



## Field Study Seminar

ANTH 3500 (2 Credits / 30 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
India: Health and Human Rights

### Introduction

The Field Study Seminar (FSS), common to every SIT-Study Abroad program, provides students the concepts and methodological skills to conduct fieldwork in a cross-cultural setting. Simultaneously, it prepares students to apply the knowledge and skills gained in language study and the thematic seminar in their fieldwork and to plan and execute the one month Independent Study Project (ISP).

It is anticipated that FSS will help students develop competence in getting oriented to a new environment; understanding and applying research ethics while conducting study projects that may involve field work with human subjects; and becoming familiar with and applying field work methods and methodological approaches to the ISP.

The concepts and skills introduced in the FSS seminar unite and reinforce all other program components and are put to the test through the execution and successful completion of the Independent Study Project.

### Course Objectives

- Provide the theoretical knowledge of field work methods, research ethics, experience doing research in a cross cultural setting research and its application in fieldwork
- Prepare students to apply formally acquired language skills, knowledge from the Health and Human Rights Seminar, and other sources to extend and deepen interest in, knowledge of, and integration into North Indian society
- Introduce experience-based learning processes outside an institutional environment and develop student confidence and initiative in learning from such experience

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- Facilitate selection of an ISP topic and investigation methodology that are sensitive and feasible given time and resource constraints; ethical in terms of local relationships; and capable of delivering new perspectives on health and human rights in the Indian context
- To help students work and learn with primary source material gathered through fieldwork

## Course Overview & Assignments

Seminar activities include classroom lectures on field work methods, cross cultural research, feasibility and ethics of research along with educational excursions to field sites. Reading materials will be assigned and discussed to prepare and enhance understanding of the course and assignments.

Two formal written assignments based on interviews and student observations will provide the opportunity to practice skills essential for conducting field work, and to assist in the development of writing skills. The Foundations of Fieldwork Exercise and Three Interviews assignments are the requirement for the completion of this course. Designed to help students develop orientation and observation skills in an experiential manner, the foundations of fieldwork exercise is based on the D-I-E (Description, Interpretation and Evaluation) method. “Drop-off”, a unique SIT activity, forms the basis of the fieldwork exercise. The three interviews assignment is based on the student’s selection of a particular topic, preparing a questionnaire and actually conducting formal interviews with a required end outcome of a paper written based on the interviews and the process of conducting them.

## Evaluation

<b>(1) Foundations of Fieldwork-D.I.E Exercise</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>(2) Three-Interviews Assignment</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>(3) Attendance, Participation, Completion of Assigned Readings</b>	<b>20%</b>

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# Evaluation Components

## 1. *Foundations of Fieldwork:*

This two part assignment requires students to compile rough field notes and transcribe them in the D-I-E format based on observations taken during two excursions.

Assignment Requirements:

1. Rough notes: Students must bring a notebook to both of the excursions and record in as much detail as possible all observations about the location, the local residents, the key development issues and questions that are both subjectively observed and, if appropriate, articulated in group interactions. Attention should be paid to recording all sensory information, in a rough stream-of-consciousness form. Rough notes are not expected to be polished, using complete sentences and proper grammatical constructions. These notes are a tool for honing the researcher's observation skills and for paying attention to the often small and subtle details that can lead to important insights and revelations. The rough notes for both visits should be written in the same notebook and clearly labeled. Evaluation criteria include: comprehensiveness of notes; labeling of time, places, and identification of speakers; and a detailed variety of observations.

2. D-I-E transcription: D-I-E is a tool or system for discerning among neutral facts, interpretation of such facts within specific social-cultural contexts, and subjective evaluations of such information from passionate and opinionated positions. Correctly used, the D-I-E system can be a useful aid for fieldworkers to organize data, distinguish facts from personal ideas, interpret possible meanings of events and situations, and critically examine their own subjective, emotional or biased reactions. For this assignment the student must chose one significant event, incident or observation from each excursion and transcribe it in the D-I-E format as follows:

**Description:** Describe the experience without attributing meaning. Try to be as objective as possible using purely descriptive techniques without adding anything about what you are seeing in terms of its meaning to participants (interpretation) or to yourself (evaluation).

**Interpretation:** Interpret what you see, using what you know from your own experience and cultural background or what you have learned about the cultural context you are now experiencing in India. What you are looking for here are ideas of what the event you are witnessing means to the people you are observing.

**Evaluation:** To evaluate is to pass judgments using some assumed standard of comparison. It involves our opinions of and explanations for what has happened, what ought to happen or what we feel should or should not happen. Remember that it is always possible and very important in current thinking in the social sciences to be reflexive in making your own evaluations. This means we should take into account the cultural and personal reasons that may have an effect on how we make an evaluation. In current thinking there is no "objective" analysis outside of someone's evaluative position.

Each section of the D-I-E should be approximately one paragraph. The evaluation of this assignment will be based on the following criteria: correct use of the D-I-E format (if you still have questions or doubt about this after it has been explained, please do not hesitate to ask for more clarity); depth of cultural insights expressed in the interpretation section; evidence of self-reflexivity in the evaluation section.

