

## Beginning Samoan SAMO-1003 (3 credits)

### Samoa: Social and Environmental Change in Oceania

*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

The language course is designed to prepare students for daily social interactions with Samoans. Learning basic language will help students to enrich all aspects of their experience abroad. It will help students develop basic communication skills and provide a grammatical foundation that will allow them to communicate with Samoans.

#### Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Master common greeting words and interact with Samoans on a daily basis;
- Ask and answer biographical questions and introduce oneself in Samoan;
- Formulate basic Samoan sentences using VSOLT format;
- Use question words and ask and answer questions effectively;
- Describe activities completed in the past;
- Talk about one's family using photos;
- Master the use of independent and dependent pronouns in a variety of tenses;
- Write journal entries about a variety of topics;
- Discuss the weather;
- Negotiate the use of buses and taxis to get from place to place;
- Use Samoan in shopping situations;
- Express thanks appropriately in a variety of settings.

#### Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English and Samoan, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well as the nuances of Samoan culture as well as social and environmental change through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

#### Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process

that is not confined to the formal curriculum; “knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

The language program begins with an introduction to Samoan sounds and structures in Hawaii with Associate Professor John Mayer, Chair of the Department of Indo-Pacific Languages and Literature at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Once in Samoa, the first 20 hours of language will be conducted in a university setting with approximately two hours of lessons per day. Following this, students will travel to a rural village where they will spend one week with individual families and continue group lessons for part of the day. Lessons will continue after the village stay.

Students will use a Samoa language book designed for SIT students. Language materials are competency based and include sample language, vocabulary, grammar and cultural notes and worksheets. Song and dance will also be included in the program. Language games and activities will provide further language learning opportunities. Class attendance and participation are emphasized, and students are encouraged to use language as much as possible outside of the classroom. Assessment will include both oral interviews and written exams.

## **Assignments and Evaluation**

### Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

Students will complete both written and oral assignments. Two exams will be given and include both an oral and written component. Final grades will be assigned by the Academic Director and will be based on the following criteria:

#### 1) Participation (10%)

This 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, taking notes.

- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; not keeping others waiting.
- Displaying Respect – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities

## 2) Journal Keeping (20%)

Your journal will be marked three times in the semester. Each journal entry will expand on concepts of the self and the family. You will be encouraged through your journal entries to explore concepts of Family in Samoa.

- First entry: Myself and my American Family
- Second entry: My urban Homestay
- Third entry: My Village visit Homestay

## 3) Worksheets (30%)

Class worksheets will be collected and marked each week

## 4) Exam Written (20%)

## 5) Exam Oral (20%)

### Assessment

- Participation – 10%
- Journal Keeping – 20%
- Worksheets – 20%
- Written assignments – 10%
- Exam Written – 20%
- Exam Oral – 20%

### Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

### Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and

progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Example: Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

### Grading Scale

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

### **Program Expectations**

- 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 accordingly 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 (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the 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.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our

classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.

- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

### **SIT Policies and Resources**

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Topic Overview by Week**

##### **Week One: Approximately five classroom hours of language**

Topics: Introduction to Samoan sounds, stock expressions, greeting people, asking for help with language

Tasks: Worksheets, greeting people; learning at least 20 new words

##### **Week Two: Approximately ten hours of formal classroom instruction plus sessions on Samoan song and dance**

Topics: Introducing self, counting, meeting, and taking leave, asking where, talking about family, forming Samoan sentences

Tasks: Worksheets, journal entries about self and family, explain photos of family; written quiz, Samoan song and dance

##### **Week Three: Approximately ten hours of formal classroom instruction plus sessions on Samoan song and dance**

Topics: Using pronouns and various tenses both negative and positive; Asking and answering questions, having a meal with a family, and food preferences

Tasks: Worksheets, journal entries, grammar review

**Week Four: Village stay: ten formal classroom hours plus activities, surveys, and conversations with host families in Samoan (additional 5 hours)**

Topics: Talking about the past; activities, wishes, permission; connecting and descriptive words

Tasks: Design and present language games, worksheets, complete language journal activities with family, survey task.

**Week Five: Final five hours of classroom instruction, revision, and assessment**

Topics: Weather, shopping, using transport, revision

Tasks: Language Exam; Written and Oral Proficiency Exam