethics
ANTH-3500 (3 credits)

Samoa: Social and Environmental Change in Oceania

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 (FME) course helps students to learn effectively in a non-traditional, cross-cultural environment, and develops specific field study techniques that will be necessary for students to complete their Independent Study Projects. Students participate in a series of discussions and exercises designed to break down stereotypes and sensitize them to the values they assign to behaviours or customs based on their cultural heritage. Emphasis is placed on grappling with cultural differences and on recording, interpreting, and analysing information from primary sources. Written assignments include a journal of observations on cultural mores and use of a work journal during the Independent Study Project period.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
- Become aware of experience-based learning processes outside an institutional structure, and to develop confidence and initiative in learning from experience;
- Develop knowledge of the ethical dimensions of working with human subjects and to design a research project that is ethically sound and culturally sensitive;
- Gain skills in various methods of field study, including participant observation, ethnographic interviewing, note-taking and transcription, keeping a field journal, and to learn how to develop a thorough research proposal;
- Apply Samoan language skills, increasing information from the Seminar, and information from other sources to extend and deepen interest, knowledge and integration in Samoa and other Pacific Island communities.
- Select an ISP topic and methodology that are realistic within the constraints of time and resources, appropriate, and that will yield an interesting and academically rigorous project beneficial to the community and/or organization studied;
- Learn to work with primary sources in the field, such as material gained through observation and interviews, and to learn to work with a foreign language, interpreters, and informants.

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 social and environmental change through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

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

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria
The Academic Director will evaluate students based on their participation in course activities, completion of course exercises and required readings, and the appropriate use of methodology in the Independent Study Project as documented in their work journal and presented in the ISP paper.

1) D-I-E essay writing (40%)
Write four short essays. They are due in weeks 2, 3, 5 & 6. Each essay is 1000 words and is worth 10%. The essays are reflections of excursions, outings, and family stays. These essays in a description-interpretation-evaluation format will assist in processing observations or experiences and link experiences to personal learning. You will also develop skills in recording field data. Your essay should indicate a cultural learning moment. Essays could also describe confusing or challenging cultural situations that allow for a variety of interpretations and reactions. The short essays could describe a situation or series of them that caused a shift in your understanding of Samoa. It may be a positive or negative experience but one that made you re-examine your own behavior and beliefs. Essays that are only descriptive are not acceptable. They should be more than two pages long.

> Four short essays should follow the D.I.E. format and be written in separate sections:
> Description: Objectively describe the event with relevant details. These are the "findings" in a research paper. What happened? What was said? What did you see?

Interpretation: Bring in your hypothesis, interpretations, generalizations, comparisons and what you learned or wish to investigate further. This is the "discussions" section of a paper.

Evaluation: Discuss your value judgments and feelings. You may want to engage critically with the experience and what you have learned from a difficult experience. Think of this as your personal "conclusions" section. Each short essay should end with a brief comment about what you learned from the event how it might affect your behavior in the future. DIE short essays will be collected and commented upon four times during the semester.

2) Group Presentations (30%)
In week 3, meet as a group and agree on a topic of interest. Conduct research on this topic and in week 10 present a 35-minute group presentation outlining the following:
- The major question framing your research and a background of your topic
- Limitations and challenges during the research
- 5 scholarly articles and summary of how they relate to your topic
- Findings from at least 3 interviews – use different types of interview methods
- Findings from participant observation
- Findings from statistical data relating to an aspect of your topic
- Photographs
- Maps
- Conclusions based on your primary and secondary data

THERE IS NO WRITTEN PAPER FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

You will be assessed on the group presentation and the Q & A discussion only.
Hand in the presentation for assessment. The group presentation is to be 20-minutes long and each group member must present an aspect of the project. Q & A is for 15 minutes.

3) ISP proposal (30%)
Submit an ISP proposal that clearly outlines what you plan to study and how you plan to conduct your ISP. Your proposal and the Application of Human Subjects Review form should be submitted electronically on or before the due date.

ISP PROPOSAL GUIDELINES:

A research proposal is a written document that convinces others that you have a worthwhile research project, and that you have the knowledge and skills to complete it. It describes what you plan to do, why you want to do it and how you are going to do it.

Your ISP proposal should contain the following:

I. TITLE:
A brief, precise phrase that captures the main emphasis of the research

II. INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS:

Describe what you propose to study and state your research question.
- Briefly explain what you hope to accomplish: The goal of this study is to …..
- Explain how your study relates to larger issues, why it is important/ relevant and who will benefit from your study.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW:
Discuss books, articles, or other information you have about the topic.

