

Global Health Research Methods and Ethics RSCH-3500 (3 credits)

Kenya: Global Health and Human Rights

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 Global Health Research Methods and Ethics course serves three main interrelated objectives. First, the course equips students with a toolkit for exploring their own positionality as a public health researcher in the Kenyan cultural context. Second, the course equips students with knowledge and skills for gathering primary data in Kenya and on documenting, interpreting, and analyzing this data. Ethics are a third focus of the course, with special attention devoted to relational ethics and culture, and the processes of human subject review, especially in health care settings. These three objectives are essential to successfully completing the Independent Study Project (ISP).

A central aspect of that runs through the course also lies in equipping students with a consciousness and a sensitivity to non-western epistemologies and in being open minded about non-local and localized approaches to knowledge production or what constitutes valid knowledge, and the processes through which research questions are posed, why, what and whom they represent. Students work with the academic director (AD) and local experts to develop feasible research questions related to health and human rights in the Kenyan context, to formulate appropriate methods based on the research questions, and to design an initial proposal to address a selected health issue in Kisumu County. Emphasis is placed on ways of navigating and interpreting cultural difference. Field assignments provide students with opportunities to practice cross-cultural communication approaches and develop new skills in preparation for gathering primary data in Kenya. The fieldwork skills, navigating ethical concerns, and cross-cultural methodological training gained from this course should prove particularly useful for students who plan to pursue a career in public health and other medical fields.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Identify appropriate data collection methods to answer research questions in the critical global issue of global health;

- Engage with questions of positionality, power, cultural context, and subjectivity in the research process;
- Utilize analytical skills while gathering primary data, including qualitative and quantitative data;
- Implement rigorous and ethical frameworks for collecting data and developing interpretations and conclusions;
- Develop an Independent Study Project proposal that complies with ethical research standards and local values and norms.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English by the Academic Director complemented by Kenyan experts and by assigned readings and discussions.

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

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai (2021). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London : Dunedin, N.Z.: Zed Books ; University of Otago Press. Third Edition.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

ISP Ideas Paper

For this assignment students will submit a short write up of no more than 500 words that describes three ISP areas of interest and potential research questions. The write up could also include any concerns or questions that the student is having at this point about ISP.

CITI Training

Complete online IRB training through CITI programs. This training addresses human subjects research protocols and ethical considerations essential for conducting ethical research. You can find a FAQ for students which includes guidelines on how to access the training at this link: [CITI - FAQ Doc for SIT students.docx](#).

Practicing Interviewing

This paper is part of the CHS Assignment One. This assignment requires that students interview at least 6 persons. For this RME assignment students should provide answers to the following questions (1000 words):

- i) Who did you interview and why? What criteria did you use to choose your respondents?
- ii) Assess your success in obtaining information from your respondents? What did you do well? What could you have done differently?
- iii) How does this assignment benefit your ISP/internship?
- iv) How did you identify (gender, race, class, age, etc.) impact your choice of respondents? How did it impact your approach to the interview and your data?

Practicing Observation

Students will assess the role of observation in informing their perceptions, knowledge, and insights on the urban and rural community health field visits. What is the potential and limits of observation as a method of data collection? How can a researcher enhance the success of observation as a social research method. The essay should begin by defining observation as a social research method and should cite at least three articles or book chapters. 1000 words.

Survey Design

Develop a draft survey with 10-15 fixed-response questions (open-ended questions can be included as well). Questions must align with the student's chosen research question. Students are not required to administer the survey, but rather include a 500-word written reflection on the process of designing the survey, with consideration for ethics, local cultural norms, language, and possible implementation strategies.

Draft ISP Proposal

At this point each student should have consolidated their ISP plans. They should have a clear topic or thematic area, research questions, data collection & analysis plan, and significance/rationale. The proposal should include a short literature review with at least 6 articles related to their topic.

Final ISP Proposal

All students must develop a research 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. At least 8 sources should be included.

Participation

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 Global Health Research Methods and Ethics course. Participation 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

Ideas Paper 5%

CITI Training 5%

Interviewing Assessment 15%

Observation Assessment 15%

Survey Design 10%

Draft ISP Proposal 10%

Final ISP Proposal 30%

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.
- 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](#), [Accessibility 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*

Module One : Introduction, experiential learning, and cultural adjustment

First, this module introduces unique aspects of SIT's experiential learning pedagogy and how it shapes SIT Kenya's program structure, student and faculty roles. 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.

Sessions

- Cultural adjustment cycle
- Cultural experiences as sites of learning
- Positionality and outsider/insider research
- Introduction to ISP proposal and ISP paper

Assigned reading:

Kohls, Robert. "The Values Americans Live By."

