

## **Internship and Seminar**

### **ITRN-3000 (4 credits)**

### **South Africa: Virtual Internship in Diplomacy, Conflict Resolution, and International Relations**

*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**

This course will focus on issues around diplomacy, conflict resolution, human rights and international relations while being attached to NGOs that work in the area of conflict resolution and international relations. During the period of South Africa's transition to democracy thousands of lives were lost within the country as a result of an internal conflict that escalated dramatically. Various think tanks and NGOs made their entry into conflict resolution then; so in this context the course will explore how political developments are influenced by foregrounding dialogue and institutional development as an alternative to armed violence and protracted conflict. The course will also look at interventions through mediation, negotiation, training, research and conflict analysis. During the introduction of the internship students will learn about SA's transition from apartheid and human rights abuses to democracy. Thereafter, while engaged in a 11-week online internship, you will also learn about multilateral diplomacy and strategic decision-making. Students will get to explore perspectives on international relations, south-south diplomacy, and the politics of the African Union.

Following an introduction and orientation to the internship, students are directly engaged with the NGOs they have been partnered with. Students will therefore have the opportunity to have an immersive learning experience with rigorously constructed discussions, reflection and written assignments to review the progress of the internship. Given SIT's existing strengths in experiential education, the internship will prioritize collaborative learning and engagement/relationships with host communities.

Each student is expected to choose an organization identified by the academic director as suitable and satisfying the program's requirements. Students will complete their internship and submit a final paper. In the final paper, students will process their learning experience, analyze an important organizational issue, as well as their experience and observations as related to the theme of the internship.

The final paper and presentation will demonstrate how the students' goals are achieved, how their experience links to the program theme and how the student intends to apply these skills and knowledge in their home country.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the internship and seminar, the student will be able to:

- Demonstrate awareness of the ethics involved in doing an online internship in the context of South Africa;
- Describe, analyze, and synthesize their learning experience in the online internship in the form of an internship paper;
- Articulate new learning from the online internship experience in the form of an oral presentation;
- Show understanding of themes related to international relations and justice/human rights/memory processes in postconflict societies like SA
- Assess the challenges of the student's own positionality; and
- Gain access to meaningful and practical experience in their chosen field and connect to a network of civil society organizations in Southern Africa.

### Language of Instruction English

### Course Schedule

Students will be expected to devote 180 hours to this virtual internship and seminar course. This will include 12 hours per week "on" the internship site over 11 weeks as well as weekly one-hour synchronous discussions led by the academic director. Students are expected to spend up to 20 hours writing the progress reports and the final internship paper (minimum of 15 pages). Virtual attendance is required for all the sessions.

### **Module I: Introduction, Positionality and Internship Ethics Course**

This module occurs prior to the actual internship placement. Students will prepare for the internship by learning about SA's transition from apartheid and human rights abuses to democracy.

Students also discuss the ethics of the internship, work place norms in SA and expectations of the internship, including the final paper.

Seminar content will include:

1. Introduction – country context/history crash course/lectures/visit NGOs
2. Positionality and Internship Ethics/Awareness
  - a. Stereotypes and preconceptions about Africa
  - b. Students' lens – how have you been taught to understand foreign places?
  - c. What are my motivations?
3. Introduction to work culture in SA; differences from the US

4. Introduction to Internship – visit and develop understanding of context and position in field/country
5. Goals and objectives of the internship

Once internship placements are confirmed, the students, together with the academic director will review objectives for the internship and discuss expectations, learning agreements, timeframes and other logistics, structural components of the final internship paper, content, layout, and general guidelines.

### *Assigned Reading*

- Recommended reading: Sweitzer, H. Frederick and King, A. Mary (2013) *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning* (4th Edition). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole (Chapter 12)
- Miner, Horace "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema". *American Anthropologist*, 1956, 58(3), 503-507
- Ritzer, George. (1983). "The McDonalidization of Society." *Journal of American Culture*, 6 (1), 100-107
- 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.

## **Module 2: Contextualizing our Engagement: International Diplomacy, Critical Global Issues and Conflict Resolution**

Seminar content will include:

- Structure of the international political system and the possibility and limits of multi-lateral diplomacy for addressing critical global issues. Special attention will be devoted to the rise and current dissolution of liberal internationalism, the impact of populism on contemporary international affairs, and the challenges posed by contemporary global trends such as mass migration, climate change, rising populism, weapons of mass destruction, and global wealth inequality
- The architecture of the African political landscape constructed around the multi-lateral objectives of the African Union (AU).

### *Assigned Reading*

- Christian Reus Smit and Duncan Snidal. 2008. "Between Utopia and Reality: The Practical Discourses of International Relations," in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, editors, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 3-40
- Neoliberalism, Authoritarianism and Popular Resistance in Africa, *International Review of Modern Sociology*, 2019

## **Module 3: Processing and Maximizing the Internship Experience**

This module focuses on ways of processing the internship as well as equipping students with practical tips and strategies for making the most of the experience personally, academically, and professionally.