IV. METHODOLOGY:
Describe what you will do to answer your main research questions. Include the following:
- Methodology: A statement of methods you will use
- Procedures and time frames: when and where you will conduct your study
- Data collection: How you will collect your data
- Sampling: Describe the participants in your study
- Advisor: State under whose guidance you will study

V. EXPECTED OUTCOMES:
State your research questions and what you expect to get out of the research. Explain why you are interested in the study.

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY:
List all the relevant sources you have that will be helpful. These should include secondary and internet sources and any primary contacts you may have. The bibliography should use APA format.

VII.   APPENDICES:

A. SIT HUMAN SUBJECT REVIEW FORM (electronic)

B. SURVEY INSTRUMENT to be used

C. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

D. LOGISTICS:
Describe your logistics for the ISP period considering your safety and any needs you may have:
- proposed overnight travel away from USP & travel arrangements (bus, ferry)
- need for letters re research in Education, Health or other agency
- proposed accommodation outside of USP
- your phone contact and/or contact names and numbers

E. CONTACT INFORMATION

<u>Assessment</u>
  Four D-I-E essays worth 10% each – 40%
  Group Presentations – 30%
  ISP Proposal and Human Subjects Review – 30%

<u>Attendance and Participation</u>
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.

<u>Late Assignments</u>
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.

<u>Grading Scale</u>
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.
- 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

Module I: Cultural Adjustment: Challenges and Coping Strategies

Readings:
K. Oberg, (2006). "Cultural Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environment" in Practical
　　　　Anthropology, 7: 177-182.
L. Robert Kohls, (1984). From Survival Kit for Overseas Living, 2nd ed., Intercultural press.

Module II: Exploring and Examining The Dominant Research Paradigms

Readings:
Baba, T., Williams, N., & Nabobo-Baba, U. (2004). Researching Pacific and Indigenous
　　　　peoples: issues and perspectives. Auckland: University of Auckland Centre for Pacific
　　　　Studies.
Nabobo-Baba, U. (2008). Decolonising Framings in Pacific Research: Indigenous Fijian Vanua
　　　　Research Framework as an Organic Response. Alternative, 4(2), 141-154.
Smith, L. T. (1999). Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. New
　　　　York: Zed Books.

Module III: Participant Observation and Thick Description

Readings:
Bernard, H. R. (2006). Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative
　　　　Approaches 4 th ed. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. Chapter 7: —Participant
　　　　Observation.
O'Donoghue, T. (2006). Planning Your Qualitative Research Project: An Introduction to
　　　　Interpretivist Research in Education, Taylor and Francis. Chapter 1-4 and Chapter 7.

Module IV: Interviewing and conducting focus groups discussions

Readings:
Thaman, K. (2008). Nurturing Relationships and Honouring Responsibilities. International
　　　　Reviews of Education, 54(3-4), 459-473.
Farrelly, T., & Nabobo-Baba, U. (2012). Talanoa as Empathic Research. Paper presented at
　　　　the The International Development Conference, Auckland, 3-5 December 2012.
　　　　http://www.devnet.org.nz

Module V: Constructing data collection tools, collecting and managing data

Readings:
Yin, R. (2015). Qualitative Research from Start to Finish, 2nd ed., New York: Guilford (read
　　　　Chapter 2 pp 27-52, "Getting Ready to Do Qualitative Research").
Riessman, C. (2010) in "Doing Narrative Analysis" in Atkinson, P etal. Qualitative Research
　　　　Methods, London: Sage pp 201-211 (Chapter 52).

Module VI: ISP Design and Planning
Readings:

Readings:
Kumar, R. (2011). Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners, 3rd ed. London: Sage Chapter 4.
Vaioleti, T. M. (2006). Talanoa Research Methodology: A Developing Position on Pacific Research. Waikato Journal of Education, 12, 21-33.

Module VII: Research ethics and ethical challenges

Readings:
Bennett, J., Brunton, M., Bryant-Tokalau, J., Sopoaga, F., Weaver, N., & Witte, G. (2013). Pacific Research Protocols from the University of Otago. Contemporary Pacific, 25(1), 95-124.

Module VIII: Conducting Field Work and Writing the ISP

Readings:
Yin, R. (2015). Qualitative Research from Start to Finish, 2nd ed., New York: Guilford (read Chapter 2 Part II pp 118-135, "Working in the Field").
Fine, G.A. (2010). "Ten Lies of Ethnography: Moral Dilemmas of Field Research" in Atkinson, P etal. Qualitative Research Methods, London: Sage pp 251-271(Chapter 33).