

Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH-3500 (3 credits)

Portugal: Communications & Media

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 explores qualitative and arts-based research methodologies as well as the ethical considerations that guide researchers, journalists, and multimedia content creators. The course touches on the growing field of research-creation, which arises from the intersection of art, theory, and academic inquiry. Students gain the knowledge and skills essential to forming constructive and ethical relationships with creative collaborators, co-researchers, and organizations so that they can successfully complete an Independent Study Project in Portugal. Through readings and discussions, students interrogate their own values and biases to consider in the variety of ways in which artistic and research ideas are represented, related to, and reproduced in various contexts.

The course surveys a variety of arts- and multimedia-based methods, tools, and methodologies to help students identify approaches that align with their research interests, creative ideas, and personal values to develop a research proposal for the Independent Study Project course. To do this, the seminar uses activities, lectures, readings, and field assignments to prepare students to undertake projects in the cultural context of Portugal in strict observance of research procedures involving human subjects and the regulatory ethical norms defined by the Study Abroad Review Board (SARB) and SIT's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The overall aim is to support students with SIT's experience-based learning process and prepare them for the Independent Study Project (ISP) which draws from these creative methods of knowledge and content production.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Demonstrate awareness of impacts of positionality and subjectivity on the study they undertake;
- Operate independently, using cultural sensitivity in collaboration with local networks of trust built over the course of the semester;

- Design research or research-creation projects that integrate a variety of media, methods, and approaches to data generation, data analysis and interpretation, and/or representation of data;
- Code, analyze, and integrate data and content from multiple data sources in the field and draw valid and ethical interpretations and conclusions;
- Produce a multimedia or research-based project proposal that is in strict observance of ethical and academic standards and local values.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to Portuguese vocabulary related to course content 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 **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

Description of Assignments:

1) Practice Interview (20%)

Students will conduct a practice interview with a community member, program affiliate, or local student in a medium of their choosing, such as an audio podcast, video interview, photovoice, traditional interview, or other creative approaches. Regardless of the medium of choice, all assignments should be accompanied by a short (2-page) reflection about their role and attitude towards their research subjects, the skills they brought to the interview to establish an ethical and safe environment for the interviewee, and the relative advantages and limitations of the

method they utilized. Students are also encouraged to explore how their own positionality along the lines of gender, sexuality, race, and class affected the set-up and approach to the interview, and consequently the outcome of the interview.

2) Methods and Methodologies Presentations (25%)

During the semester students will be studying and practicing different research methods, methodologies, and approaches to content creation that they will use during the ISP. This exercise is designed for students to explore a method, methodology, or way of representing research to deepen their knowledge in an area of interest. (Examples include, but are not limited to, narrative inquiry, counterstory, a/r/tographic approaches, digital storytelling, soundwalks and walking methodologies, cartography, comics-based research, ethnographic film, documentary, phenomenology, audio essays, etc.). Students may work individually, in pairs or in small groups to design a 20-minute presentation or experiential learning activity on their topic for their classmates.

3) In Progress Literature Review (10%)

In this assignment, students will begin to explore literature on a developing ISP idea. Students should select at least three sources, which may include peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, films, or other online resources and publications. Your literature review should include both a reference list, as well as a 2-page write-up where you discuss the literature review; any trends, topics, discussions, or debates that seem to be arising from the batch of literature surveyed; and how you plan to use or build on this literature in your ISP. The literature review is not a place to explore your methods and methodologies, but rather a space to explore current trends, issues, and academic discourses that may be relevant to your topic of study. While students may plan to work in small groups for the ISP, each student must separately submit a literature review with unique sources from their collaborators.

4) ISP Proposal (35%)

All students must develop a 5-page proposal for a research paper or multimedia story project. The proposal should include research question and objectives, theoretical framework/literature review (which should be a revision and expansion of the previous assignment), methods/methodology, and comply with the ethical standards learned throughout the course. Students will work directly with the AD and/or ISP advisor on the development of the proposal, which will vary depending on the nature of the project. Students may choose to work independently, in pairs, or small groups on the ISP, and collaborative ISP proposals should reflect the added rigor and project ambitions that larger teams can bring to bear on projects.

5) 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 – 20%
 Methods and Methodologies Presentation – 25%
 In Progress Literature Review – 10%
 ISP Proposal – 35%
 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, 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 you 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

**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*

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

This introductory module is designed to introduce students to research in an intercultural context. Students learn how to use the creative arts and media creation processes as possibilities for relating to their surroundings and host culture. More particularly, this module allows students to discover the power of experiential learning as a tool for reflecting on researcher rapport and positionality in relation to the local communities in which they engage their research.

Sessions may include:

- Cultural adjustment cycle
- Introduction to research and multimedia storytelling in an intercultural context
- Experiential learning philosophy and the politics of culture in Portugal
- Positionality and outsider/insider research

Required Readings:

Barone, T., & Eisner, E. (2012) What is and what is not arts-based research (chapter 1).
In *Arts based research*. Sage.

Pink, Sarah. (2015/2009). Situating sensory ethnography: From academia to ethnography (chapter 1). In *Doing sensory ethnography (2nd edition)*. Sage

Recommended Reading:

Glesne, Corrine. (2021). Field relations: Researcher roles, rapport, and reflexivity (chapter 5).
In *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction (5th edition)*. Pearson.

