



## Internship & Seminar

ITRN 3000 (5 credits/150 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
Australia: Sustainability and Environmental Action

**PLEASE NOTE:** This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because seminars develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual seminar content varies from semester to semester.

### Description

This seminar consists of a five-week internship with an environmental non-profit organization, or a government department or agency focused on environmental issues. Permission may be granted to undertake an internship with a for-profit entity but this will only be given if the entity is primarily focused on environmental outcomes. The aim of an internship is to enable the student to gain valuable internship experience in the field of sustainability and enhance their skills in an international internship environment. A minimum of 150 hours must be spent interning for the organization.

While SIT will suggest organizations, which are willing to take on our students as interns, it is ultimately each student's responsibility to apply for and secure an internship placement. Whether a student is accepted at any particular organization will, in large part, depend on the organization's requirements in that semester and on the student's skills, and academic and employment background. The organization and the student's internship activities, including the Internship Learning Agreement, must be approved by SIT's academic director having regard to both the program's academic goals and safety requirements. Normally only one student at a time can intern with any particular organization. The internship must also be approved by the Local Review Board for ethics considerations. Regular meetings are held with your SIT advisor to review the student's progress in setting up and undertaking the internship and learning associated with the internship experience. Students must decide whether they want to undertake an internship or Independent Study Project by the end of the second week of the semester.

Students undertaking an internship must be concurrently enrolled in the Research Methods and Ethics course, which will help prepare them to successfully undertake the internship, and as part of this course they will submit a detailed proposal before beginning their internship. The proposal will include an extensive literature review covering the background and history of the organization, the issues it focuses on, how it fits in the context of similar organizations in Australia, and how it advances sustainability.

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Students, in consultation with their internship organization and their SIT advisor, will identify a focus project that they will spend the majority of their internship hours interning on and a responsible person at the organization who will act as their internship supervisor. Regular reflection and assessment meetings are held with the academic director and/or internship coordinator to review the progress of the internship and learning associated with the internship experience.

The students complete an internship and submit a focus project paper in which they process their learning experience on the internship, analyze an issue important to the organization, and/or design a socially responsible solution to a problem identified by the organization. Approved in advance by the Academic Director, SIT's Local Review Board (for ethical clearance purposes), and the internship supervisor, the internship focus project may involve interviews and other data collection methods relevant to achieving internship learning goals. The paper and final presentation reveal how those goals are linked to the SIT program theme of sustainability and its Critical Global Issue focus and how the student intends to apply these skills and knowledge upon return to the United States. The paper should also document a comprehensive schedule and the specific skills and knowledge acquired through the experience. Rubrics for the focus project paper and presentation will be shared with students.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The Internship seminar comprises 150 hours of physical time at the internship. Upon completion of the seminar, students will be able to:

- Apply relevant ethical concepts in the undertaking of their internship in the Australian context;
- Describe, analyze, and synthesize their learning experience in the form of an internship paper;
- Articulate the output of the internship experience in the form of an oral presentation;
- Show understanding of how the concepts of sustainability are applied in their internship organization;
- Use effective field study methods and techniques to gather data;
- Gain meaningful and practical internship experience in their chosen field.

### **Language of Instruction**

This course is taught in English.

### **Module 1: Making the Most of Your Internship**

During this module, students will prepare for the internship and the writing of the internship paper, have regular meetings with the academic director, reflect on the internship experience, and learn how to use their experience for future professional growth.

#### Session 1: Setting the Stage

This session reviews objectives for the internship. Students meet with the academic director following confirmation of their internship placement and discuss expectations, timeframes and other logistics, structural components of the final internship paper, content, layout, and general guidelines.

#### Sessions 2 & 3: The Internship Experience: Review and Reflection

These sessions focus on the review and reflection process of the internship experience. Students set weekly learning objectives, keep an internship journal, and write two progress reports on their learning experience.

#### *Required Readings:*

Readings are assigned to meet the needs of the current term.

#### *Recommended Readings:*

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Switzer, Frederick and King, Mary (2013) *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole (chapter 12).

## **Module 2: Internship Final Paper and Presentation Design and Content**

This module focuses on the design and mechanics of the internship final paper. The module covers the final paper's structural design, organization, and guidelines for effective self-reflection on the internship experience and appraisal of acquired internship experience.

### Session 1: Description of the Host Institution

This session focuses on the general guidelines for the description of the host institution. The session walks the student through samples of a brief description (one page) of the host institution for the internship, the nature of the services offered, and a profile of the customers who use them. The session also highlights the importance of including brochures or collateral material that further describes the institution.

### Session 2: Description of Tasks Performed on the Internship

This session provides guidelines for effective ways of describing tasks performed as an intern. The session covers the importance of third-person narration (as if the student, acting as a manager, were writing it for a new employee/associate), outline form (except for the internship summary section), and headings for each of the sessions. A suggested outline for this description includes:

- Internship role/title and place of employment
- Internship summary—narrative summary of the activities of the position
- Qualifications—education and experience required and/or desirable
- Internship conditions—uniform requirements, physical surroundings, internship days, hours, etc.
- Internship relationships—who is the mentor and to whom does the student report
- Specific duties and responsibilities—a list should be provided to indicate all duties performed by the individual in this position

### Section 3: Output of the Internship Experience

This session focuses on output of the internship experience, which may include a proposal for a strategic response to an existing problem, a creation of a sustainable plan, a grant proposal, or research that responds to the need of an organization that links back to the program theme and the *Climate and Environment Critical Global Issue*.

