



Pacific Communities in Transition

ANTH 3010 (3 Credits /45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Samoa: Social and Environmental Change in Oceania

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.

Course Description

This course examines key aspects of the ways in which Pacific Island communities, and their value systems, have adapted to the waves of globalization, development, and change that have reached their shores and shaped identities in Oceania. 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.

Exploring the move from subsistence economies to cash economies assists students in developing insights to the values of Pacific communities and how values are being challenged, adapted and blended. Gender, education, health, and sustainable agriculture are also introduced as factors associated with social and environmental transitions in Samoa and the Pacific today. Students are encouraged to analyze their own experiences and learning, as well as synthesize new information required for further intensive study as Independent Study Projects. Field experiences and assignments are structured to complement the lectures and readings.

This course begins with an overview of lectures and activities during the first week in Hawaii and runs through the first five weeks of coursework. An eight day village stay and interaction with Samoan homestay families are key elements of this course. The course has components in Hawaii, Samoa, American Samoa and Fiji. Lectures and discussions are conducted 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. Research and presentation of a village study project culminate this course.

This syllabus is supplemented by a course handbook which explains expectations for all assignments in greater detail.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Describe the values of Pacific Island communities in Samoa, American Samoa, and Fiji, and assess

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ways in which these values are being challenged, adapted and blended as the subsistence economies move towards cash economies;

- Identify key aspects of traditional cultures and examine the changes brought by Christianity, cash economies and other Western influences;
- Analyze opportunities and constraints as villagers adapt to a more globalized world by exploring key values seen in the eight-day village homestay;
- Analyze and theorize personal experiences and learn critically by comparing and contrasting contemporary issues faced by Pacific communities in transition;
- Evaluate a significant aspect of colonialism, development, globalization, or another pertinent global process in Samoa in a research paper.

Course Requirements

Course Schedule

Module 1: Forces of Change in Oceania (12 hours)

This module looks at varying views of Oceania from insider and outsider perspectives using some of the concepts presented by the late Professor Epeli Hauofa in some of his classic works compiled in *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works* (2008). It examines some of the key elements of traditional society including social organization, women and gender, religion and education. This module begins in Hawaii.

Lecture and discussion time in Hawaii is usually 1.5 hours per session

Session 1: The Pacific as a Concept in Transition

This introductory lecture sets the tone for this course and the program's goals of engaging students in the social and political forces of change in the Pacific today. Key concepts include colonialism, imperialism, globalization, identity, race, gender, social structure, and community resilience.

Session 2: Globalization in the Pacific

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:

Firth, S. (2000). The Pacific Islands and the Globalization Agenda. In *The Contemporary Pacific, Volume 12, Number 1, 178–192*.

Session 3: Social Issues and Change in Oceania

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:

Lockwood, V. (2004). The Global Imperative and Pacific Islands in Lockwood, V. *Globalization and Culture Change in the Pacific Islands*. (1-40). University of Michigan: Prentice Hall.

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Session 4: Peer Learning and Discussion with Pacific Island Students

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 5: The Diversity of Pacific Communities

This lecture provides an introduction to the diversity and geographical location of Pacific Islands and the kinds of livelihoods and issues faced by Pacific Islanders.

Reading:

Hauofa, E. 2008. "Our Sea of Islands" in *We are the Ocean; Selected Works*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp 27-40.

Session 6: Anthropology and Pacific Islanders

This lecture by a Hawaiian anthropologist looks at the role of indigenous people in contributing to the field of anthropology.

Reading:

Tengan, T. 2016. Shifting the "We" in *Oceania: Anthropology and Pacific Islanders Revisited*.

Session 7: Contemporary Issues and Social Justice in Hawaii

This lecture looks at contemporary issues of Hawaii and ways in which they are being addressed. It looks at issues relating to nationhood, race, and history as well as the sovereignty movement in recent decades. The role of the military and tourism are also discussed.

