

Field Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 credits/45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Nepal: Himalayan and Buddhist Peoples

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus represents a recent 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* course (FME) introduces students to the conceptual and practical tools for gathering primary data. This course also helps students develop the knowledge and skills that are essential to forming constructive relationships with organizations and/or individuals, which are necessary for completing an academic project in the cultural context of Nepal or India. In particular, the course enhances students' skills at building rapport; initiating purposeful dialogue in the cultural context of Nepal or India; gathering, recording, and analysing primary data; and writing a scholarly academic report. The course also pays particular attention to US higher education ethical considerations that guide primary data collection and how these could be translated within the local cultural context of Nepal or India and the program's Critical Global Issue (CGI): Migration | Identity | Resilience. Broadly, the course introduces students to both qualitative and quantitative approaches of social science field research.

The main emphasis of the course is on the development of empirical tools and ethics of interactive research skills involving the collection of primary data. This experiential learning course includes sessions on qualitative methods of research in social sciences and, in particular, in the program's Critical Global Issue (CGI): Migration | Identity | Resilience, development of a research proposal or internship proposal, and preparation of an application for review of research with human subjects. All students will participate in an overview of research design and methodological approaches to program themes. Ethical considerations related to conducting research or completing an internship will be discussed. The overall aim is to help students hone their experience-based learning processes and prepare them for the development of an Independent Study Project (ISP) that is largely based on the data gathered from primary sources, or an internship at a local organization.

From the first initiation to field study techniques and throughout, this course is interdependent with the two concurrent courses "Politics of Himalayan Borders" and "Religious Change in Himalayan and Buddhist Communities." The ethics of fieldwork in a variety of Himalayan settings will be addressed, above all in relation to religious traditions and beliefs on the one hand, and, on the other, political circumstances and interactions with the regional and local nodes of power. While cultural environments may be "Tibetan" (including "Tibetanoid/Tibetanish") they will vary much and renewed cultural adaptation is required throughout the semester in diverse settings across Nepal and India.

Learning Outcomes

The Field Methods and Ethics course comprises 45 hours. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Show an acute sense of positionality and perspective and operate independently, using cultural sensitivity, language skills, and local networks of trust built over the course of the semester;

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- Demonstrate awareness of appropriate methods and ethics used in field research in the critical global issue of Migration | Identity | Resilience OR demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of Nepal or India;
- Analyze and process primary data gathered in the field and draw valid and ethical interpretations and conclusions;
- Produce an Independent Study Project proposal that is in strict observance of ethical academic standards and local values and that includes a research question, sample review of the relevant literature, outline of the field methods, and anticipated ethical challenges and ways of addressing them OR an internship proposal that includes a description of the host organization, an outline of tasks that will be performed, a proposed work timetable, and projected outcomes such as a paper or business plan.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English but students will be exposed to Tibetan and Himalayan vocabulary related to course content through in-country expert lectures and field visits to a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Course Requirements

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 1: Experiential Learning and Positionality in Field-Based Research

This introductory module is designed to introduce students to field-based research in a study abroad context. Students learn how to relate to local communities and individuals. 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 or internship.

Module 1 discussions: Tibetan & Himalayan (& Nepali) customs

Students will participate in discussions about local customs and cultural norms. The first two introductory sessions will take place at orientation. Additional sessions will take place as part of the first and second excursion briefing and independent period preparation. These sessions are key to understanding positionality and navigating relationships with local communities and individuals.

required reading:

Moreno, Juan C. "Entering into the realm of 'the other': suggestions for crossing boundaries of human differences." *Office of Diversity and Inclusion, University of Minnesota Extension*.

Module 1 visits: local drop-offs

Students will be "dropped-off" in a location and asked to complete local field-based research before returning for a group debrief. Students are asked to collect visual and oral/aural observations with special attention to positionality and outsider/insider perspectives. Local drop-offs are an experiential method of sharpening field-based research skills such as note taking, interview techniques and the politics of culture in Nepal and India. Drop-offs will take place at orientation, in Kathmandu and in selected first and second excursion locations.

Module 2: Field Methods and Ethics in Migration | Identity | Resilience

This module focuses on the tools and methods required for conducting quantitative and/or qualitative field research in observance of the ethics and value systems of the local community.

