Course Syllabus

Memory and Reconciliation in South Africa

POLI 3000 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
South Africa: Social and Political Transformation

Course Description

Memory and Reconciliation in South Africa encompasses 3-credits (45 class hours), with the course material delivered through the examination of three interrelated modules: 1. Challenges of transition, 2. Re-membering the past, and 3. Challenges of reconciliation. Lectures and discussions aim to provide students with a solid grasp of the historical background of South Africa's apartheid system, contemporary developments leading to the dismantling of that system, the visions for post-apartheid South Africa, the political, economic and social structure of the future South Africa, the role of memory in healing the trauma of the past, and an anthropological and cultural look at South African society. With this foundational understanding, students critically examine issues of transition in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa marked by political change and a new political order, transformations in the educational system, reforms to the South African health system, housing, and an emerging and evolving middle class. Course materials are delivered through a series of lectures, assigned readings, educational excursions, and field experiences from the program’s base in KwaZulu-Natal and select locations around the country.

Course Objectives

Memory and Reconciliation in South Africa has an interdisciplinary and critical focus encompassing 45 academic hours (3 credits). Its main objectives are to:

- Provide students with the necessary foundational understanding of South Africa's political, economic, social and cultural makeup from multiple sites, historical vantage points, and from critical perspectives;
- Illustrate the role of individual and collective memory in the process of healing, reconciliation and nation building;
- Examine contemporary transitional issues in South Africa through a multidisciplinary lens;
- Investigate the issues and challenges surrounding peace, reconciliation and coexistence in South Africa, including an in-depth look into the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as applicable local conceptions and knowledge systems for dealing with the legacy of Apartheid and injustice;

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• Introduce students to the unique resources available in South Africa through contact with the expertise of host nationals, including local communities, practitioners, and academics;
• Encourage students, through written work and discussion sessions, to process and integrate substantial amounts of information, different schools of thought, and varied types of presentations; and
• Provide further context and understanding for the course on Development, Transformation and Nation Building, in addition to the other program components.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students should have attained the ability to:
• Articulate and assess issues of transition in post-Apartheid South Africa, from multiple perspectives, with demonstrable awareness of its complexity;
• Demonstrate critical understanding of South Africa’s historical and contemporary political, social, economic and cultural milieu;
• Discuss the role of memory in the process of healing trauma and seeking reconciliation;
• Demonstrate knowledge of the complex relationship between justice, reconciliation and coexistence within the complex web of identity formation in contemporary South Africa; and
• Integrate knowledge from field-based experiences with a select community to information gathered from secondary sources on particular issues related to the course themes.

Course Requirements
Readings
You are responsible for all the required readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will help you place the classes in their context, to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions, and to deepen your knowledge of particular topics or issues discussed in class. Engaging with supplementary readings will provide additional depth of understanding of the events leading up to South Africa’s transition in 1994 which will inform your learning.

Selected Readings


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**Selected Fiction Readings**

There is a large and continually growing body of fictional writings on South Africa. Listed below are some South African fiction authors along with their more noted works. Any of these texts will add to your knowledge base on South Africa.


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**PLEASE NOTE:** COURSE CONTENTS, LECTURERS AND READINGS MAY BE MODIFIED AS NEEDED. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED.

**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

**Assignments**

Students will be expected to prepare for, attend, and participate in the lectures, discussions, and field visits. They will be expected to complete all assignments in a professional, timely manner. The following breakdown of grades will be used to arrive at the final letter grade, which is determined by the Academic Director (AD) and the Academic Coordinator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused-Study: Memory (paper)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused-Study: Memory (oral presentation)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Seminar Paper:** Reading, thinking, and writing are essential components within field-based education. Critically exploring what others have written on a topic can help to suggest potential frameworks for both understanding what one experiences in the field, and interpretations that can be “tested” in your own work in the field. One context where such an exploration of the literature would be useful is in relation to your ISPs.

The seminar paper offers you the time and space to explore the professional literature on a topic of your choice relevant to issues of transition, memory, and/or reconciliation in South Africa. While separate from your ISP for grading purposes, the seminar paper may be used as an opportunity to prepare for your ISP. You are not required to submit a seminar paper on the precise topic of your ISP, but reviewing complementary literature may indeed help you to develop a more grounded theoretical framework within which to frame your ISP and/or make sense of your ISP experiences. You are free to integrate the seminar paper into your ISP as a literature review (simply refer to it if appropriate), or not mention it at all – this is up to you. If you use any part of your seminar paper in your ISP, however, please note that the sections of the ISP taken or paraphrased from the paper do not count towards the page requirement of the ISP. Your seminar paper is to be based on the literature, i.e., secondary sources, while ISPs are, by definition, focused on the collection and analysis of primary data. We encourage you to carefully integrate the seminar paper into your ISP if appropriate, and doing so is likely to increase the overall quality, sharpen the argument, and contextualize the findings of the ISP. But please remember that the thrust of your ISP is upon the collection and analysis of primary data.

