

Vietnam: Civil Society and Social Change Seminar

ASIA 3000 (3 credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad:
Vietnam: Non-Governmental Organization Internship

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

Course Description

This course is comprised of two inter-related components: First, this seminar will explore the theoretical link between current sustainable development policies, gender, social change and roles of non-governmental organizations in the Vietnamese social context. Second, this seminar will help students build key cross-cultural communication skills for understanding development policy, social change and practice in complex social-cultural and political context of Vietnam in general and as an international intern in particular.

Designed to provide a grounding in development politics and practices in preparation for an internship in non-governmental organizations, lectures and site visits during the first two weeks of the program will introduce development policy and practice, the increasing emphasis on sustainability and the greening of the economy, and the roles of non-governmental organizations in Vietnam. This course emphasizes the overarching political economic and legal context of Vietnam that impacts access to and the expansion of the network of non-governmental organizations in local governance and community-level engagement in social change.

Students are exposed to specific case studies that illuminate the prospects, and potential methods of promoting the sustainable development of civil society within the socio-cultural environment of Vietnam, particularly in Ho Chi Minh City. These same cases will serve as points of reference and juxtaposition relative to students' internship experiences in different local organizations. Case studies will be on topics such as civil society theory and practice, human rights and gender roles in civil society, and the roles of science and technology for sustainability and green development. Case studies in some rural areas will be examined to understand current approaches for equal access and effective poverty reduction programs toward vulnerable and marginalized ethnic groups.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this seminar, students will be able to:

- Understand key social, cultural, political and economic factors affecting current development policies and environmental sustainability in Vietnam;

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- Discuss strategies for promoting civil society and human rights in Vietnam;
- Understand Vietnamese systems of local non-governmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) operations in a variety of different socio-cultural contexts;
- Discuss roles of gender in terms of the social complexities and cultural diversity;
- Discuss roles of science and technology in strengthening civic responsibilities among individuals and professional communities;
- Integrate hands-on, experiential learning in-country with academic understanding of current approaches to and theories regarding the role of NGOs and the concept of civil society in social change through the active participation of community-based organizations.

Language of Instruction

The seminar is taught in English, but students will be exposed to Vietnamese language vocabulary related to course and internship content through a combination of in-country expert lectures, field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales, and student-led discussions prior to the start of the internship.

Course Requirements

Methodology

This seminar is comprised of lectures, facilitated discussions, student presentations, and site visits to various communities in Ho Chi Minh City and on excursion to the Mekong Delta. 10-day homestays in Ho Chi Minh City will provide a context for students to experience interactions between “modern” development and “traditional” cultures at the scale of the family. Course participants are required to demonstrate their knowledge and course engagement through a written paper, discussion of readings, site visits, and active participation in all course components.

Session 1: Introduction to Civil Society: Conceptual Overview and Introduction to Seminar Goals *Pre-departure reading TBA*

Session 2: Introduction to Vietnam: History, People, and Cultural Domains in Vietnam

The lecture introduces students to Vietnam history and exploration of Vietnam’s culture, custom and the ways of life and the cultural significance to Vietnamese people.

Readings:

Nguyen Van Huyen. (1995). *Ancient Vietnamese Civilization*. Ha Noi: *The Gioi Moi* Publishing House.

Chapter 1: The Family Nha, 19-69.

Neil, James. 1995. *Understanding Vietnam*. University of California Press, 1-41.

Recommended Readings:

Taylor, K., (2013) *A History of the Vietnamese*. Cambridge University Press. 1-13

Karnow, S. (1997). *Vietnam: A History*. USA: Penguin Group. Chapter 3: The Heritage of Vietnamese Nationalism, 109-138.

Site Visit: History Museum in Ho Chi Minh City

Session 3: The Civil Society / Development Nexus: Theory in Context

This session will examine the historical context, the theoretical assumptions, the key arguments, and the policy implications of major development theories and their relationship to civil society. It will also

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highlight the dynamics of these theories -- how these theories shape the research agenda and empirical studies in the fields of development and civil society, how these theories critically challenge one another, and how their critical challenges have led to the reformulation of current theories in order to catch up with the changing situations in the late twentieth and at the beginning of 21st century.

Readings:

Peet, R. & Hartwick, E. (2nd ed.) (2009). *Theories of Development – Contentions, Arguments, Alternatives*. The Guilford Press. Chapter 1: Development.

McMichael, P. (5th edition) (2011).. *Development and Social Change*. CA; Sage Publication. Chapter 1: Development: Theories and Reality.

Recommended Readings:

Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the third world*. Chapters 1-3, 3-101.

Clark, David A. (2005). 'Sen' capability approach and the many spaces of human well-being". *Journal Of Development Studies*. Vol. 41, No.8., 1339-1368.

