Course Description
This course examines social, environmental, economic and political issues Pacific Island communities face as they move into a more globalized world. Globalization is not new to small island states. It began during the colonial period with Christianity as one of the key global forces introduced in the early 1800’s. Free trade, mobility of resources and advances in communication and technology have also played a part.

The course looks at the role environment, natural history, climate change and natural disasters play in the settlement and livelihoods of Pacific Islanders. Climate change has been identified as the most pressing issue in the Pacific and has implications for a variety of sectors including agriculture, health, and development. Climate change is a profoundly human issue with human causes and consequences The interrelated issues of colonialism, development and globalization have set in place processes that have reduced resilience and increased exposure to uncertainty in these times of climate change. Adaptation and mitigation efforts address some of these issues. The economic, social, environmental, and cultural impacts of tourism and other aspects of development in small island state are also examined.

Through the complimentary lenses of globalization and climate change, the course examines a variety of contemporary issues including human rights, tourism and development, migration and remittances, health, education, youth and gender are examined from a number of perspectives. Homestays in American Samoa and Fiji allow students to see and discuss these issues first hand and examine mobility, urbanization, and poverty.

These issues critical to the future of Pacific communities are discussed in cooperation with the University of Hawai’i, the East-West Center, the National University of Samoa, American Samoa Community College and the University of the South Pacific in Alafua, Samoa and Suva, Fiji with support from additional local professionals.

The course is introduced during the first week of the program in Hawaii and touched upon at various points in the first half of the semester, but major topics of discussion which build on the Pacific Communities in Transition course take place in weeks 6-10 of the semester. A typical session in this course begins with a lecture followed by a discussion in a wide variety of settings ranging from university lecture halls, to
Excursions and homestays are integral to this course. Students experience culture and impacts of development in daily family life first hand in a variety of homestays. An excursion to the big island of Savai’i is the setting for natural history and geology lectures and activities as well as examination of climate change and tourism. A short visit to American Samoa provides first hand comparisons of development, social and climate change in the two Samoas. Interactions with American Samoa Community College peers provide insights into current social, political and environmental issues. An excursion to Fiji late in the program provides an opportunity compare and contrast the political, ethnic, environmental, and social issues in another Pacific Island nation. The theme of climate change is woven throughout the seminar, with a special emphasis on the impacts of natural disasters and rising sea levels on Pacific communities in Samoa, Fiji, American Samoa, and Hawaii.

Learning Outcomes
At the conclusion of this course it is expected that students will be able to:

- Analyze varying viewpoints, think critically and write a position paper about globalization, development, climate change or another key issue facing Samoa and the Pacific;
- Articulate the key impacts and implications of climate change for small islands and describe climate change adaptation and mitigation programs, plans and policies;
- Lead a one hour discussion on selected academic readings and contribute evaluative comments in peer learning discussions;
- Keep abreast of current events on a local and regional level, present a short newscast and contribute to discussions of current issues;
- Evaluate and think creatively about key political, economic, environmental and social issues facing Hawaii, Independent Samoa, American Samoa and Fiji;
- Integrate information gathered from primary resources available in Samoa with information presented by local Pacific scholars, professionals, and scholarly writings in a final written exam.

Course Requirements

Course Schedule

Module 1: Globalization and Social Change (10 hours)
This module looks at how modernization and globalization have impacted small islands states, beginning with a look at contemporary issues and social change in Hawaii.

Session 1: Globalization in the Pacific (1.5 hours)
This session discusses the characteristics of globalization and whether or not it is a new phenomenon. It considers the colonial period from 1870 -1914 as the first globalization and the post 1970 periods as the second. It considers whether globalization undermines the power of the state and discusses how free trade, mobility of resources, and the revolution of communication have impacted Pacific Island states.

Reading:

Session 2: Climate Change in the Pacific (1.5 hours)
This session provides an overview of Pacific climate and weather and examines potential climate change impacts in a variety of sectors from agriculture to urban development. It touches on key adaptation and

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mitigation opportunities and properties contributing to climate change resilience.

**Reading:**


**Session 3: Climate Change and Human Rights (1.5 hours)**
This session examines the interface between climate change and human rights and reconceptualizes climate change as a profoundly human issue with human causes and consequences. It looks at the role of the UN in promoting this agenda.