Module 2: Introduction to the ISP

This module will describe the ISP processes and help students brainstorm ideas and set goals for their ISP. The module will also introduce students to the SIT Study Abroad Review Board (SARB) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and the application for Human Subjects Review (HSR application). The final session of this module will focus on traditional research-based, journalistic, and decolonial interview methods to help students develop a basic understanding of interview techniques in advance of their first assignment.

Sessions may include:

- Introduction to the SIT Study Abroad Review Board (SARB)/Institutional Review Board (IRB) Process and Human Subjects Review Application
- Defining and discussing vulnerable research populations; ethical considerations in research with refugees
- Research-based, journalistic, and decolonial interview approaches and interview question design

Required Readings:

Chilisa, B. (2011). Decolonizing the interview method (chapter 7). In *Indigenous Research Methods*. Sage. (pp. 202-224).

Miranda, J., & Camponez, C. (2022). Accountability and transparency of journalism at the organizational level: News media editorial statutes in Portugal. *Journalism Practice* 17(9), 1-21.

Recommended Readings:

Mencher, M. (2011). Interviewing principles and practices (chapter 15). In *Melvin Mencher's News Reporting and Writing* (12th ed). McGraw-Hill). (pp. 293-320).

Sindicato do Jornalistas. (2017, January). *Code of ethics*.

<https://jornalistas.eu/deontologico/codigo-deontologico/>

Assignment: Practice Interview (20%)

Module 3: Methods of Arts-Based Research and Multimedia Storytelling

This module introduces tools and methods required for conducting research and multimedia storytelling projects in Portugal, with an emphasis on the arts-based research practices. The module also addresses the ethics of research in data collection and interpretation in the fields of journalism and social research. In this module, students undertake an assignment where they choose a method or methodology of interest, and review at least two select articles or book chapters to prepare a presentation on their topic for the class (some possible readings are included below but students are encouraged to depart from this list to complete their assignment). By the end of this module, students should have a basic understanding of a variety of qualitative and multimethod approaches to consider when pursuing their ISP. Possible presentation topics include methodologies such as ethnography, ethnographic film, phenomenology, case-study, mixed methods research, narrative inquiry, counterstory, participatory action research, arts-based research; or methods such as interviewing, focus groups, participant observation, surveys, etc.

Sessions may include:

- Arts-based research methods and ethics; journalistic ethics
- Selecting topics, formulating research questions, and conducting a literature review
- Controversies and challenges surrounding arts-based research
- Multimedia data collection
- Data organization, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation

Required Readings:

Barone, T., & Eisner, E. (2012) Why do arts-based research? In *Arts based research*. Sage. (Chapter 2).

Gershon, W. (2018). Reverberations and reverb: Sound possibilities for narrative, creativity, and critique. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 26(10), 1-11.

Recommended Reading:

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2013). Five qualitative approaches to inquiry (chapter 4). In *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (3rd ed.)*. Sage.

Possible Additional Readings for Method/Methodology Review Assignment:

Bazeley, P. (2018). "Mixed methods in my bones": Transcending the qualitative-quantitative divide. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches* 10(1), 334-341.

Clark/Keefe, K. (2020). Becoming backpack: Towards a counter-inscription of young adult collegian identity work. *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal* 5(1), 158-179.

Lam, S. S. (2019). Multi-layered identities by social media and presumption practices in digital and participatory communication. *Journal of Digital Media & Interaction*, 2(3), 7-22.

Sousanis, N. (2015). *Unflattening*. Harvard University Press.

Truman, S., & Ben Shannon, D. (2018). Queer sonic cultures: An affective walking-composing project. *Capacious: Journal for Emerging Affect Inquiry* 1(3), 58-77.

Vasconcelos, F. P. (2020). Drawing at visual art's teachers' education: Reflections from Designare. *Revista Educação, Artes e Inclusão*, 16(2), 7-25.

Assignment: Methods and Methodologies Presentations (25%)

Module 4: Literature Review and Project Proposal Development

Based on learning and engagement in the preceding course modules, this module focuses on ISP proposal development through the crafting of a research question, creation of an in-progress literature review, and submission 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.

Sessions may include:

- What is a literature review?
- Honing your research question and details of the ISP Proposal
- Peer review of ISP proposal drafts

- Writing the HSR Application
- ISP proposal presentation to peers and roundtable discussion

Required Reading:

Pink, Sarah. (2015/2009). Preparing for sensory research: Practical and orientation issues (chapter 3). In *Doing sensory ethnography (2nd edition)*. Sage.

Additional Readings:

Self-select at least three additional readings for your Literature Review.

Assignment: In Progress Literature Review (10%)

Module 5: ISP in the Context of Portugal

This module prepares the student for the ISP experience. It examines work-based norms and practices related to conducting research or journalistic endeavors in Portugal. 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: Research Norms and Practices in Portugal

This session explores work-based norms and practices related to research in Portugal 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.

Session 3: ISP Applied Methodology

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

Required Reading:

Bell, J. (2010). Chapter 6. In *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers* (5th edition). McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2006). *Designing qualitative research* (4th edition). Sage. (Chapter 1).

Recommended Readings:

Flick, U. (2023). Ethics of doing qualitative research (chapter 9). In *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. SAGE

Kara, H. (2015). *Creative Research Methods in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide*. Policy Press.

White, P. (2009). *Developing Research Questions: A Guide for Social Scientists*. Palgrave

Macmillan.

Assignment: ISP Proposal (35%)