Session 4: Roles of Civil Society in the Vietnamese context.

Through a site visit to LIN Center for Community Development, this session introduces the concept of civil society in the Vietnamese context and explores the debates on the concept and paradigms of development that can be applied to the Vietnamese society. Vietnam has undergone different socio-economic and political regimes. How do we assess and measure development in Vietnam relative to other countries? And what do we mean by development and civil society in Vietnam in contrast to the US?

This session presents international debates and changes in Vietnam's government policy, promulgated by the Community Party, that accept the necessity of social work and education by organizations outside the state administration and the increasing role to be played by non-profit organizations.

Reading:

Wells-Dang, A. (2010). Political Space in Vietnam: View from the "rice-roots". *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 23 No.1, March 2010. 93-112.

Recommended Readings:

CIVICUS. (2006). *The Emerging Civil Society: An Initial Assessment of Civil Society in Vietnam*. Ha Noi.

Robinson, S. and T. Tran. (2004). *Civil Society Development in Viet Nam*. Ha Noi.

Session 5: Meaning and Practices of Human Rights in the Global and the local context of Vietnam

This session provides discussion on human rights at the UN Convention and Understanding applications of human rights in the context of Vietnam.

Reading:

Callaway R. and H-Stephen, J. (2007). *Exploring International Human Rights: Essential Readings*. ISBNs: 978-1-58826-412-1

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Recommended Readings:

Goodman, R, Pegram, T (eds.) (2012) *Human rights, state compliance, and social change: assessing national human rights institutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Session 6: Establishments and the Rise of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the context with Development Agenda in Vietnam and Introduction of Vietnam Union Friendship Organization (VUFO), a branch in Ho Chi Minh City

This session aims to introduce students to social advocacy, people fighting for peace and development expanding solidarity, friendship and cooperation between the people of Viet Nam with the peoples of the world and non-governmental organizations. This session hosted by the VUFO.

Readings:

VUFO-NGO Resource Centre. (2016). *Forms of Engagement between State Agencies and Civil Society Organizations in Viet Nam*. Ha Noi.

Wischermann. J. (2010). Civil Society Action and Governance in Viet Nam: Selected Findings from an Empirical Survey. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*. Issue 29.

Session 7: Weekly Synthesis Session

Session 8: Gender and Development in Vietnam

Through a lecture and discussion with Vietnamese student peers, this session examines the deep roots of Vietnamese culture regarding gender relations, from traditional to modern society. It presents the impacts of religions and beliefs of ancient Southeast Asian cultures, Buddhism and Confucianism on understanding of gender roles in Vietnamese society and its current status of gender equality.

Readings:

Earl, Catherine. 2014. *Vietnam's New Middle Classes*. Singapore: Nordic Inst of Asian Studies.

Chapter 1: Urban middle classes in postcolonial Saigon;

Chapter 2: Living in twenty-first century Ho Chi Minh City.

Recommended Readings:

Momsen, Janet. (2006). *Gender and Development*. New York: Routledge, 1-16.

Werner, Jayne. (2009). *Gender, Household, and State in Post-Revolutionary Vietnam*. New York: Routledge, 16-38.

Session 9: International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and Resource Centers.

This session aims to provide a better understanding on the NGO Resource Centre in Hanoi Capital that serves the community of international non-governmental organization (INGOs) working in Vietnam. It addresses the coordination and enhances a dialogue between INGOs and other development actors in Vietnam, including government agencies, donor organizations, and the private sector.

Readings:

Sidel, Mark. 2010. Maintaining Firm Control: Recent Developments in Nonprofit Law and Regulation in Viet Nam. *International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*. Volume 12, Issue 3.

VUFO-NGO Resource Center. *Annual Report: International NGO Partnership for Sustainable Development*. www.ngocentre.org.vn

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Session 10: Ethnic Minorities and Challenges for Equitable Development

During an excursion to the Mekong Delta, this session examines development policies in Vietnam and how they are put into practice in ethnic minority communities. Ethnic group responses to state policies are also discussed.

Recommended Readings:

Hai Anh Dang. (2010). *Vietnam: A Widening Poverty Gap for Ethnic Minorities*. Chapter 8. World Bank Report, 1-35.

Nguyen Van Chinh. (2011). Representation of Ethnic Minority in Vietnamese Press. *Paper prepared with iSEE Institute: Hanoi.*

Session 11: Roles of Science and Technology in the Contemporary Context of Vietnam Development

During the excursion to the Mekong Delta and a site visit to the Union of Science and Technology Associations in Ho Chi Minh City, this session brings to life the roles on science and technology for current development in Vietnam.

Recommended Readings:

OECD *Reviews of Innovation Policy: Science, Technology and Innovation in Vietnam*. November 2014.