Module 2 lectures and visits

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Session 1 lecture & discussion: SIT & Beyond—Phoenix Kenney (SP15 alumni)

required reading:

Kenney, Phoenix. April in Khumbu: Resilience among Sherpa Women. ISP. Spring 2015.

Session 2 discussion: drop off debrief: experiential education—Trilochan & Dorjee

required readings:

“Buddhist Holy Sites of Nepal: Pharping.” *Voices of the Rigpa Shedra*.

<http://shedrataalk.blogspot.com/2011/03/buddhist-holy-sites-of-nepal-pharping.html>.

Dowman, Keith (transl). “Yanglesho,” “Pharping Bajra Jogini,” “Asura Cave” & “Daksin Kali” in *A Buddhist Guide to the Power Places of the Kathmandu Valley*. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications, 2007. 48–51, 51–52, 52–54 & 54–55.

Dowman, Keith. “Pharping Vajra Yogini” & “Shesh Narayana” in *Power Places of Kathmandu: Hindu and Buddhist Holy Sites in the Sacred Valley of Nepal*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 1995. 92–94 & 95–38.

Session 2 paper & group discussion: Boudha/Buddhism Observed

required readings:

Dowman, Keith (transl.). “Brief History of the Stupa.” In *History of Great Stupa Jarung Khashor*. Kathmandu: Samtenling Monastery, 2005. 83–94

Dowman, Keith. “Introduction” & “Boudhanath.” In *Power Places of Kathmandu: Hindu and Buddhist Holy Sites in the Sacred Valley of Nepal*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 1995. 1–23 & 30–35.

Lama, Mani. “Foreword” & “Histories & Mythology.” In *Boudha: restoring the great stupa*. Kathmandu: Vajra Books, December 2019, 1–27.

Moran, Peter. “Introduction” & “Chapter 3: Commodities, Identities and the aura of the Other.” In *Buddhism Observed: Travelers, Exiles and Tibetan Dharma in Kathmandu*. New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004. 1–13 & 34–57.

Session 3 lecture: intro to fieldwork methods—Janak Rai

required reading:

Rai, Janak. “Kuragraphy, “senses of place” and qualitative research: Ethnographic illustrations.” *Nepalese Journal of Qualitative Research Methods* 5 (2013): 67-79.

Craig, Sienna R. “Come as a Guest, Go as a Friend.” In *Horses Like Lightning: A Story of Passage Through the Himalayas*. Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2008. 19-34.

Session 4 workshop: writing & reading workshop—Nazneen Zafar

required readings:

NPT writing & reading workshop handout

Session 5 lecture: intro to ISP fieldwork methods—Trilochan & Dorjee

required reading:

Childs, Geoff. “Methods, Meanings, and Representations in the Study of Past Tibetan Societies.” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, no. 1 (October 2005): 1-11.

Gergan, Mabel, and Sara Smith. 2021. “Reaching out: Cross-cultural research,” in Meghan Cope and Iain Hay. *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 40-59.

Session 6 group discussion and presentations: “Prisoners of Shangri-La” (Donald Lopez)

required readings:

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: Field Methods and Ethics—3

- Lopez, Donald. Jr. "Introduction" in *Prisoners of Shangri-la*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. 1–13.
- Shakya, Tsering. "Who Are the Prisoners?" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 69 (2001): 183–190.
- Thurman, R.A.F. "Critical Reflections on Donald S. Lopez Jr.'s Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West." *ibid*: 191–202.
- Norbu, Jamyang. "Behind the Lost Horizon: Demystifying Tibet." *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections and Fantasies*. Edited by Thierry Dodin & Heinz Räther. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001.
- Lopez, Donald Jr. "Jailbreak: Author's Response." *ibid*: 203–213.
- Lopez, Donald Jr. *Prisoners of Shangri-la: Tibetan Buddhism and the West, Twentieth Anniversary Edition, with a new preface*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2018, ix-xix.
- Lopez, Donald Jr. *7 Things You Didn't Know About Tibet*. University of Chicago Press. <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/493105.html>

Module 2 seminar: critical concepts in context in conversation
(30 minutes x 8, see assignment below)

"Free Tibet" ethics
institutional review board (IRB)
Nepal/Tibet border
experiential education
extractive research/reciprocity
orientalism

suggested readings:

- "AAA Statement on Ethnography and Institutional Review Boards." *American Anthropological Association*. 2006. www.aaanet.org/stmts/irb.htm.
- American Anthropological Association. "Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association." *American Anthropological Association*. June 1998. <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethicscode.pdf>.
- American Folklore Society. "AFS Statement on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibility." *American Folklore Society*. February 1988. www.afsnet.org/?Ethics.
- American Folklore Society. "AFS Position Statement on Research with Human Subjects." *American Folklore Society*. 2011. www.afsnet.org/?page=HumanSubjects.
- Anand, Dibyesh. *Geopolitical exotica: Tibet in Western imagination*. University of Michigan press, 2007.
- Anand, Dibyesh, Swargajyoti Gohain, Nitasha Kaul, and Sayantani Mukherjee. "Introduction. The Himalayas from Its Edges: Networks, Identities and Place-Making." *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, no. 62 (July 15, 2024). <https://journals.openedition.org/ebhr/2240>
- Armbruster, Heidi, and Anna Lærke, eds. *Taking Sides: Ethics, Politics, and Fieldwork in Anthropology*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2010.
- Ballenger, Bruce. *The Curious Researcher: A Guide to Writing Research Papers*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2007.
- Barley, Nigel. *The Innocent Anthropologist: Notes from a Mud Hut*. New York: Henry Holt & Co, 1983.
- Banks, Marcus, and Howard Morphy eds.. *Rethinking Visual Anthropology*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Barnard, Alan. *History and Theory in Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Bhattachan, Krishna Bahadur. *Minorities & Indigenous Peoples of Nepal*. National Coalition Against Racial Discrimination, 2008.
- Brown, Leslie & Susan Strega. *Research as Resistance: critical, indigenous, and anti-oppressive approaches*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2005.
- Bohannon, Laura. "Shakespeare in the Bush." *Natural History* 77, 7 (Aug-Sept 1966): 28–33. www.naturalhistorymag.com/editors_pick/1966_08-09_pick.html
- Booth, Wayne C. et al. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Byrne, Bridget (2009). "Qualitative interviewing." (p.179-192) *Researching Society and Culture* Second Edition, Edited by Clive Seale, Sage.
- Chilisa, Bagele. *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2012.

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- Clifford, James, and George Marcus. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. *Writing ethnographic field notes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Feld, Steven, and Keith Basso eds. *Senses of Place*. Sante Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, Published in Penguin Classics 2017, Penguin Books, 2017.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- Geertz, Clifford. "Chapter 1, Thick description: toward an interpretive theory of culture." In *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays*. New York: Basic Books, 1973, 3–30.
- Geertz, Clifford. "Deep play: notes on the Balinese cockfight." *Daedalus* 134. No. 4 (Fall 2005), 56–86.
- Goodenough, Ward. *Description and Comparison in Cultural Anthropology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Harris, Marvin. "History and Significance of the Emic/Etic Distinction." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 5 (1976): 329–350.
- Headland, Thomas. *Emics and Etics: The Insider Outsider Debate*. London: Sage Publications, 1990.
- Hirsch, Eric, and Michael O'Hanlon. *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Kripal, Jeffrey John. *The Serpent's Gift: gnostic reflections on the study of religion*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007
- Lassiter, L.E. *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005.
- "Looking at Our Organization and the World through a DEIA+ Lens." *School for International Training*, <https://www.sit.edu/story/looking-at-our-organization-and-the-world-through-a-deia-lens/>.
- Marshall, Catherine, and Gretchen B Rossman. *Designing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publication, 1995.
- Meskell, Lynn, and Peter Pels. *Embedding Ethics: Shifting Boundaries of the Anthropological Profession*. New York: Bloomsbury Academics, 2005.
- Miner, Horace. "Body Ritual among the Nacirema." *American Anthropologist* 58, 3 (Jun., 1956): 503-507.
- Moran, Peter. *Buddhism Observed: Travelers, Exiles and Tibetan Dharma in Kathmandu*. London: Routledge Curzon Press, 2004.
- Norman, K. R. *A Philological Approach to Buddhism*. London: University of London Press, 1997.
- Rapport, Nigel. "The Conventionalities of Note-Taking and Taking Note in the Field." *Anthropology Today* 7, 1 (1991): 10-13.
- Rossman, Gretchen and Sharon Rallis. *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications, 2003.
- Rinpoche, Dzongsar Khyentse. "The Distortions we Bring to the Study of Buddhism." *Lions Roar*. September 1 1997. <http://www.lionsroar.com/the-distortions-we-bring-to-the-study-of-buddhism/>
- Saddhatissa, Hammalawa. *Buddhist Ethics*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 1997.
- Said, Edward. *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. London: Penguin Books, 1977.
- Saxer, Martin. "Pathways: A Concept, Field Site and Methodological Approach to Study Remoteness and Connectivity." *Himalaya* 36, no. 2 (Autumn 2016).
- Sensoy, Özlem, and Robin J. DiAngelo. *Is Everyone Really Equal? An Introduction to Key Concepts in Social Justice Education*. Second Edition, Teachers College Press, 2017.
- SIT Academic Council. "Human Subjects Review Policies and Procedures." *School for International Training*. June 2004. http://www.sit.edu/SSA_Other_documents/human_subjects_policy.pdf.
- "SIT DEIA+ Strategic Plan 2022-2024." *School for International Training*, <https://www.sit.edu/about-us/institutional-plans/sit-dei-strategic-plan-2022-2024/>.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1999.
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*, London: Penguin Books, 1977.
- Sperling, Elliot. "'Orientalism' and Aspects of Violence in the Tibetan Tradition." *Tibetan Buddhism in the West*. <https://info->