**Reading:**


**Session 4: Social Issues and Change in Oceania (1.5 hours)**
This lecture begins with a look at decolonization and its impact on the Pacific. It discusses development as trauma and some of the issues currently facing Pacific Islands. It compares and contrast issues facing various Pacific Islands.

**Reading:**

**Session 5: Religion and Social Transformation in Samoa (1.5 hour)**
Christianity is one of the key global forces that has shaped Samoa since the early 1800’s. This session lays the groundwork for the role religión plays in Samoan society.

**Reading:**

**Session 6: Social Interactions with Pacific Island Students (1.5 hour)**
Students are given opportunities to interact with Pacific Island students studying at the University of Hawaii. They learn specific facts about a number of Pacific Island countries and discuss, compare and contrast issues in different Pacific Islands.

**Session 7: Religion and Social Change (1 hour peer discussion)**
This session conducted in the village setting looks at the role of religion in everyday life and obligations and hardships it may create for families with whom the students are living.

**Reading:**

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Module Two: Environmental Impacts of Globalization and Climate Change (14 hours)
This module looks at the role environment, natural history, climate change and natural disasters play in the settlement and livelihoods of Pacific Islanders as well as the economic, social and cultural impacts of tourism in small island states. This module is completed in conjunction with a weeklong stay in Savaii, Samoa’s largest island. Students visit a number of archaeological and geologic sites including the most recent lava flows (1906). They stay at beach fales that continue to face challenges of coastal erosion, sea level rise and climate change. They evaluate contemporary settlement patterns and livelihoods, adaptations to current environmental challenges and ways in which they are/can be addressed.

Session I: Climate Change and Environmental Issues in Samoa (1.5 hour)
This session will set the stage for the Savaii excursion. It will help identify major environmental concerns in Samoa and the organizations and initiatives in place to address these issues. It begins to assess the impact of climate change and natural disasters on environment and ways in which Samoa and other Pacific Islands are adapting to climate change.

Reading:

Session 2: Vulnerability and Resilience (1 hour peer learning discussion)
Pacific islands and their inhabitants, are not essentially or inherently vulnerable. They were traditionally sites of resilience. Colonialism, development and globalization have set in place processes by which the resilience has been reduced and exposure increased. This discussion examines factors relating to vulnerability and resilience and gives insight into Pacific voices.

Readings:


Session 3; Tourism and Climate Change (1 hour peer learning discussion)
This session examines how the impacts of climate change threaten the sustainability of the Pacific tourism sector. The vulnerability and resilience of nature-based tourism in Vava’u are discussed and analyzed. The factors that increase vulnerability and resilience in Tonga can then be compared with Samoa.

Readings:


Session 4: Geology in Samoa (2.5 hours)
This session consists of a lecture and mini on-site lectures by a resident geologist who reviews the role of plate tectonics and formation of volcanic island chains. It discusses the formation of volcanic islands in contrast to atolls and compares their structures. Recent volcanism in Samoa is discussed before a visit is
made to some of the most recent lava flows in Samoa.

*Reading*

*Activity*: Examine human and natural environmental impacts on Volcanic lava fields at the Saleaula Lava flows and ruins (1906-1911).

**Session 5: Climate Change Seminar organized by SPREP, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (2.5 hours)**
This seminar will begin with a look at myths and realities of climate change and allow students to contribute and build on their knowledge of climate change. It will look at the climate, science and meteorology as well as oceans and ocean acidification.

**Session 6: Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in Samoa (1.5 hours)**
This session done in conjunction with the MNRE (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment) and SUNGO (Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations) will look at adaptation project sites.

*Reading*

**Session 7: Resilience is good for business (1 hour)**
This session in conjunction with the Samoa Tourist Authority looks at building back better through recovery programs for the Tourism Sector and partners.

*Reading*

**Session 8: Mainstreaming disaster and climate change resilience (1 hour)**
This session examines the 8th Strategy for the Development of Samoa and its vision to mainstream climate change into the 14 key outcomes of the plan. It will also look at the building the capacity of sectors to mainstream and implement disaster relief management and climate change.

