

Research Project in Arctic Climate Protection

ISPR 3000 (6 credits / 180 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Iceland and Greenland: Climate Change and The Arctic

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

Description

The goal of the Research Project in Arctic Climate Protection is to provide a forum design for students to learn from the local community and think through innovative interdisciplinary approaches and technologies that could help stabilize the Arctic climate in the face of global climate change. The protection of the climate therefore aids in the protection of flora and fauna populations, human communities, and landscapes through the design/adoption of a renewable energy, behavioral practice, or a creative method/approach to track climate change in the Arctic. Students pursue their own interests within climate change by conducting an original research project with support from program faculty and partners in Iceland. Particular emphasis is placed on real-world relevance, interdisciplinary perspectives on climate change, and connecting with current research in Iceland. Another aim of the Research Project is for students to build collaborative partnerships with local scientific and indigenous communities for the enhancement of innovative approaches to climate change. Students can choose to work on a project independently or in a small group.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the seminar, students will be able to:

- Design a project proposal, delimit a research question, and define methodology;
- Gather relevant research and data and interact with experts in the field;
- Demonstrate reciprocity in relation to the local community and understand importance of community in project design;
- Contribute to group tasks, participate in problem-solving, and develop teamwork skills, OR manage a thorough research project independently;

- Complete and present a project (either independently or in small group) that addresses an innovative approach to the protection of the Arctic climate.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Course Schedule

The Research Project in Arctic Climate Protection will provide students with an opportunity to provide a design or research on developments in the Arctic on an issue related to climate, ecosystems, biodiversity, exploitation of resources, or socio-economic conditions.

As the Research Project in Arctic Climate Protection is the academic culmination of the learning experience, students are encouraged to start actively thinking about their research project and sharing ideas as early in the program as possible. Students should also decide early in the semester whether they would like to work on a project independently or in a small group. The academic director (AD) will make frequent check-ins with students to determine the progress of these decisions and advise students as necessary. The AD will facilitate the selection of small groups based on student interest in the various potential research topics. By the end of the first five weeks, students will decide whether they will do their project independently or work in a small group.

All components of the program, beginning with orientation and including the thematic seminars The Arctic: Changing Ecosystems and Resilience, Climate Modeling and Carbon Management, and Research Methods and Ethics in the Arctic; the homestay; educational excursions; and associated forms of cultural interaction within the host society must be used diligently to refine and deepen thinking and the production of an original research project.

Ongoing discussion with the AD, while primarily concerning the research topic, must also enable students to identify available resources, including an appropriate research advisor. Ultimately, the successful completion of the Research Project depends, to no small degree, on the methodological rigor, originality, and sophistication with which the student group or individual attends to the research topic.

All Research Project topics must receive advanced approval by the AD. Students are required to submit a formal research proposal as part of the Research Methods and Ethics in the Arctic course, including a plan for implementation to ensure that the project is conducted in an ethical, responsible, and culturally appropriate manner.

The student will spend a minimum of 180 hours on the Research Project with a majority of this work conducted in the field (as opposed to library research, for example). This includes time spent reading, developing contacts, interviewing, collecting data, making field observations, writing, and meeting with the AD and Research Project advisor.

Student groups or individual students are responsible for scheduling at least 3-5 advising meetings to review their Research Project proposal and planning. Periodic progress conferences will be held with the AD as needed.

Readings:

While the majority of the Research Project work should be conducted in the field, readings in preparation for, and throughout the Research Project period, are strongly encouraged and will be based on the specific topic of study.

Potential topic areas for the Research Project in Arctic Climate Protection include:

- Thinning of ice sheets
- Melting permafrost
- Ecosystem carbon sequestration
- Renewable energy
- Arctic air pollution
- Climate change impacts on traditional lifestyles
- Communicating climate science

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Papers and presentations will be graded on style and structure, depth of analysis, and synthesis of secondary and primary sources. Specific criteria for assessment are listed in the rubrics of assessment for individual and group projects.

Description of Assignments:

The Research Project in Arctic Climate Protection will include a typed and bound academic paper documenting methodology, including ethics, issue analysis, data collection, accessibility of sources, and challenges encountered. The project may also include interactive or creative components. In addition, a 20-minute oral presentation highlighting research findings and analyses will be given by the individual or group to colleagues, community members, program staff, the AD, the Research Project advisor, and other invited guests.

Assessment:

Research Project (including paper and any interactive/creative components)	70%
Research Project Presentation	20%
Group Participation OR Initiative to Work Independently	10%

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. 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 according 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 we engage 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.

Student research is a product of fieldwork and, as such, students have an obligation to assess both the positive and negative consequences of their field study. Ethical fieldwork, as stipulated in the SIT Statement of Ethics, results in products that are shared with local and academic communities; therefore, copies of Research Projects are returned to the sponsoring institutions and the host communities, at the discretion of the institution(s) and/or community involved. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may archive, copy, or convert the Research Project for non-commercial use, for preservation purposes, and to ensure future accessibility. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad archives the Research Project in the permanent collection at the SIT Study Abroad local country program office and/or at any World Learning office. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad has a non-exclusive, perpetual right to store and make available, including electronic online open access, to the Research Project. Students retain all ownership rights of the Research Project product and retain the right to use all, or part, of the project in future works. Please refer to the Student Handbook or the Access, Use, and Publication of ISP form.

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 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>.