



Climate Change and Resilience in Oceania

PACI 3020 (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

Climate change is a profoundly human issue with human causes and consequences. As the most pressing issue in Oceania, climate change has implications for a variety of sectors in the Pacific Islands and among Pacific Islanders. This course builds on understandings of historical forces and cultural systems in transition in contemporary Samoa and islands in Oceania to evaluate and analyze the relationship between climate and environmental change and social issues. The economic, social, environmental, and cultural impacts of tourism and other aspects of development in small island states are also examined and refracted through the new lens of climate change. Excursions and homestays are integral to this course. Homestays in American Samoa and Fiji allow students to see and discuss these issues and examine mobility, urbanization, and poverty, in particular.

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 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 geological and archeological sites, to homestay villages.

The theme of climate change is woven throughout the seminar, with a special emphasis on the impacts of weather changes, natural disasters and rising sea levels on Pacific communities. Themes explored in a variety of island nation contexts include, for example, the impacts of climate change and tourism in Samoa's big island; 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 from the perspective of student peers. Finally, an excursion to Fiji late in the program provides an opportunity to compare the political, ethnic, environmental, and social issues among Pacific Island nations that are all experiencing climate change.

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 and the University of the South Pacific in Alafua, Samoa and Suva, Fiji with support from additional local professionals.

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:

- Analyze varying viewpoints, think critically and write a position paper on a contemporary issue related to globalization, development, climate change, or a topic of interest 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 weekly discussions of current issues;
- Evaluate and think creatively about key political, economic, environmental and social issues facing Hawaii, Independent Samoa, American Samoa and Fiji and assess the relationship between those issues and climate change;
- 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

A lecture and discussion session is typically 1.5 hours

Module 1: Social, Environmental, and Climate Change (8 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: Critical Systems and Concepts

In this session we set the ground rules for engaging in critical issues discussions by defining key concepts and systems of change in Hawaii, Samoa, and Oceania in general, including globalization, climate change, environment, equity, sustainability, resilience, and development.

Reading:

Sachs, W. (1992). *The Development dictionary: A guide to knowledge as power*. London: Zed Books, 1-52.

Session 2: Climate Change in Oceania

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 mitigation opportunities and properties contributing to climate change resilience.

Reading:

Barnett, J. (2005). 'Titanic states? Impacts and responses to CC in the Pacific Islands', *Journal of International Affairs*, vol 59, issue 1, pp 203-219.

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Barnett, J. & Campbell J. (2010). "The Trouble with Climate Change." *Climate Change and Small Island States: Power, Knowledge, and the South Pacific*. London: Earthscan pp 1-17.

Session 3: Climate Change and Human Rights

This sessions examines the interface between climate change and human rights and re-conceptualizes climate change as a profoundly human issue with human causes and consequences. It looks at the role of the UN in promoting this agenda.

Readings:

Limon, M. (2009). Human Rights and Climate Change: Constructing a Case for Political Action. *Harvard Law Review*. Vol 33, pp 439-476.

Slade, N. (2007). Climate Change: The Human Rights Implications for Small Island Developing States *37 Env'tl. Pol'y & L.* 216.

Session 4: The Island President- Climate Change in the Maldives (2 hours)

The Island President is a 2011 documentary film about the efforts of then-President of the Maldives Mohamed Nasheed to tackle rising sea levels resulting from the ravages of global climate change.

Session 5: There was once an island

A climate change documentary looking at the impact of sea level rise on a remote Polynesian island in the Pacific. Will this community be some of the world's first climate change refugees?

Module Two: Climate Change in Samoa (12 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 several 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. Beach *fales* also represent a more sustainable form of tourism and challenge students to evaluate or reevaluate the role of tourism. Students also evaluate contemporary settlement patterns and livelihoods, adaptations to current environmental challenges and ways in which they are/can be addressed.

Session 1: 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:

Cherrington, M. (2008). Indigenous peoples and climate change; Guardians. *Cultural Survival Quarterly: Climate change and indigenous peoples*. Summer 32 (2): 10-15.

Session 2: Vulnerability and Resilience (1.5 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.

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Readings:

Campbell, J.R. (2009). 'Islandness: Vulnerability and resilience in Oceania', *Shima: The international Journal of Research into Island Cultures*, vol 3, issue 1: 85-97.

Paton, Kathryn and Fairbairn-Dunlop, Peggy. (2010). 'Listening to local voices: Tuvaluans respond to climate change', *Local Environment*, 15: 7, 687 — 698.