Session 12: Thematic Seminar Synthesis Session

Discuss, reflect, and debate key seminar themes, including the articulation of insights in Development and Civil Society Paper.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Assignments

Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

Internship Ethics Review Application	
Development and Civil Society Theory in Context Reflection Paper	50%
Weekly Synthesis Sessions	20%
Field Visit Reports (2)	20%
Class Attendance, Participation (class and outdoor activities), and Discussion	10%

Internship Ethics Review Application

The internship ethics review application is prepared by the student and submitted to the program's Local Review Board (LRB), before the internship begins. The LRB, operating under the auspices of SIT's IRB committee, reviews and comments on the application, along with student's Internship Learning Agreement, but the ethics application is not graded. Please see the Internship and Seminar syllabus for more information about the Internship Learning Agreement.

Development and Civil Society Theory in Context Reflection Paper (50%)

For this assignment, students are expected to specify a topic related to development and civil society. To gain in-depth knowledge of current scholarship in this area, students are expected to undertake at least one site visit to organizations (institutions, schools, etc.) or NGOs associated with their topic. They should conduct a minimum of two interviews on the internship site with a list of questions prepared in advance and based on issues raised in the course readings and lectures. This paper is submitted at the end of the program, after the internship placement is complete.

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The resulting theoretical and fieldwork research should be compiled in a 6-page paper. The goal of the paper is to demonstrate the students' understanding and synthesis of the subjects addressed in the module's lectures, readings, site visits and discussions, and analyze this knowledge within the Vietnamese specific context. Successful completion of the paper requires a thorough discussion of the topic of choice, including the socio-economic circumstances in which the topic is set. Students are required to use a minimum of four **secondary sources** to evidence their arguments. It is expected that the Development and Civil Society paper will be **rigorously edited**. Thus, it should be free from grammatical errors and typos. It should also follow standard citation formats for both primary and secondary sources. Most importantly, the paper should persuasively argue points in a concise and logical manner.

Report of Weekly Synthesis Sessions (20%)

All Students are required to submit the two – three pages of weekly synthesis session. Written report of weekly synthesis requires that the student prepare a summary of the week's lectures, readings, make comments and highlight lesson learned from the weekly synthesis session. .

Field Visit Reports (20%)

Following field visits to two NGO and/or community sites, students will be expected to prepare a two page analytical paper focusing on observations made during the visit, issues raised and/or presentations by field lecturers/NGO professionals during the visit, and how the site visit added to your understanding of NGOs role in civil society and development theory in context of Vietnam.

Attendance, Participation (classroom and outdoor activities), and Discussion (10%)

This module combines classroom-based lectures with student discussions. Each student is required to lead at least one synthesis discussion session during the course. Students are expected to demonstrate a basic understanding of the material to facilitate group analysis of key themes and ideas.

All students are required to attend all lectures at the program center, and to participate in all discussion and analysis sessions. All visits are mandatory and students must discuss any potential absences with the Academic Director prior to their absence.

Participation is not the same as attendance. All students are expected to participate fully in all aspects of the course. This means asking pertinent questions to the course's guest lecturers, engaging in discussion and analysis during question opportunities after lectures and in group discussions. Students are expected to complete the required reading in a timely fashion, and to demonstrate their understanding of texts through reflection, writing, and discussion.

Participation includes active involvement in lectures, readings and discussions using the following criteria:

Attendance - promptness to class and positive presence in class.

Active Listening - paying attention in class, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives and note taking.

Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge and information. This means students should challenge themselves to step outside their comfort zones, speaking up if they usually don't, and allowing others to speak if they usually dominate discussions.

Group Accountability - participating positively as group member during classes.

Respect - culturally appropriate interactions with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities. This includes appropriately greeting others when entering offices and classrooms and saying "thank you."

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Late papers will marked down one step (B- to C+, e.g.) for each day they are late.

With the exception of journals and field notebooks, all assignments should be typed and double-spaced. Spelling and grammar are part of grading criteria; careful proofreading and editing are essential parts of the writing process. Please note: *description is not analysis*.

While there is a place for description of people, events or organizations in your assignments, be aware that extensive description is not a substitute for critical analysis based on independent thinking and understanding. The more students' writing reflects synthesis of theory, observation and reflection, the more successful work will be.

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 and appropriately dressed: many local organizations and government departments may expect a dress code. Be always on time, have your preparations completed and points in mind for an interview or meeting. Comply with internship organization's rules and protocols.

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 (internship supervisor, colleagues, classmates', lecturers, and local constituents engaged). 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. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook.

Disability Services: For information about and support from Disability Services (DS) to facilitate an accessible educational experience, please contact disabilityservices@sit.edu or +1-802-258-3390. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services can be found on the DS website at: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.

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