

International Field Research

2 Credit Hours

Instructor: John Tomaro, Water Institute Senior Affiliate

Course Description

This is an intermediate level course targeted at graduate students who are contemplating or have committed to international field research. The course uses guest lectures, readings and hands on exercises to provide an overview of relevant research, cultural and ethical issues. At the end of the course students will be able to apply the knowledge and skills gained to undertake field study in a foreign culture. This course does not guarantee that students will conduct a successful field study but raises awareness and offers possible solutions to issues that may arise when traveling internationally for research purposes.

Purpose

The purpose of this course is to offer theoretical foundations in cultural sensitivity, personal security, communication, organization and research along with guided practical exercises in conducting international field research. The result is the development of cross-cultural and applied research skills that prepare the student to conduct successful field research.

Objectives

- To strengthen independent research skills, mainly how to function, conduct research and cope with logistical issues in an international context
- To develop a research “toolbox” of basic skills in various methods of field research
- To enhance students understanding of other cultures; encourage student appreciation of other cultures
- To promote self-confidence in course participants as world travelers/observers
- To foster a bridge knowledge between gained in the classroom and “real world” international settings
- To promote a greater understanding of important issues related to international field work

Course Format

The course employs a flipped classroom format where lecture materials are read prior to class, and classroom time is devoted to dialogue and participating in experiential activities.

Readings

Due to the multidisciplinary nature of international field research there is no text entirely suitable for the course. Students will be provided with lecture materials prepared by the instructor, peer-reviewed journal articles, government issued travel materials and content drawn from other sources. The course continually builds on material from previous lectures so class attendance is essential.

Assessments

Grades will be determined on the basis of student performance on mini assignments (40%), class participation (20%) and a final project (40%). Several (4-5) classroom based projects will be assigned in which students will have an opportunity to assess challenges, then produce a series of recommendations and defend them in both written and oral presentations.

Content

Weeks	Content
1	Course Intro, Includes: Instructor intro, Syllabus Review, FAQ and student/instructor expectations
2-3	Organization, Logistics and Planning Includes: Checklists, UNC travel requirements, IRB, Business Protocols
4-5	Communication Includes: In country with partners and other researchers, to colleagues at UNC, community engagement, expectations, priorities, building relationships, adaptive management
5-7	Personal Safety and Security Includes: Health, Worldwide security, self-defense, situational awareness, emergency management
8-10	Cultural Sensitivity Includes: Sensitivity, current events, history pop culture, language, integration
11-13	Field Research Skills Includes: Professional conduct, interviews, project resources, working effectively,

	adaptive management, integrity
14	Ethics Includes: Bribes, gifts, personal conduct
15	Final Project Presentations