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Pink, Sarah. *Doing Visual Ethnography*. London: Sage Publications, 2001.

The Tibetan & Himalayan Library. "The Transliteration and Transcription of Tibetan."

<http://www.thlib.org/tools/scripts/wiki/tibetan%20transliteration%20and%20transcription.html>

Tierney, Patrick. "The Fierce Anthropologist." *New Yorker*. October 9 2000, pp. 50-61.

www.newyorker.com/archive/2000/10/09/2000_10_09_050_TNY_LIBRY_000021871.

Watt, Donald B. *Intelligence is Not Enough: The Story of My First Forty Years and of the Early Years of The Experiment in International Living*. Putney, Vermont: The Experiment Press, 1967.

Wilson, Ken. 1993. "Thinking about the Ethics of Fieldwork." In *Fieldwork in Developing Countries*. Ed. Stephen Devereus and John Hoddinott. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993. pp. 179-199.

Wilson, Shawn. *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood Publishing, 2008.

Williams, Duncan Ryûken. "At Ease in Between: The Middle Position of a Scholar-Practitioner." *Journal of Global Buddhism*. 9 (2008), 155-163.

Module 2 Group discussion: Synthesis and debrief

(20 minutes x 8, see assignment below)

group 1: field method & ethics in Nepal: Himalayan & Buddhist Peoples

group 2: field method & ethics of Losar

group 3: field method & ethics in Nepal

group 4: field method & ethics in Sikkim-Kalimpong (first excursion)

group 5: field method & ethics of the Himalayas

group 6: field method & ethics of Trans-Himalayan Trade

group 7: field method & ethics in Mustang (second excursion)

group 8: field method & ethics of Co-Researching, across cultures and languages

Module 3: excursions

During our first and second excursion we will focus on developing relationships with co-researchers and working with them in the field. Interactions and discussions with co-researchers are designed to open a dialogue about culture, positionality and ethics. This module is an important primer for the independent period, where most students will work with co-researchers in different capacities.

Module 3 exercises with co-researchers

Session 1 exercise with Sikkim-Kalimpong co-researchers: exploring cultural differences (i/ii)

Session 2 exercise with Mustang co-researchers: exploring cultural differences (ii/ii)

Module 4: Introduction to the ISP and Internship

This module will describe the ISP and internship processes and help students brainstorm ideas and set goals for their ISP or internship. We will review and critique past ISP and/or internship papers. 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).