### Talking About the Internship Experience

This session allows students to reflect, in a safe and supportive context, on the internship experience and process the learning that occurred. The internship may have been a different experience than expected, may challenge the student's expectations of working in a diverse and challenging environment, and may change the student's perspective of life projects or professional goals. The module discusses ways of acknowledging both the successes and failures of the internship, of completing tasks, handing over projects to and sharing insights with colleagues on the job, and setting realistic goals for the future.

Additional seminar content will include:

1. Processing the End of the Internship Experience
2. Closure with Colleagues and Supervisors
3. Articulating the Experience and Setting Plans for the Future

This final portion occurs in the final days of the program, as students plan their next steps, academically and professionally. Students discuss fears and strategies for building on this experience in other work settings, opportunities for professional growth, and how to make optimal use of the internship experience.

4. How to Include Your Internship on Your Résumé
5. Next Steps

## **Ethics**

The internship experience must reflect SIT's ethics policy and commitment to the values of reciprocity. The student intern should also abide by the policy and regulations of the host institution including dress, punctuality, and employee behavior. Violations of SIT's code of conduct or employee conduct at the host institution will result in an immediate termination of the internship and can lead to further disciplinary sanctions by SIT.

### Academic and Ethical Integrity

The internship experience must reflect SIT's ethics policy and commitment to the values of reciprocity. Students must respect, protect and promote the rights and the welfare of all those affected by their work by doing everything in their power to protect

the dignity and privacy of the people with whom they work. The student intern should also abide by the policy and regulations of the host institution including dress, punctuality, and employee behavior. Violations of SIT's code of conduct or employee conduct at the host institution will result in an immediate termination of the internship and can lead to further disciplinary sanctions by SIT. Students must not represent as their own work, either in speaking or writing, materials or ideas, directly taken from other sources. They must give full credit in speaking or writing to all those who have contributed to their work. Academic penalties apply for deliberate plagiarism or other academic dishonesty.

### Evaluation and Grading Criteria

At the end of the internship period, students are expected to give an oral presentation of their work. Assessment of both written work and the oral presentation is based on quality, academic scholarship, and adherence to the highest ethical standards.

### **Description of Assignments**

#### **Internship Journal**

Journaling is essential to the internship learning process. Students are expected to journal daily, starting before the internship begins, to reflect on internship goals, expectations, and experiences as a way to deepen individual, professional, and academic growth. While the journal is not graded, the journal serves as a foundation for weekly discussion and reflection sessions, progress reports, and the final paper and presentation.

#### **Internship Learning Agreement**

The Internship Learning Agreement, combined with the Internship Ethics Review Application, constitutes the internship proposal reviewed and approved by the Local Review Board (LRB) before the internship may begin. The Internship Learning Agreement asks students to develop a set of internship goals, consider their relationship to program themes, and sets forth the intern's understanding of the intern's role and responsibilities.

#### **Discussion and Reflection Sessions**

Discussion and reflection sessions take place on a weekly basis. Students are expected to discuss experiences in the internship, reflect on the professional learning process, and respond to any prompts assigned by the internship instructor. These discussion and reflection sessions are key elements for personal, academic, and professional development during the internship. Depending on the circumstances, these sessions may be held in person or virtually.

#### **Progress Reports**

The progress report should document the student's progress toward achieving their learning objectives during the internship. Students also document the

challenges they face and how they try to deal with those challenges. Students submit two progress reports in the course of their internship experience.

### **Internship Performance**

This evaluation by the Academic Director assesses the student's internship experience, overall professional achievements, and self-growth.

### **Oral Presentation**

In the presentation, you should provide a succinct and clear description of the internship experience, a brief history of the organization where you interned, the activities undertaken, and key insights gained that are related to the core program themes. You should demonstrate effective management of the discussion with the audience and attend to the aesthetic elements of the delivery.

### **Final Paper**

Students are expected to submit, at minimum, 15-20 pages final paper at the end of their internship experience. The final paper should include a title, list of acknowledgments, and an abstract. The paper should also have an introduction which describes the work and history of the organization and incorporates several references, detailed description of the activities accomplished, and strong and innovative aspects of the organization. The final paper must include thoughtfully articulated analytical writing that addresses positionality and ethics, and connects learning at the internship to the broader themes of the semester program and/or the investigation of one or more specific questions. The paper should be well written, well organized, and aesthetically pleasing. A summary of the final paper assessment rubric will be shared with students in advance. (Example at the end of syllabus.)

### Assessment of the Internship

Discussion and Four Reflection Sessions 10%

Three Journal Reports 15%

Internship Mentor Evaluation [from the NGO] 20%

Oral Presentation 10%

Final Paper 45%

### Grading Scale

94-100% A Excellent

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 Fail

### Expectations and Policies

- Show up prepared, on time. Comply with organization rules.
- Have the internship journal and progress report assignments completed on schedule and done according to specified requirements.
- Ask questions when in the field/office. Engage in the everyday life of the organization and initiate interaction.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (those of your internship supervisor and colleagues, classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on-site 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.

### Academic Policies

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. Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto: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>.