Reading:

Osorio, J. K. 2001. "What Kine Hawaiian Are You?" A Mo'olelo about Nationhood, Race, History, and the Contemporary Sovereignty Movement in Hawai'i. Special issue, *The Contemporary Pacific* 13 (2): 359-79.

Session 8: Visit to Bishop Museum – Hawaiian History, Arts, and Culture

Bishop Museum is the premier place to experience the history, arts and culture of the Hawaiian people. The recently renovated Hawaiian Hall begins with the Hawaiian creations story. Bishop is recognized throughout the world for its scientific research, educational programs, and extensive collections which give voice to the stories of Hawai'i and the broader Pacific. The Pacific Hall touches on key aspects of culture in the various regions of the Pacific.

Session 9: Oahu – History, Geology, Tourism, and the Military

This day-long tour showcases the diverse landscapes of the Hawaii and their impact on Hawaiian society. It visits places of historic, religious and economic significance including the Pali Lookout, Byodo-In Temple, Laie Point and surfing and tourism sites on the North Shore. Commentary on history, geology, tourism and the military provide context throughout the day.

Session 10: Ethno-ecology in Kanewai Lo'i

This activity includes mini lectures on traditional Hawaii taro production, water catchment and the history of Kanewai. Students also participate in hands on activities weeding, harvesting and planting taro. These activities are integrated with traditional stories and learning about legends and plants.

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Session 11: Positioning the Pacific

This session looks at wayfaring and voyaging and the roles they have played in the Pacific. It looks at challenges the Pacific faces and challenges students to find their own place in the journeys.

Reading:

Hauofa, E. 2008. "The Ocean in Us" in *We are the Ocean; Selected Works*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp .40-59.

Session 12: Samoan Engagement with Global Forces

This session looks at some of the social and economic challenges faced by Samoa as it engages with the global forces of capitalism, colonialism and Christianity. It examines the concept of fa'alavelave and the economic, social and political impacts of these special life events.

Reading:

Macpherson & Macpherson, (2009) "A Brief History of Samoa's Engagement with Global Forces"; In *The Warm Winds of Change*, Auckland University Press, pp 25-39.

Module Two: Transformation in Traditional Samoan Society (10 Hours)

This module looks at the key elements of the *fa'asamoa* or Samoan way of life and the role of Christianity. It examines the challenges rural families face in terms of health, education, and economics.

Session 1: Traditional Samoan Society

This lecture studies the key aspects of the traditional Samoan Society. It looks at the way traditional Samoan society is structured and examines ways in which traditional Samoan Society has adapted to development and change.

Readings:

Vaai, E. (2011). *Dynamism and Resilience: Samoan Social Structure and Cultural Change*. In E. Vaai. *Producing the Text of Culture: The Appropriation of English in Contemporary Samoa*. Lepapaigalagala, Samoa: National University of Samoa.

Session 2: Religion and Culture

This lecture describes Samoan indigenous religion and culture and looks at reasons Christianity was readily adopted in Samoa. It also examines the impacts of Christianity on village structure, women, education and the Samoan language as well as Samoan culture's impact on Christianity.

Readings:

Ma'ilo, M. (2010). *Religion and Culture: The dialectic between Christianity and Samoa Culture*. Unpublished paper prepared for SIT, pp 1-9.

Session 3: Religion and Social Transformation in Samoa

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 religion plays in Samoan society.

Reading:

Macpherson & Macpherson. (2009). "Ideas and Social Transformations; In *The Warm Winds of Change*, Auckland University Press, pp 99-121.

Session 4: Understanding Gender in Samoa

This session examines women, girls and gender issues in Samoa. It examines the roles and status of women,

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especially sisters, in traditional society. Current issues discussed include equal employment opportunities, access to health and education, domestic violence, sexual abuse and the gender roles of fa'afafine in Samoa.

Readings:

Afamasaga-Fuata'i, Afamasaga, E. et al. (2012). Women's Contribution to Development. In L. Meleisea, P. Meleisea and E. Meleisea (Eds). Samoa's Journey 1962-2012 Aspects of History (pp. 142-156). Wellington: Victoria University Press.