**Requirements**

The seminar paper must be structured along the lines of a standard academic paper – clear introduction, thesis, engaging and rigorous argument, insightful conclusions and recommendations, and consistent referencing. While there is no formal page requirement for this assignment, it is difficult to imagine that one could adequately engage the literature on a particular topic relevant to in less than, say, 3000 words (about 8-10 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced).

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Objectives
The purpose of the seminar paper is to:

- Demonstrate substantive knowledge of a body of literature on a topic of particular interest.
- Provide an opportunity to read on and around a potential ISP topic in order to articulate a theoretical framework upon which to base their ISP field study.
- Encourage students to practice literature search, selection, synthesis, and writing skills.

Assessment
The seminar paper will be based on the following criteria:

- It must be structurally sound. It should include a statement of the topic/question to be addressed and a quality literature review. It should be in essay form, not an annotated “list” of articles; emphasize findings of previous research; point out trends, themes and note gaps; express personal opinion regarding quality and importance of cited research; use direct quotations sparingly and only when appropriate; and contain a complete list of references for citations.
- Content: development of thesis, responsiveness to question; mature position, strong argument; supports case with evidence, accurate information; and works reviewed are recent and appropriate to the thesis, logical structure and sequence.
- Quality of the writing: grammar, syntax, spelling, and a clear, concise, and engaging writing style.

Focused-Study: Memory: You will be required to utilize archival sources or individual/collective memory from your host community in order to remember the past. The results are to be presented in the form of a storyboard of popular memory, and illustration of how recollecting the past can inform the present and future.

Requirements
Your storyboard should be mounted on a board no smaller than A2 size (similar to poster board size) and should include both visual and textual elements that illustrate the particular memories.

Objectives
The purpose of the memory exercise to:

- Engage students with the archive of individual or collective memory;
- Sharpen students’ ability to incorporate different types of evidence (quotes, statistics, personal anecdotes, photographic or material artifacts) within their story board and utilize the power of oral histories.
- Encourage students to practice creativity on assembling and analyzing data.

Assessment
The storyboard will be assessed in relation to:

- Content: quotes, statistics, personal anecdotes, photographic or material artifacts;
- Quality of the text/interpretation supporting visual elements;
- Creativity: Everyone’s memory is unique, and you are encouraged to be creative with your presentation;
- Presentation of your storyboard to the class.

Participation: Criteria for assessment of participation, which counts for 20 percent of your grade, is as follows.

- Attendance: promptness to class, and positive presence in class.
• **Active listening:** paying attention in class/during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm, entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.
• **Involvement in class discussions:** either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge and information.
• **Group accountability:** participates as part of a group during field excursions and classes.
• **Respect:** culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers, and communities.

Attendance at all seminars and field activities is mandatory unless indicated as optional on the schedule. Failure to attend, or repeated late arrival, will lower your grade substantially, if not jeopardize your standing in the program. Please note that while strong participation on all the above matters will get you close to full points for this component of your grade, a failure to fully participate in any program activity, as determined by the Academic Director, is grounds not only for failure of the, but also for academic and/or behavioral probation and other disciplinary action, up to and possibly including dismissal from the program.

**Grading Scale:** The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</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>
<tr>
<td>70-73%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-66%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below 64</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Criteria**

All grades assigned will take into account the students’ special circumstances and challenges they face as foreign students. An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of Class Participation, an “A” grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all academic lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students’ participation will be monitored and taken into account.

**Program Calendar**

Course materials will be delivered through the examination of two interrelated modules, as found below. The approach will be integrative and experiential, and will aim to develop a multi-sided and historical understanding of the South African experience, with particular reference to social, economic and political transition. Please note that module-specific syllabi, with readings and other detailed information, will be made available to students as the course progresses.

**Module 1: South Africa: Re-membering the past**

This module engages with notions of both individual and collective memory as a tool for collecting and re-collecting oral histories of past struggles in South Africa. It demonstrates to students the power of memory as a tool for moving between states of transition to that of reconciliation; and

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Module 2: The challenges of reconciliation
This module will be taught in Durban. We will look at issues surrounding peace, reconciliation, and coexistence in South Africa. These will include the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), race, racism, identity, peace and conflict resolution in South Africa, the concept of Ubuntu and traditional knowledge systems, and the process of healing the wounds and memories of apartheid. This module will also look into the delicate issues of identity development and reclamation in the new South Africa.

Module 3: State of the nation
In this module students will engage in a broad range of lectures that will serve as a broad framing of where South Africa is currently in terms of sociopolitical and economic transformation and developmental deficits. It will focus on the challenges of undoing the past and will utilize a political simulation exercise/game to achieve its objectives.

Student Expectations

Class Participation
Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

PLEASE NOTE: All classes leave ¼ of the scheduled time for the purpose of class discussion of the lecture and/or readings

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.