Session topics

Critical review and discussion of past ISPs or Internships

Introduction to the LRB/IRB process and HSR application

Identifying an ISP advisor or securing an Internship placement

One-on-one meetings with the acting director and program staff to discuss preliminary ISP or Internship ideas

Module 5: Project Proposal Development

Based on learning and engagement in the preceding course modules, this module focuses on ISP and internship proposal development and guiding students through the development of the Human Subjects Review (HSR) application for review by the Local Review Board (LRB). This critical phase in the course

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involves both large student group check-in sessions and individual student meetings with the acting director and the ISP advisor or internship supervisor.

Other session topics

Writing an ISP or Internship proposal

One-on-one meetings with acting director, program staff and/or ISP advisor or Internship supervisor

Writing the HSR application

ISP or Internship proposal presentation to peers and roundtable discussion

Module 6: Reciprocity

This module focuses on reciprocity between students, the local community and the SIT program.

Module 6 survey: midsemester survey

Students will complete a midsemester survey before beginning the independent period. The survey is an opportunity to give feedback on every aspect of the semester to date, and is an important exercise in reciprocity with the SIT community.

Module 6 discussion: SIT: Himalayan & Buddhist Peoples, indigenous knowledge, reciprocity & re-orientation

SIT AD, staff and/or alumni will lead discussions will take place over three sessions during the last week of the semester, after ISP & Internship presentations. The sessions will cover students' feedback to the semester, indigenous knowledge, and reciprocity in light of the independent period and the whole semester.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Description of Assignments:

Assignment 1: orientation assignment

Your text should include the following four components:

- I. Reminisce: recall a disparaging comment or an ironic question or an encouraging remark by an acquaintance, previous to your departure, about the possible use of this Study Abroad semester. Give your reply or your private thought at the time.
- II. Somehow connect this with a quotation or anecdote from Avedon's or Kapstein's books that set you thinking.
- III. Reminisce: the last time you traveled; and what's different now.
- IV. End with another quote, either from Avedon or Kapstein again or (preferably) from one of the other titles; one that can function as a closing remark, without any comment.

Compose this piece as a publishable article, with a proper title. It is up to you what kind of publication you have in mind as the venue for your work. But write as a professional. As a colleague puts it, "fake it till you make it." Your article should be serious with a light touch.

Include at least one illustration, whether a photograph of your own, a self-penned sketch, or image you've sourced by other means.

Sign your text with no reference other than a pen name, in order to sublimate the personal, to assist in the conceit that this is a publishable piece, and to exercise your imagination in selecting a pseudonym. But do please initial your piece so that we can in fact return it to the right author.

You will receive written and verbal feedback.

When you are writing, please double-check that you have followed these simple instructions.

Grading

The orientation assignment will make up 2.5% of your Field Methods and Ethics grade.

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Assignment II: Local Drop-offs

Objectives

To initially explore, observe, document and reflect upon a location; To develop field work skills with group and research collaborators, note taking, transcribing and synthesizing interviews; To give you practice at facilitating discussions and making presentations.

How it works

Students will be “dropped-off” in a location and asked to complete local field-based research at one or more sites. Students are required to return from the drop-off with a specific number of visual and oral/aural observations with supporting documentation which they must present and explain during a group debrief.

Grading

Participation in the local drop-offs will make up 5% of your Field Methods and Ethics grade.

Assignment III: Boudha[“Buddhism”] observed (presentation & paper)

Objectives

To deconstruct misconceptions about Tibetan Buddhism, both popular and personal.

How it works

Having read the Peter Moran text (“Buddhism Observed: Travellers, Exiles and Tibetan Dharma in Kathmandu” (2004), Introduction and Chapter 3, *Commodities, Identities and the aura of the Other*) you will spend a minimum of one hour making observations at Boudha stupa. Your observations can focus on a particular interaction or on a group of people at the stupa. In tandem with describing your observations, please suggest interpretations for what you have observed. You will bring five such pairings (observation/“what?” plus interpretation/“so what?”) to present in class. You will also have one key insight from Moran’s text. You will submit in writing your five pairings

Assignment IV: “Prisoners of Shangri-la” position presentation & paper

Objectives

To deconstruct myths about Tibet, both popular and personal.

How it works

You will be assigned one position to present in class, from the set of 5(/6) Lopez pieces. You will read the whole series and then analyse your position in relation to the others.

