Course Description
The program seeks to teach through classroom and field-based experiences. Students are engaged in lectures, visits and discussions related to local and global issues that impact Brazil particularly the northeastern region of the country. The most prominent areas of concern are the global culture of violence, capitalism, racism, sexism, development and under-development, poverty, healthcare, education, housing, economic disparities, land tenure, relations between the “developed” and “undeveloped” countries, alternative non-capitalist models of social and economic relations and building a global culture of justice and peace, which affect a large number of socially excluded people.

Course Objectives
The objectives for this course are to:

• expose each student to the political, social, and cultural realities of Brazil, particularly the northeast region; to foster an understanding of Brazilian attitudes, behaviors, practices, and values; and to become aware of Brazilian political and social issues fostered by neo-liberal economic policies and an incomplete transition from a military dictatorship to a civilian democracy;

• facilitate access to leading analysts and intellectuals of Brazil, thereby challenging students to make the connections between their life experiences, course readings, lectures and excursions and the life experiences of the people of the northeast region;

• explore the ways we make sense of the world and particular social processes; to deepen intercultural and interpersonal awareness, understanding, and respect, and thus enhance students’ abilities to interact sensitively and responsibly within other cultures;

• discuss state based and individual based violence, justice and peace as broad concepts, related to quality of life;

• engage in critical, reflective dialog regarding global human and natural conditions and the alternative visions of human and natural engagement;

• develop Portuguese language skills, with an emphasis on oral expression and comprehension;

• promote dialog related to multiculturalism, inclusion, diversity and social justice as fundamental rights and principles of human and natural life;

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• foster a more sophisticated awareness of field-based learning processes outside the traditional institutional setting, to increase the capacity to think critically and creatively, and to integrate and analyze information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, thereby developing self-motivated learning skills.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students should have attained the following:
• Selected and finalized the ISP topic within the first three weeks of the semester program.
• Extensive experience formulating, researching, organizing and implementing a small-scale, micro field-based project in an international, cross-cultural setting.
• Acquired experience establishing contacts and implementing logistical plans related to the execution of a field study project in an international, cross-cultural setting.
• Established cultural skills allowing for intellectual engagement and inquiry with a local community and local professionals around a subject of importance and concern to the local community.
• Developed a strong awareness of research and relational ethics in an international, cross-cultural setting.
• Elaborated a comprehensive research product utilizing an anthropological methodology.

Independent Study Project
The Independent Study Project (ISP) is designed as the culmination of the semester program incorporating all of skills acquired during the other program components: Intensive Portuguese, the Culture, Development and Social Justice Academic Seminar and the Field Study Seminar. The ISP provides the students with the unique opportunity to conduct an original and independent field study of a topic of particular interest to them over a one-month period. The ISP requires intense responsibility and commitment on the part of the students.

Students are required to submit a brief description of a proposed area of study as part of the admissions process. In most cases, that topic is then revised once the student is in country, or a new topic is developed from lectures, discussions and field trips. The final topic must have a direct or indirect relationship with an active non-governmental or grass roots organization or social movement. With the assistance of the SIT Brazil-Fortaleza staff, a Project Advisor who is appropriate to the student’s topic is then selected. Project Advisors are usually host country nationals who are experienced field professionals, have a thorough knowledge and intimate understanding of the student’s ISP theme, and who will work closely with that student during the ISP portion of the program, helping them to frame their research and employ appropriate methodologies. ISP advisors assist students during all stages of the ISP, from data collection, analysis of approaches, and interpretation of findings to the written presentation of results.

In conducting their projects, students directly utilize the field-based learning concepts and skills presented in the Field Study Seminar plus the insights they have gained from the other program components. In the process, they have the opportunity to hone their skills in dealing with, and learning from the unexpected while, at the same time, accomplishing a significant academic project in a challenging new environment. The ISP normally results in oral and written presentations.

ISP Objectives
• To select, design, and implement an individual project that investigates a dimension of Northeastern Brazil’s life and culture.

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• To provide students with an opportunity to conduct original, independent research.
• To increase each student’s capacity for critical thinking and analysis.
• To synthesize information obtained from primary and secondary sources.
• To learn and effectively utilize a field study report format.
• To develop self-confidence and an understanding of field-based education.

Sample ISPs
“Alabes: Ketu Drummers of Candomble”
“Violent Lives and Inherited Destinies in Pirambu: A Case Study”
“Denial of Race in Brazil’s Public Health”
“Flor do Sol Street Theater Group: Creating New Cultural Leaders”
“The Qualitative Impact of Sterilization on Women’s Sexual Health in Fortaleza, Ceará”

Course Requirements
Students spend a minimum of 120 hours on their projects. These hours, documented in the ISP fieldwork journal, include time spent reading, interviewing, making field observations, writing, and consulting with the Academic Director, as well as approximately ten hours of meetings with the project advisor. The final product is generally a paper of 30 to 40 pages and a 30-minute oral presentation to colleagues, the Academic Director, project advisors, and students and faculty of the Brazil-United States Institute.

Student Assessment and Evaluation
In conjunction with the project advisor, the Academic Director evaluates student performance. Assessment of the written work and oral presentation is based on the accuracy of the information conveyed, the breadth and appropriateness of sources, the depth of analysis and insight, and the quality of expression. Special emphasis is placed on students’ abilities to integrate primary and secondary sources and to present their findings in a clear, organized, adequately documented and well-synthesized format.

Grading Scales and Criteria
Grades are given both fairly and rigorously and in accordance with the system below. They will reflect a combination of absolute quality of performance, progress made, the ability to take into account and assimilate the Academic Director’s and the teachers’ advice in assessing the work done. An “A” letter grade reflects exceptional work, perfect combination of academic competences and personal research and analysis. It shows great ability to integrate field-based investigation and personal reflection into a structured and well argued paper. A “B” letter grade reflects serious and methodical work as well as a substantial effort at analyzing and understanding cross-cultural issues. A “C” letter grade shows the work meets the requirements but needs more in-depth reflection and personal involvement. A “D” letter grade is insufficient and clearly reflects lack of work or serious deficiencies.

The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-76%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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70-73% C-
67-69% D+
64-66% D
below 64 F

Please see the SIT Study Abroad student handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

Please note, the syllabus, course content, lecturers, and readings may modified by the Academic Director in order to better suit the needs of the course and its participants. Should any change of class topics or lecturers may be necessary, student will be promptly notified.

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