Fairbairn-Dunlop, P. 2005. "Gender, culture and sustainable development - the Pacific way." In Hooper, Antony ed. Culture and Sustainable Development in the Pacific. Asia Pacific Press at the Australian National University. Chapter 4.

Session 5: Exploring Gender Equality in Samoa

A 26 minute video documentary film (2012) exploring gender equality in Samoa that provides women and men with an opportunity to articulate barriers to gender equality in Samoa.

Session 6: The Girl in the Moon Circle Book Discussion

The Girl in the Moon Circle shows Samoan life through the eyes of a ten-year-old girl called Samoana who talks about school, church, friends, family violence, having refrigerators and television for the first time, chunky cat food, a made-in-Taiwan Jesus, pay day, cricket, crushes on boys, incest, legends and many other things. Her observations offer a compelling look at Samoan society. Often fiction allows authors to tell truths that otherwise would be too painful; Sia Figiel is uninhibited.

Reading:

Figiel, S. (1996). *The Girl in the Moon Circle*. Suva, Fiji: Mana.

Session 7: Key Elements of the Fa'asamoa

This lecture examines the key elements of *fa'asamoa* or the Samoan way. Key elements include the *fa'amatai* or *matai* system of governance, roles in the *aiga* (extended family) and the influences of the church on *fa'asamoa*. It also looks at the importance of respect, maintaining relationships and reciprocity.

Reading:

Va'ai, E. (2011). "Dynamism and Resilience: Samoan Social Structures and Cultural Change." In E. Va'ai. *Producing the Text of Culture: The Appropriation of English in Contemporary Samoa*. Lepapaigalaga, Samoa: National University of Samoa. pp 22-41.

Session 8: Indigenous Knowledge, Values and Identity

This session looks at indigenous knowledge and beliefs and how they shape present day perspectives.

Reading:

Flores-Palacios, X. Samoa: local knowledge, climate change and population movements.

Session 9: Issues in Education

This session traces the development and achievements in primary, secondary, and post-secondary education in Samoa and analyzes the issues and challenges facing education in Samoa today. It attempts to evaluate the role education plays in a developing society.

Reading:

Afamasaga-Fuata'i, K., Afamasaga, E. et al. (2012). "Educational Development." In Meleisea & Meleisea (ed). Samoa's Journey 1962-2012 Aspects of History, Victoria University Press, pp.142-156.

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Session 10: Video: The Land Has Eyes (2004)

An ethnographic documentary on traditional life, values and issues filmed in Rotuma, written and produced by Vilsoni Hereniko. Students are asked to compare and contrast traditional life in Samoa and Rotuma and identify challenges faced by Pacific Islanders as they transition into a more globalized world.

Module Three: Values in Transition (13 Hours)

An eight day village stay in Lotofaga on the southeast coast of Upolu is an opportunity to identify and analyze the values of *fa'asamoa* through observations and interactions in host families and class discussions. Students will compare and contrast communal society to an individualistic society, describe and analyze gender roles and daily activities and evaluate the role of subsistence agriculture. They will also observe and explain the role of Christianity in village life and interpret the impacts of Christianity on the *fa'asamoa*.

Discussion Session 1: Religion and Social Change

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:

Thornton A, Kerslake M, Binns T (2010) Alienation and obligation: religion and social change in Samoa. *Asia-Pacific Viewpoint* 51 (1), 1–16.

Discussion Session 2: Village Life and Economics

This session examines sources of income in the village setting and analyzes the transition from subsistence to a cash economy. Students are asked to share their observations from their village homestays.

Readings:

Macpherson & Macpherson, (2009) “Warm Winds of Change.” In *The Warm Winds of Change*, Auckland University Press, pp 7-24.

O’Meara, T. (1994) *Samoan Planters: Tradition and Economic Development in Polynesia*. University of North Carolina.