Furthermore, the same day, you will submit a written list of five “facts” or “beliefs” about Tibet/Tibetans, etc., facts or beliefs which you previously held and/or continue to hold and/or never held but believe others to have held. These five should include at least two which are not in Lopez’s list of “7 things...”. You will be able to name and assess your sources (textual, visual, oral etc.), including whether the source is unknown (folk wisdom, urban legend, etc.). Maximum 500 words.

Assignment V: Critical concept in context in conversation (seminar paper & presentation)

Objectives

The “critical concepts in context in conversation” are designed to demonstrate the wealth of primary resources at hand in experiential education and to deploy those resources in the analysis and synthesis of core thematic concepts.

How it works

You will choose (or be assigned) a keyword central to the “Field methods & ethics” course (and/or the “Religion/Change,” and/or the “Politics/Borders” course). You will prepare an engaging five-minute presentation of your keyword and its significance, especially within the thematic seminar. On the due

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date, before your presentation, you will submit a 500-word write-up of your “critical concept in context”. You will present material from three kinds of sources or evidence: visual, oral/[aural] and written: a textual source, a picture/image, and the fruits of an encounter, i.e. an interview, e.g. a discussion with your homestay family and/or other Tibetan (or Nepali) friends and acquaintances. Additionally, you will ask an artificial intelligence technology or algorithm (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Gemini) about your keyword and compare the result to information your other sources.

You do not need to show your visual evidence when we present outside of the program centre, but you must submit it as part of your assignment and describe the image wherever you make your presentation. You will be able to name and assess your sources. You will also attempt to spell your words in Tibetan or translate them into Tibetan idiom (in Tibetan script and/or Wylie transliteration).

Grading

Of the total 10% grade for the “critical concept in context in conversation”, 5% will be for the written paper and 5% for the seminar presentation.

Assignment VI: Facilitation: synthesis and debrief

Objectives

- To enable the group to reflect on what we have learnt from various parts of the course, to integrate knowledge gained from a variety of sources, including field trips, and to share insights;
- To provide a forum for discussion of course readings;
- To give you practice at facilitating discussions and making presentations.
- To engage critically with distinct threads from among the semester themes

How it works

At the end of orientation, you will be assigned to one of eight groups. Each group will be assigned one group discussion to facilitate during the semester. These discussions will be guided by faculty but run by students. The group discussions will last for 60 minutes and will **foster debate or discussion** about what we have learnt in synthesis in each of three components, “Politics/Borders,” “Religion/Change” and FME, since the previous meeting and will integrate what we have learnt that week in workshops, lectures, **field trips** and **readings** with what we have previously covered in the semester. Each group will moreover be assigned a distinct thread from one of the semester themes, to be addressed in the discussion **but not as the theme of the entire discussion**.

When it is your turn to facilitate a discussion, you need as a group, to **identify the most important topics (check the learning goals) that are suitable for class discussion** (don’t pick so many topics that there isn’t adequate time to discuss them all). At the meeting, the facilitators should first identify the topics to be covered in the meeting. They should then encourage and direct group discussion of the topics, ensuring that every member of the group is **given space to speak**, and indeed the **everyone does make a contribution**, however small. Facilitators are scheduled to **meet with a relevant faculty member** for the 15 minutes just prior to their session in order to review the questions you will put to the group. Please feel free to approach any faculty member already prior to starting your preparation for your own meeting in order to review the topics to be discussed. We reserve the right to include critical questions or topics if they are absent from your list. **It is important to allow sufficient time for discussion of the readings.**

Grading

Synthesis and debrief discussions make up 15% of the course grade. The quality of your contribution to the discussions throughout the semester is worth 7.5% and your facilitation of your session is worth another 7.5%. As a participant, you should come to group discussions with notes from the readings including a sentence summarizing the author’s main message. You should contribute to the discussions but not dominate them, your contributions should **be informed** and you should respect other’s opinions but not be afraid to disagree.

The criteria for evaluating the facilitators are:

- Your introduction identifying the topics to be discussed (5%)

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- Your identification and framing of the important issues to be discussed from lectures, workshops, fieldtrips, etc., and the quality of the questions and prompts you used to initiate and direct the discussion (40%)
- Your identification of the important issues contained in the readings and your facilitation of the discussion of those readings (35%)
- Your facilitation of the group discussion (did you get everyone involved in and enthused about the discussion? Did you use any innovative approaches? Were you able to control the discussion and get it back on track when it wandered off the topic? Did you manage the time well—so that all topics were covered?) (20%)

Assignments VII & VIII: Excursion study projects (first & second)

Objectives

The fieldwork papers are designed to help you to reflect upon, **analyze and synthesize** what you are learning from excursions, field trips, lectures, seminars, readings, formal and informal discussions and your own observations.