Session 3: Tourism and Climate Change (1.5 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:

Van der Veeken, Calgaro, Munk Klint, Law, Min Jiang, de Lacy & Dominey-Howes. 2016. Tourism destinations' vulnerability to climate change: Nature-based tourism in Vava'u, the Kingdom of Tonga. *Tourism and Hospitality Research* January 2016 16: 50-71.

Scheyvens, R & Momsen, J. (2008). Tourism in Small Island States: From Vulnerability to Strengths, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16:5, 491-510.

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:

Jopling, W. (2014). *Samoa: A Geologic History*. Apia: Samoa Tourist Authority.

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. Papers will be presented on climate change and weather, climate change finance, climate change and traditional knowledge and the Pacific Climate Change Portal. Resource: <https://www.pacificclimatechange.net>

Session 6: Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in Samoa (1.5 hour)

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:

Smit B, Wandel J. (2006). Adaptation, adaptive capacity and vulnerability. *Global Environ Chang* 16: 282–292.

Session 7: Resilience is good for business (1.5 hour)

This session in conjunction with the Samoa Tourist Authority looks at building back better through recovery programs for the Tourism Sector and partners.

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Reading:

Scott, D. (2008). *Climate Change and Tourism: Responding to Global Challenges CTO / CRSTDP Regional Workshop, The Bahamas, 18-19 March 2008.*

Session 8: Mainstreaming disaster and climate change resilience (1.5 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.

http://www.mof.gov.ws/Portals/195/EPPD/SDS%201617-1920_Eng.pdf

Module Three: Climate and Environmental Change in American Samoa and Fiji (15 hours)

This module looks at contemporary issues in independent Samoa and on excursion to 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: Contemporary Issues and Social Change in American Samoa (1.5 hours)

This session examines common values in the two Samoans 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 issues in the two Samoas in the context of climate, environment, and social change.

Readings:

Poblete-Cross, J. (2010). Bridging Indigenous and Immigrant Struggles: A Case Study of American Samoa. *American Quarterly*. Sep 2010, Vol. 62 Issue 3, p501-522.

Stover, M. (1999). Individual Land Tenure in American Samoa. *The Contemporary Pacific* 11 (1): 69-104.

Session 2: The Impacts of Climate Change in American Samoa (1.5 hour)

This session looks at climate change in American Samoa, disaster management plans and climate change adaptation projects, as well as oceans and ocean acidification.

Reading:

Governor's Coral Reef Advisory Group. *Potential Climate Change Impacts to American Samoa (2007).*

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 community life, social changes and key values and social issues in the two Samoas.

Session 4: Current Event Activities: newscasts and op-ed (3.0 hours)

Throughout each module pairs of students will present short weekly newscasts. This encourages students to engage with local news media and issues.

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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 and the relationship between migration and climate and environmental change.

Readings:

Barcham, M.; Scheyvens, R.; Overton, J. (2007). Rethinking Polynesian mobility: A new Polynesian triangle? (CIGAD Working Paper Series 3/2007). Palmerston North, N.Z.: Massey University. Centre for Indigenous Governance and Development.

Session 6: Urbanization and Change (1.5 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:

Connell, J. (2011). “Elephants in the Pacific? Pacific urbanisation and its discontents Asia Pacific Viewpoint, Vol. 52, No. 2, August 2011 ISSN 1360-7456, pp121–135.

Thornton, A., Binns, T. and Kerlake, M. T. (2013). Hard times in Apia? Urban landlessness and the church in Samoa. *Singap J Trop Geogr*, 34: 357–372. doi:10.1111/sjtg.12040.

Session 7: Understanding Fiji (1.5 hours)

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 can compare and contrast key cultural differences of everyday activities in indigenous and Indo Fijian homes during their respective homestays in Fiji.

Reading:

Taylor, R. (2005). Fiji's Move into the 21st Century. In Marsella, A., Austin, A. and Grant, B. *Social Change and Psychosocial Adaptation in the Pacific Islands: Cultures in Transition*. Springer US, pp 107-131.

Session 8: Disasters and Relocation in Fiji (1.5 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.

Readings:

Dejarnette. (2016). Fiji's Climate is bigger than Winston.
www.bendejarnette.com/fiji-climate-story-bigger-than-winston/

McNamara, K.E. & Des Combes, H.J. (2005) Planning for Community Relocations Due to Climate Change in Fiji *Int J Disaster Risk Sci* (2015) 6: 315. doi: 10.1007/s13753-015-0065-2.

Session 9: Critical Issues in the Pacific (1.5 hour peer discussion)

This session uses the voices of poets as the lens to review and 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.