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**2. Three Interviews Assignment:** Students should select a single topic about their ISP or another topic of interest related to health and human rights and compose 2 sets of 10-12 questions – one in Hindi (translated with the help of the Hindi Instructors) and one in English. Using these two distinct sets of questions, conduct one Hindi and two English interviews about your topic and write up your results in a 750-1000 summary, focusing on a description and analysis of your interview process. Two of your interviews must be conducted outside the Homestay. Students should include transcripts of both sets of interview *questions* as appendices to the paper. Please bear in mind the limitations and possibilities of language in composing your Hindi questions by rephrasing and rethinking your English questions in a manner appropriate to your language level. Try to make the most of the language skills you have.

Working on this assignment will be a cumulative process ending with a written summary on a topic of student's interest which should include a description of the topic, interviewees, interview location and the process and lessons learned from the interview. The goal of this assignment is to orient students to the interview process and prepare them for ISP.

**3. Attendance and Participation:** Students are expected to take part in all FSS activities, complete all required readings and enthusiastically participate in classroom discussions and field activities.

**Participation is not the same as attendance.** All students are expected to participate fully in all aspects of the seminar. This means asking pertinent questions to the course's guest lecturers, engaging in discussion and analysis during question opportunities after lectures, in group discussions and on excursions. Students are expected to read the assigned readings, complete and submit assignments on given deadline and demonstrate their knowledge and learning's through reflection, writing, and discussion.

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, note taking.
- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge and information. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability - participates positively as a part of a group during field excursions and classes
- Respect - culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities. This includes appropriately greeting people when entering offices and classrooms and saying thank you.

***Late papers will be marked down one step (B- to C+, e.g.) for each day they are late.***

## **Expectations**

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With the exception of journals and field notebooks, all assignments should be typed and double-spaced. Spelling and grammar are part of grading criteria; careful proofreading and editing are essential parts of the writing process. Compliance with a standard format of citation for both primary and secondary sources; and, most importantly, concise and logical argument is needed.

**Please note: *description is not analysis.* While there is a place for description of people, events or organizations in your assignments, be aware that extensive description is not a substitute for critical analysis based on independent thinking and understanding. The more your writing reflects synthesis of theory, observation and reflection, the more successful your work will be.**

**Academic Policies:** While SIT prides itself on providing students with an experientially based program we hold ourselves and our students to the highest of academic standards. Students are asked to refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process.

### FSS Seminar, Exercise and Required Readings

Week	Topic	Required Readings (Additional readings may be given)
1	Observations and Cross Cultural learning: DIE Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ahuja, R (2001). "Observation" in <i>Research Methods</i>. Rawat Publications. Jaipur, pp 239-260</li> <li>Said, Edward. "Introduction," in <i>Orientalism</i>, New York: Vintage Books, 1979, pp. 1-28.</li> </ul>
	Field Work Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ahuja, R (2001). "Questionnaire and Interview Schedule" in <i>Research Methods</i>. Rawat Publications. Jaipur, pp 193-220</li> <li>Ahuja, R (2001). "Observation" in <i>Research Methods</i>. Rawat Publications. Jaipur, pp 239-260</li> <li>Desai, V &amp; Potter, R.B (2006). <i>Doing Development Research</i>. Sage Publications, London. Chapters 11, 13, 15, 16,</li> </ul>
3	Conducting Interviews in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ahuja, R (2001). "Questionnaire and Interview Schedule" in <i>Research Methods</i>. Rawat Publications. Jaipur, pp 193-220</li> <li>Ahuja, R (2001). "Interview" in <i>Research Methods</i>. Rawat Publications. Jaipur, pp 221-238</li> <li>Desai, V &amp; Potter, R.B (2006). <i>Doing Development Research</i>. Sage Publications, London. Chapters 17, 18</li> </ul>

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5	ISP Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ahuja, R (2001). “Research Design” in <i>Research Methods</i>. Rawat Publications. Jaipur, pp 125-130, 146-149</li> <li>• Glesne, Corrine. “Prestudy Tasks: Doing what is good for you” in <i>Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An introduction</i>. Third edition. Pearson Education, Inc. 1992, pp 21-48</li> <li>• Workshop Report on <i>Qualitative Methods in Health Research: opportunities and considerations in application and review</i>, Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, National Institutes of Health <a href="http://obsr.od.nih.gov/pdf/qualitative.pdf">http://obsr.od.nih.gov/pdf/qualitative.pdf</a></li> </ul>
6	Foreigners as Researchers: Opportunities and challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desai, V &amp; Potter, R.B (2006). <i>Doing Development Research</i>. Sage Publications, London. Chapters 4 &amp; 5</li> <li>• Winchatz, Michaela R., “Fieldworker or Foreigner? Ethnographic interviewing in nonnative languages”, <i>Field Methods</i>, Vol 18, no.1, Feb 2006, pp 83-97</li> </ul>

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