Village Based Activities:

- Welcome *ava* ceremony
A prep session and debriefing following this traditional welcome ceremony.
- Mat Weaving and uses of sleeping, sitting and fine mats
A hands on activity follows a mini-lecture and discussion of weaving materials, types of mats and their uses.
- Umu making and food preparation
Students learn traditional cooking vocabulary and participate in the making of a traditional oven.
- Coconut leaf weaving
Students observe the collecting of drinking nuts and coconut leaves, husk coconuts and make coconut leaf plates to use at lunch.
- Observations and lessons at village primary school
Students prepare lessons, observe classes and teach a half hour lesson
- Self-directed learning day
Students assist with family activities and report to the group.
- Evening prayer and church services

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Students attend Sunday church service and participate with family in evening prayer

- Dance practice
Student learn the basics of Samoan dance, and have a number of practice sessions.
- Agriculture visit and activity
Students accompany Samoan planter to plantation, assist with weeding, harvesting and planting taro
- Farewell *fiafia*
Students perform the dances they have prepared and are participant observers in this traditional entertainment activity

Module Four: Community Resilience in Contemporary Samoa: Key Issues (10 hours)

This module compares life in a rural village with that of the urban area. It examines challenges Samoans currently face in terms of health, education, and the economics of a cash economy as well as how successfully Samoan communities are incorporating change and at what costs.

Session 1: Challenges and Constraints in Education

This lecture examines the major problems and challenges in education and explains the policies and plans of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture with regards to quality, efficiency, and relevance of education. Policies and practices with regard to bilingual and cultural education are also examined.

Readings:

Afamasaga, T., (2002). Personal Reflections on Education in Samoa. *Tree of Opportunity: Re-thinking Pacific Education*. Suva, Fiji. IOE and USP.

Nabobo, U., (2002). *Computer Tigers and Coconut Trees*. *Tree of Opportunity: Rethinking Pacific Education*. Suva, Fiji. IOE and USP.

Session 2: Sustainable Agriculture: Challenges and Constraints

This session describes the role of agriculture and the challenges and constraints faced by Pacific Islanders. It evaluates the vulnerability of agriculture in terms of pests, diseases and natural disasters and some of the current projects promoting sustainability.

Reading:

Murray, W. E. (2001). The Second Wave of Globalization and Agrarian Change in the Pacific Islands. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 17(2), pp 135-148.

Session 3: The Changing Health Status of Samoans

This session evaluates major health concerns of Samoans and their causes. It examines global forces and how they impact the lives of Samoans and looks at a variety of research projects dealing with current health issues.

Reading:

Bindon. (2006) *Food, Power and Globalization in Samoa*. ASOS meeting, San Diego, Feb 2006.

Hughes, R G., and Lawrence, M. A. 2005. "Globalisation, Food and Health in Pacific Island Countries." *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 14.4: 298.

Session 4: The Changing Matai System and Democracy

This session examines the ways in which the *fa'amatai* has adapted to democracy and change. It evaluates the tensions and contradictions between democracy and the *fa'amatai*.

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Reading:

Toleafoa, A. (2005). "A Changing fa'amatai and implications for governance." In S. Taua'a, ed. JAFNUS, Volume 3, Apia, Samoa: NUS. pp 83-106.

Session 5: Religion, Politics and Current Issues

This session examines the interconnections between religion and politics and analyzes current religious issues including freedom of religion and the role of churches in social development. It also looks at church obligations and their relation to poverty in Samoa.

Readings:

MacPherson, C. & MacPherson, L. (2011). "Churches and the Economy of Samoa." *The Contemporary Pacific*, 23 (2): 303-338.

Thorton, A., Kerslake, M., and Binns, T. "Alienation and Obligation: Religion and Social Change in Samoa." *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 51.1 (2010):16.