How it works

After each of the two semester excursions you will be asked to reflect in an essay on aspects of the fieldwork you have just carried out and **to relate this to what you have previously learnt and observed** in the “Field Methods and Ethics,” “Religion/Change” and “Politics/Borders” courses. There will be two essays in total. They need to be succinct, well organized and to show that you are thinking about what you are experiencing and that you are synthesizing what you learn from disparate sources.

The first paper, resulting from the first excursion, will be a group study project. This will entail a 1,200-word **minimum** contribution to a paper prepared in collaboration with program peers.

The second excursion study project will be a 1,600-word **minimum**.

Grading

The essays will comprise **10% and 15% respectively of your Field methods and ethics grade**. Each essay will have a different objective and therefore detailed instructions and grading criteria will be given at the time they are assigned.

Students should note that topics for papers as well as their field study journal are open. Students should not feel they are limited only to topics concerning politics/borders but should feel free to use each paper to explore a variety of topics. To reinforce and emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of these Study Project assignments, the weight given in evaluating the papers will also be split equally with the other two core courses, Politics/Borders and Religion/Change.

Assignment IX: Final reflection paper

Objectives

1. Reflect on your understanding of research field methods and ethics in Tibet and the Himalayas and how your engagement may have changed as a result of your experiences in Nepal and/or India.
2. Reflect on what are the most important things you have learnt from the Politics/Borders course in general.

How it works

Before the end of the program write a 1,000-word (minimum) essay covering the following topics:

Your understanding of the field methods and ethics of the trans-Himalayan region:

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How have your experiences in Nepal and/or India affected your personal understanding of research field methods and ethics in Tibet and the Himalayas? If your understanding has not changed, why do you think this is so?

Your general learning experience:

What are the most important things you have learnt from *both* the Politics/borders *and* Religious change courses in general. Have you gained insights into US culture and/or your own cultural intersectionality as a result of your last four months in Nepal and India? If so, please discuss how these insights have shed light on particular aspects of US and/or your own culture(s).

Grading

This reflection counts for 2.5% of your FME grade and is due the final Friday of the semester. You will be graded on the quality of your answers to the above questions.

Passim: Contribution to group learning

In this seminar, great emphasis is placed on the students' active participation in their own education. This element is worth **10% of your Field Methods and Ethics grade**. Your grade is allocated on an assessment of your timely attendance and informed participation in all activities, including field trips; your adherence to codes of conduct and conditions of participation; and your general contribution to the maintenance of a positive learning environment throughout the course.

Field Work Journal

Students are expected to keep a work journal where they will document thoroughly all the activities and assignments carried out during the course. This will also continue during the Independent Study Project or the internship period. The work journal is submitted for review and evaluation 5 times during the course of the semester.

ISP/Internship Proposal

All students must develop an ISP or internship proposal. The ISP 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.

The internship proposal should include the objectives to be achieved during the internship period, a justification of the work and the organization selected, skills or areas in which the student can contribute to the work of the host organization, and an outline of the work plan to be carried out.

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 Field Methods and Ethics course.

assessment and timing of assignments			
1	orientation assignment	2.5%	1 st Monday
I1	local drop-offs	5%	Orientation, 1 st week, 1 st excursion
II1	"Prisoners of Shangri-la"	5%	2 nd week
IV	"Buddhism Observed"	5%	3 rd week
V	CCCC seminar paper & presentation	15%	one session per student
VI	facilitation: synthesis and debrief	15%	one week per student
VII	first excursion group study project	10%	1 st Monday after first excursion
VIII	second excursion study project	15%	1 st Wednesday after second excursion
IX	final reflection paper	2.5%	final Friday
	independent study/internship proposal	15%	
	contribution to group learning	10%	
		(100)	

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Grading Scale

The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

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

Expectations and Policies

- 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 according 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 (those of classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits, etc.). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>

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