*Reading*
Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2016-2020 (to be released soon)

**Session 9: Climate Change in American Samoa (1 hour)**
This session looks at climate change in American Samoa, disaster management plans and climate change adaptation projects.

*Reading*

**Session 10: Disasters and Relocation in Fiji (1 hour)**
Entire communities across the Pacific are making the complex and challenging decisions to leave their homelands and relocate to new environments that can sustain their livelihoods. This session looks at the some of the challenges relocation poses and the lessons learned in Fiji from recent cyclones in Fiji.

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Rich provides the information on the readings and syllabus:

Readings:
Dejarnette. (20160. Fiji’s Climate is bigger than Winston. www.bendejarnette.com/fiji-climate-story-bigger-than-winston/


Module Three: Migration. Urbanization and Social Change (11 hours)
This module looks at contemporary issues in independent Samoa and American Samoa. Homestays with American Samoa students’ families and educational exchanges within the classroom provide additional perspectives and insights into these issues. An excursion to Fiji allows for comparisons with another Pacific Island.

Session 1: Current Issues in the Pacific (1 hour peer discussion)
This session uses the voices of poets as the lens to examine a variety of current issues in the Pacific. These issues include environmental concerns, land and land tenure, corruption, population growth, urbanization and health. Students are encouraged to express their own ideas creatively.

Session 2: Contemporary Issues and Social Change in American Samoa (1.5 hours)
This session examines common values in the two Samoas and evaluates the role of the US plays in dealing with emerging social ills in an island territory. It gives students a chance to compare and contrast issues in the two Samoas.

Readings:


Session 3 American Samoa Homestay and Excursions (2 hours)
The visit to American Samoa allows students to analyze how the US has impacted the development of American Samoa and compare and contrast community life, social changes and key values and social issues in the two Samoas.

Session 4: Current Event newscast: (2.5 hours)
Throughout each module will present short newscasts. This encourages students to engage with local news media and issues.

Session 5: Migration and Change (1.5 hour peer discussion)
Island realms have increasingly become arenas of migration, mobility, movement and multiple meanings, as individuals and households move – whether physically metaphorically – between different worlds and different spaces. This session looks at recent movement which is multidirectional and multidimensional.

Readings:

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Session 6: Urbanization and Change (1 hour peer discussion)
This session looks at the settlement and social change at both a regional and local level. It looks at reasons for urbanization and some of the negative consequences.

Readings:


Session 7: Understanding Fiji (1.5 hour)
This session examines current political, ethnic and social issues that have impacted Fiji in recent decades. It evaluates issues of social change and how well Fiji is meeting the MDGs. Students are able to compare and contrast key cultural differences of everyday activities in indigenous and Indo Fijian homes during their respective homestays in Fiji.

Reading:

Module Four: Development and Social Change (10 hours)
This module is a final look at the issues of the semester and encourages students to reflect on the present day impacts of globalization. It examines the role aid plays and the challenge Pacific Islanders face as they try to blend traditional values with modern ones.

Session 1: Development in the Pacific Context (1.5 hours)
This session frames/reframes the Pacific in the context of development and examines the role culture plays in the development paradigm. It identifies issues and priorities and looks at the role of development and development aid partners.

Reading:

Session 2: Samoa and the Global Marketplace (1 hour)
Samoans are facing contemporary challenges by carving out a niche and adjusting to meet the demands of the present. They are part of the group of new transnational communities that are experiencing migration as a process of empowerment, a process that Portes refers to as ‘globalisation from below’. This session examines tradition and adaptation in Samoa.

Reading:

Session 3: Understanding Aid (1.5 hour)
This session traces the history of aid and its development from donor oriented aid to partnerships and evaluates the role of aid and Samoa’s interaction with aid donors.

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Reading:

Session 4: Position Paper presentations (2 hours)
Students present their positions on a topic of their choice in a ten minute presentation. Topics include fa'a Samoa, gender, human rights, tourism and development, migration and remittances, climate, change, health, education, youth and gender.

Session 5: Tales of the Tikongs book discussion (1 hour)
This discussion examines the wave of development that has swept over the Pacific and Pacific Islanders reaction to it. Students are asked to compare and contrast their personal experiences and readings related to globalization and social change with ideas and characters presented in this classic piece of Pacific literature.

