



Research Methods and Ethics

ANTH 3500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Uganda: Post-Conflict Transformation

Course Description

Research Methods and Ethics is a qualitative research design course designed to provide an overview of methodological field study approaches within the local cultural context, affording students the tools necessary to conduct field research in Uganda. The course is designed with three main objectives. First, the course addresses the various methodologies and techniques required to carry out the Independent Study Project. Issues including ethical considerations, observation strategies, interviewing techniques and designing and writing a manuscript are discussed to prepare students for the ISP course. Secondly, the course addresses Human Subjects Review process and its role in primary field research. In addition to detailing the processes and parameters of research ethics, we will focus on issues of Internally Displaced People (IDP) and refugee camps and seeks to reverse the gaze back to ourselves to be more self-conscious of our position in such spaces. Lectures and discussions analyze the manner in which these communities are addressing community building and reconciliation with the intention of providing students with tools and techniques to work with people in post-conflict zones. The third objective of the seminar seeks to address the emotional and psychological impact of working and learning in post-conflict communities. As a result, additional time is allotted to this course to provide students with ample opportunities to be briefed and debriefed for refugee and IDP camp visits, and to allow sessions for students to actively process their experiences.

Methodology

Taught largely by the academic director with support from other Ugandan academics and professionals, *Research Methods and Ethics* includes a combination of lectures, readings and field visits. Sessions also include topics designed to prepare students emotionally and academically for the experiences of working with displaced persons, survivors of conflict, and perpetrators of violence. Class sessions will also create avenues for students to debrief and share their experiences as well as find personal modes of expression and individual processing.

*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 Objectives

Research Methods and Ethics has an interdisciplinary, integrative, and critical focus encompassing 45 academic hours (3 credits). Its main objectives are to:

- Examine appropriate field techniques and methodologies for working with issues and topics surrounding conflict;
- Provide students with the necessary intellectual, psychological and emotional support needed to effectively engage with the topics of conflict, violence, and displacement;
- Develop an understanding of what kinds of information can be gathered in and/or through different kinds of sources and methods and to utilize primary sources in the field, such as material gained through observation and interviews;
- Design appropriate research questions and understand which methods are most appropriate for data collection based on the research focus;
- Introduce the Human Subjects Review process (its history and its necessity in contemporary research) and to apply this ethical framework to the ISP;
- Gain awareness of experience-based learning processes outside an institutional structure, and to develop confidence and initiative in learning from experience.

Expected Outcomes

Upon completion of *Research Methods and Ethics* students will:

- Gain greater awareness of the challenges and triumphs in dealing with issues in post-conflict Uganda;
- Understand research design and field study techniques appropriate for independent study topics on issues of conflict and in post-conflict communities;
- Undergo personal growth and the enhanced capacity to engage in a topic with the depth of complexity and emotional demands as conflict in northern Uganda;
- Assess the ethical considerations of independent study projects in accordance with norms of research ethics in post-conflict communities.

Course Requirements

Readings

You are responsible for all the required readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will help you place the classes in their context, to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions and to deepen your knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class. They are not necessarily tailor-made for each and every class.

Bagish, Henry. 1992. Confessions of a former cultural relativist. *Anthropological Perspectives*, p. 30-37.

Baumeister, Roy F. 1999. *Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty*. New York: W.H. Freeman & Co.

Glesne, C. 2006. Prestudy tasks: Doing what is good for you. In *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*. Boston: Pearson, Chapter 1, pp. 21-37 and 46-48.

Goevaerts, Didier. Ed. 2000. *Conflict and Ethnicity in Central Africa*. Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

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Kumar, R 2005. Considering ethical issues in data collection. In *Research Methodology*, 2nd edition, London: Sage, Chapter 14, p. 209-216.

May, T. 2001. Interviewing: Methods and process. In *Social Research*, Buckingham: Open University Press, Chapter 6 (only p. 120-137) and Chapter 7 (only p. 153-168).

Okot, Vincent. 1987. *Reconciliation: A Moral Therapy for Uganda*. Rome: Pontifical University Lateran.

Staub, E. 2005. Healing, Reconciliation, Forgiving and the Prevention of Violence after Genocide or Mass Killing: An Intervention and its Experimental Evaluation in Rwanda. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 24(3), pp. 297-334

Waller, James. 2002. *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and mass Killing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Silverman, D. 2006. Writing Your Report. In *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. London: Sage, Chapter 10, p. 336-344.

Waller, James. 2002. *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and mass Killing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

PLEASE NOTE: COURSE CONTENTS, LECTURERS AND READINGS MAY BE MODIFIED AS NEEDED. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Assignments

Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

Processing assignments	30%
Research methods assignments	30%
ISP proposal	20%
Participation and attendance	20%

Grading Scale: The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

94-100%	A	74-76%	C
90-93%	A-	70-73%	C-
87-89%	B+	67-69%	D+
84-86%	B	64-66%	D
80-83%	B-	below 64	F
77-79%	C+		

Grading Criteria

An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and

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the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of Class Participation, an “A” grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students` participation will be monitored and taken into account.

Student Expectations

Class Participation

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

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. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.

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