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Reading:

Clarke, W. (2000). *Pacific Voices, Pacific Views: Poets as Commentators on the Contemporary Pacific*. Pacific Distinguished Lecture. Canberra: Centre for the Contemporary Pacific

Module 4: Climate, Environment, and Social Change – Review and Analysis (10 hours)

Session 1: Understanding Aid (1.5 hours)

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.

Reading:

Alesina, Alberto, and David Dollar. (2000). Who gives foreign aid to whom and why? *Journal of Economic Growth* 5(1): 33-63.

Session 2: Position Paper presentations (2.5 hours)

Students present their positions on a topic of their choice in a ten-minute presentation. Topics include *fa'asamoa*, gender, human rights, tourism and development, migration and remittances, climate, change, health, education, youth and gender.

Session 3: *Tales of the Tikongs* book discussion (1.5 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 their personal experiences and readings related to globalization, climate and social change with ideas and characters presented in this classic piece of Pacific literature.

Reading:

Hauofa, E. (1983). *Tales of the Tikongs*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Session 4: Global Trends and Island Futures (1.5 hour peer learning discussion)

Students examine trends observed and discussed throughout the semester and identify the challenges faced by Pacific Islanders and how they are being addressed. In particular, students evaluate key political, social and economic issues, how are they relate to climate and environmental change, and the concept of resilience. Two classic readings by prominent Pacific figures stimulate this discussion and are complemented by the conclusion of a more recent study.

Readings:

Wendt, A. (1983). *Towards a New Oceania. Seaweed Constructions*. No.7, pp 72-85.

Macpherson & Macpherson, (2009) "Warm winds of change or gathering storm?" In *The Warm Winds of Change: Globalisation in Contemporary Samoa* Auckland University Press, pp 185-193.

Session 5: Final Exam (3.0 hours)

A final exam asks students to reflect and synthesize learnings and demonstrate basic knowledge of Samoan history, culture and contemporary issues as they relate intersect with core course themes. They will be asked to write concise, accurate, and informed answers to selected questions. The essays require reflection and integration of material.

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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.

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 300-500 word op-ed on the issues of concern for villagers. Op-eds are stand-alone 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:

Campbell, J.R. (2009). "Islandness: Vulnerability and resilience in Oceania', *Shima: The international Journal of Research into Island Cultures*, vol 3, issue 1: 85-97.

DISCUSSION 2: *Climate change and Tourism*

Readings:

Van der Veecken, Calgaro, Munk Klint, Law, Min Jiang, de Lacy & Dominey-Howes. 2016, *Tourism destinations' vulnerability to climate change: Nature-based tourism in Vava'u, the Kingdom of Tonga.* *Tourism and Hospitality Research* January 2016, 16: 50-71.

Scheyvens, R & Momsen, J. (2008). *Tourism in Small Island States: From Vulnerability to Strengths*, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16:5, 491-510.

DISCUSSION #3 *Current Issues*

Reading:

Clarke, W. (2000). *Pacific Voices, Pacific Views: Poets as Commentators on the Contemporary Pacific.*

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Pacific Distinguished Lecture. Canberra: Centre for the Contemporary Pacific.

DISCUSSION #4: *Migration and Change*

Reading:

Barcham, M.; Scheyvens, R.; Overton, J. (2007). Rethinking Polynesian mobility: A new Polynesian triangle? (CIGAD Working Paper Series 3/2007). Palmerston North, N.Z.: Massey University. Centre for Indigenous Governance and Development.

DISCUSSION #5 *Urbanization and Change*:

Reading:

Thornton, Binns, & Kerlake. Hard times in Apia? Urban landlessness and the church in Samoa.
Connell: "Elephants in the Pacific? Pacific urbanisation and its discontents.

Discussion 7: Issues in Fiji;

Reading:

Taylor, R. (2005). Fiji's Move into the 21st Century. Social Change and Psychosocial Adaptation in the Pacific Island.

DISCUSSION 8 (BOOK)

Hauofa, E. (1983). *Tales of the Tikongs*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

DISCUSSION #9: *Global Trends and Island Futures*

Reading:

Wendt, A. (1983). Towards a New Oceania. *Seaweed Constructions*. No.7, pp 72-85.

Macpherson & Macpherson, (2009) "Warm winds of change or gathering storm?" In *The Warm Winds of Change*, Auckland University Press, pp 185-193.

Creative Activity

15%

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 maybe 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

20%

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."

Final grades will be assigned by the Academic Director using the following criteria:

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|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Position Paper | 25% |
| Current Events/Village Voice Activity | 15% |
| Peer Learning Discussions | 25% |
| Creative Activity | 15% |
| Final Exam | 20% |

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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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