Miner, Horace "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema". *American Anthropologist*, 1956, 58(3), 503-507

Levy, D. (2000). The shock of the strange, the shock of the familiar: Learning from study abroad. *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, 1(1). 75-83.

Ritzer, George. (1983). "The McDonaldization of Society." *Journal of American Culture*, 6 (1), 100-107.

Assignments and exercises:

- Mini ISP/Drop off activity

Module Two: Collecting qualitative data in the Kenyan cultural context.

This module focuses on the strategies, and best practices for gathering qualitative health related data in Western Kenya, with a specific focus on interviewing and observation, which are the building blocks of gathering primary data in global health research. Focus is placed on the specific nuances, strategies and best practices for successfully conducting interviews and observations in rural and urban Kenya, including enhancing communication effectiveness, and obtaining and maintaining rapport.

Sessions:

- Introduction to interviewing in global health research
- Interviewing in the Kenya cultural context, plus obtaining and maintaining rapport
- Overcoming barriers and enhancing effective communication
- Strategies and tools for conducting effective observation

Assigned reading:

Glesne, C. (2015). *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford Longman. Ch 3, 4 & 5.

Assignments and exercises:

- Practice interviewing
- Practice observation

Module Three: Research Design in Global Health Research

This module equips students with the knowledge and skills related to research design in global health research. It explores qualitative and quantitative research designs and the type of research questions that are applicable to the respective research designs. It

explores quantitative and qualitative sampling techniques, and the broad methods of gathering, qualitative and quantitative data, including constructing research tools.

Sessions

- Research Design, Sample Selection, and Methods of Data Collection
- Selecting Topics, Formulating Research Questions, Objectives and Hypotheses
- Mixed Methods Research
- Creating research tools (including Survey Design)

Assigned reading:

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE. Ch 8, 9, & 10.

Bernard, H. Russell (2006) *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* 4th ed. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. Chapter 3: "Preparing for Research."

World Bank Social Capital Assessment Tool, Annex 1B

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSOCIALCAPITAL/Resources/Social-Capital-Assessment-Tool-SOCAT-/annex1.pdf>

Field activities and exercises:

- Practice formulating research questions.
- Review samples of structured, semi-structured and unstructured research instruments.

Module Four: Strategies, methods and principles of qualitative and quantitative data management and analysis

This module equips students with knowledge and skills for gathering, managing and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data. Student will learn how to code and manage qualitative and quantitative data, and the various online tools that are available for analyzing and presenting these data.

Sessions:

- Quantitative Data Management, Analysis, and Interpretation
- Qualitative Data Management, Analysis, and Interpretation
- Introduction to STATA Practical Session

Assigned reading:

Emerson, R. M, Fretz, R. I, & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. 2nd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Sunstein, B., & E. Chiseri-Strater (2007). Analyzing your fieldnotes. In *Field working: reading and writing research* (pp. 105-107). Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Field activities and exercises:

- Practice data analysis using secondary data sets.
- Practice data presentation and interpretation
- Policy brief assignments

Module Five: Mainstreaming Ethics in Global Health Research

This module focuses on the ethics, norms and value systems for conducting quantitative and/or qualitative field research in Kenya. Students will learn the principles that guide application of each ethics in the Kenya context, including data protection laws of Kenya.

Sessions:

- The Belmont Report stipulations
- Data Protection Act of Kenya
- Relational ethics and reciprocity in the Kenyan context

Assigned reading:

Glesne, C. (2015). *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford Longman. Ch 6

Salinas S., S. Rance, M. Serrate, & M. Castro (2000). Unethical ethics? Reflections on intercultural research practices. *Reproductive Health Matters*, 8(15), 104-112.
Wilson, Ken. (1993). "Thinking about the Ethics of Fieldwork," in *Fieldwork in Developing Countries*, Ed. by Stephen Devereau, Boulder: Lynn Pianner Publishers, pp. 179-199

Module Six: Preparing for the Independent Study Project (ISP)

This module revisits research ethics and the logistics for living and working in Kenya as students complete their ISP. Students receive IB feedback on their proposal, and fine tune/complete their plans for ISP including research design, data sources and selection of respondents. 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 also walk the students through the Local Review Board (LRB) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and the application for Human Subjects Review (HSR application).

Sessions:

Introduction to the LRB/IRB Process and HSR Application

Identifying and working with ISP Advisors

Work Ethics and skills for networking, time management, and productivity writing the ISP

One-on-one meetings with Academic Director

Assigned reading:

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE. Ch 3, 4, & 5.

Activities and exercises:

Critical review of past ISPs

One on one meetings with Academic Director