Session 6: Documentary: A Chief in Two Worlds (1992)

A documentary on the trans-nationalization of the matai system produced by Micah Van der Ryn. The documentary reviews the basics of the matai system and follows a Los Angeles matai from his life in America to a village in Savaii where his title is bestowed again by the entire family. It shows changes in his life following the bestowal of his title.

Session 7: Village Study Presentations and Peer Evaluations

This course culminates with 10 minute individual oral presentations on topics such as culture and religion, family structure and daily life, the matai system and politics, women and development, migration and remittances, agriculture, health, education, youth and gender. The presentations should synthesize learnings and go beyond simply answering questions by connecting issue of focus to broader themes of globalization, community, resilience, and identity. Visuals and creative presentations are encouraged.

This session concludes a review and reflection of key themes and questions raised and how they relate both to global questions of globalization and resilience, but also to how students will approach the Independent Study Project, in the next phase of the program.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Assessment Tasks:

Participation & Effort

10%

Attendance for all lectures and seminars is compulsory. Active participation includes: note taking and active participation in discussions. Engaging lecturers and asking questions is an essential part of participation.

Reflective Writings

30%

Three reflective writing exercises [500-750 words] ask students to discuss their observations opinions, lectures and experiences in and out of the classroom. Students are asked to reflect on the traditions and transitions of Pacific communities. The following prompts are guidelines and should not limit expression or creativity.

RWI: Hawaii: Discuss the issues Pacific communities in Hawaii face. Compare, contrast and critique impressions of Hawaii before, during and after the orientation.

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RW 2: Savaii: Reflect on the environmental, social and economic issues communities in Savaii face. Discuss vulnerability and maintenance of a sustainable life style in Savaii. Do migration, remittances and tourism play on strengths or expose weaknesses?

RW 3: Students are asked to choose one of the following:

RW 3A: American Samoa: Discuss the challenges American Samoa communities face as they attempt to blend American and Samoan cultures and transition between traditional and modern ways of life. How successfully are issues being addressed?

RW 3B: Fiji: Discuss the future of Fijian communities in light of ethnic, economic and environmental challenges. Consider the impacts of climate change and natural disasters on sustainable livelihood options and the role tourism may play.

Issues Paper

20%

Submit 1000-1200 word research paper on a contemporary political, economic, environmental or social issue that impacts Pacific Island communities. Discuss the issue and how it is being addressed. This is an opportunity to utilize secondary resources available and to familiarize one's self with the local libraries. This research can also provide background information for the ISP. At least five secondary sources including printed materials, texts, and academic internet article must be used.

Samoan Values Paper

20%

Read and reflect on the traditional values discussed in Epeli Hauofa's "Future of our Past." Submit an 800-1000 word paper exploring the values seen in the village homestay. Are they changing or being maintained? Why? Are changes beneficial or not? Do you see the values continuing or not? What will the village of the future look like? Secondary sources will enhance the paper.

Final Evaluation

20%

Submit a 1000-1200 word self-evaluation to evaluate personal growth, learning, and reactions in different cultural settings. Students will be asked to compare and contrast the values, norms, and identities of their communities with those of Samoa or the Pacific. They should consider how those values may be in transition in either or both societies. They will discuss how their initial expectations and impressions of the Pacific and the SIT Samoa program may have changed throughout the semester.

This paper should be submitted electronically and address the following:

- Primary values, norms and taboos of Samoa with their own values.
- Group dynamics and the intra-cultural or other differences within the SIT group and how they were dealt with.
- How curiosity in learning about Samoa was demonstrated.
- How emotions, frustrations, or pleasures from participating in a new culture and dealing with members of their own group were handled.
- Choices made and the consequences.
- How experiences during this semester may have impacted perceptions values, and understanding of identities.
- How this course has broadened understanding of societies in transition and recommendations to encourage greater learning in different cultural settings.

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Assessment:

Participation & Effort	10%
Reflective Writings	30%
Issues Paper	20%
Samoaan Values Paper	20%
Final Evaluation	20%

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

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, lectures 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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