Reading:

Session 6: Global Trends and Island Futures (1 hour peer learning discussion)
Students examine trends observed and discussed throughout the semester and identify the challenges faced by Pacific Islanders. They also evaluate key political, social and economic issues and how they are being addressed. Two classic readings by prominent Pacific figures stimulate this discussion and are complemented by the conclusion of a more recent study.

Readings:

Session 7: Final Exam (2 hours)
A final exam asks students to reflect and synthesize learnings and demonstrate basic knowledge of Samoan history, culture and contemporary issues. They will be asked to write concise, accurate, and informed answers to selected questions. The essays require reflection and integration of material.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Student Assessment
Assessment for the course is based on a variety of tasks and assignments. Assessment tools include:

Position Paper 25%
Like a debate, a position paper presents one side of an arguable opinion about an issue. The goal of a position paper is to convince the reader that one’s opinion is valid and defensible. The task is to take one side of the argument and support the validity of one's claims as well as to refute the counterclaims to show that one is well informed about both sides. Students may choose a topic related to social change, aid and development, climate change, remittances and migration, or gender and identity. Topics will be decided early in the semester with an oral presentation late in the course.

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**Current Events/ Village Voice Activity**  
15%
A series of activities will encourage students to keep up with current events on a local and regional level.

1) On a weekly/biweekly basis pairs of students will present a 15-20 minute news report followed by a short discussion of current events of the week.

2) Students will read at least 10 entries of Village Voice in the Samoan Observer and write a 500-800 word op ed on the issues of concern for villagers. Op-eds are articles which appear opposite of the editorial page in a newspaper. Letters to the editor usually respond to something in the written in the newspaper but the topic of op-eds are the writer’s choice and call attention to an issue. Student should choose an issue of interest and aim to promote discussion, controversy or response. An op-ed includes a brief paragraph or two which explains this necessary background information and supports an action. The conclusion should be supported with three key points-one paragraph to each supporting point. This paragraph breakdown will help maintain focus and aid in effective organization of the Op-Ed as a unified piece.

**Peer Learning Discussions**  
25%
Pairs of students will lead a discussion on one of the following themes. Each discussion session should include a 10-15 minute presentation by the leaders and approximately 30 minutes of group discussion. Leaders are encouraged to supplement the discussion with different perspectives and ensure that everyone contributes. Participants will evaluate the leaders, their own participation and the reading.

DISCUSSION #1: Vulnerability and Resilience

Readings:

DISCUSSION 2: Climate change and Tourism

Readings:


DISCUSSION #3 Current Issues

Reading:

DISCUSSION #4: Migration and Change

Reading:

DISCUSSION #5 Urbanization and Change:

Reading:

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Discussion 7: Issues in Fiji;

Reading:

DISCUSSION 8 (BOOK)

DISCUSSION #9: Global Trends and Island Futures
Reading:


Creative Activity
This exercise is an opportunity to present an issue in the Pacific in a creative way. The 5-10 minute presentation/activity should examine the issue and how it is/can be addressed. The presentation can be visual or audio including poetry, drama, song, dance, artwork or photos. The project may be done individually, in pairs, or in trios. The oral presentation should be accompanied by a 250-500 word essay explaining why the issue was chosen, its significance and how it is being addressed. These presentations will be a closing activity for the seminar.

Exam
A final exam will help students reflect and synthesize learnings and demonstrate basic knowledge of Samoan history, culture and contemporary issues. Information should be drawn from lecture notes, readings, excursions and interactions with Samoans or other Pacific Islanders. Students will be asked to write a concise, accurate, and informed answers to selected questions. The essays require reflection and integration of material rather than simple “regurgitation.”

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

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Expectations and Policies
Attend and Participate. Students are expected to attend all class sessions, participate in all sessions, and keep careful notes.

Ask questions in class and engage the lecturers. Ask at least one question per lecture and make evaluative comments about each lecture.

Comply with academic integrity policies: No plagiarism or cheating.

Complete assignments on time according to requirements.

Respect the opinions of classmates, lecturers and local constituents.

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 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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