### Session 4: Personal Assessment of the Internship Performance

This session provides guidelines for an assessment of the key learning milestones acquired on the internship experience, the challenges faced, and the possible impact of the experience on the student's academic and professional career. The session also covers a reflection on the internship experience, including the output of the internship (addressed in Session 3), as it relates to the critical global issue central to the program theme.

### Session 5: Oral Presentation of the Internship Final Paper

This module focuses on the mechanics and guidelines for the presentation of the internship final paper. The presentation should take 20 minutes and students are encouraged to use audiovisual aid/handouts to facilitate their presentations.

Session content includes:

Presenting a brief overview of the internship experience

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Communicating assigned responsibilities and tasks performed  
Articulating major output of the experience  
Providing personal assessment of the internship performance.  
*Required Readings:*  
Readings are assigned to meet the needs of the current term.

*Recommended Readings:*

Switzer, Frederick and King, Mary (2013) *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

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

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

#### Session 1: Talking About the Internship Experience

This session allows students to reflect on the internship experience and process the learning that occurred in a safe and supportive context. The internship may have been a different experience than expected, may challenge the student's expectations of interning 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 internship, and setting realistic goals for the future.

Session content includes:

- Processing the End of the Internship Experience
- Closure with Colleagues and Supervisors
- Articulating the Experience and Setting Plans for the Future
- Session 2: How to Include Your Internship on Your Résumé
- During this session, students will learn appropriate ways of including their internship on their résumés and in online professional platforms such as LinkedIn.

#### Session 3: Next Steps

This final session occurs in the final week 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. They will discuss ways to describe the experience gained and skills learned in their internship in cover letters and how to use this experience for future professional growth.

### **THE FINAL PAPER**

The student will submit a 15-20 page paper consisting of the following sections:

- A title, abstract and acknowledgements
- Learning goals and a justification of those goals
- Description of the host institution, its history and how it advances sustainability and your focus project and the issues related to it.
- Description of tasks performed on the internship
- The results of the focus project
- Personal assessment of your internship performance and learning and how this will be applied upon return to the USA.

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## **GUIDELINES FOR THE FINAL PAPER**

The expectations for each section of the final paper are outlined below.

**Learning goals and justification:** A short justification briefly explaining why you chose to do an internship, why you chose your particular organization and the goals of your internship and why they are important in the context of sustainability.

**Description of host institution and focus project:** A minimum 1500 word literature review giving: the background and history of the organization, the work it does and how it fits in the context of similar organizations in Australia, and how it advances sustainability, the background of your focus topic and the issues related to it.

**Description of tasks performed:** This should include a listing of the tasks you performed and the days and hours that you interned, the methods you used to gather data on your organization and any ethical considerations. This must be written in a first person active voice and make clear what you did as opposed to what others in your team did.

**Output of the focus project:** This will vary depending on the nature of the project. Expectations for this section of the report must be clarified with your SIT advisor well before you begin writing your paper.

**Personal assessment of the experience:** In the context of sustainability, detail what you learnt from your internship experience and how you intend to apply these new skills and knowledge when you return to the USA.

### **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. Likewise, respect, care and attention should be given to protecting, conserving and restoring the natural environment.

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. Severe 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 present their work to the group. Assessment of both written work and the oral presentation is based on the quality of research and academic scholarship and adherence to the highest ethical standards.

#### Description of Assignments

##### Progress Reports

The progress report should document the progress of the student's professional and personal learning on the internship. Students document aspects of the challenges they face and how they try to deal with those

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challenges. Students submit four progress reports (1 per week) in the course of their internship experience.

### Discussion and Reflection Sessions

Discussion and reflection sessions take place on a weekly basis. Students are expected to share their personal experience in the internship and reflect on the professional learning process. These discussion and reflection sessions are key elements in the process of the learning experience and the student's professional achievements within the host organization.

### 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, and the responsibilities undertaken. The oral presentation should relate the learning associated with the focus project and reflect on its relevance to the program theme and Critical Global Issue. You should demonstrate effective management of the discussion with the audience and attend to the aesthetic elements of the delivery. A summary of the oral presentation assessment rubric will be shared with students in advance.

### Final Paper:

Students are expected to submit a 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 summarizes the work and history of the organization and incorporates a number of references, detailed description of internship accomplishments, and strong and innovative aspects of the organization. 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.

### Assessment of the Internship

4 Progress Reports	10%
Discussion and Reflection Sessions	10%
Internship Performance	35%
Oral Presentation	10%
Final Paper	35%

### 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

### **Expectations and Policies**

Show up prepared, on time, and appropriately dressed for your internship. Comply with organization rules.

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Have progress report assignments completed on schedule and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.

Ask questions when in the field/office. Engage yourself in 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 onsite 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.

**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.

**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>.

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