



## **Social Justice and Social Change Seminar**

AFRS 3000 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
**South Africa: Social Justice and Activism Internship**

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 Overview**

The Social Justice and Social Change seminar (SJSC), delivered through lectures, discussions and excursions to relevant sites, aims to provide students with a broad understanding of the historical background to South Africa's Apartheid system, how Apartheid shaped and continues to impact social policy and the visions for contemporary South Africa. The course begins with the necessary foundational and contextual materials relating to South Africa's sociopolitical, cultural and economic history. From there the course covers topics on social justice's theoretical foundations, which then opens a critical forum for discussing various forms of activism, offering an exciting opportunity to rigorously examine some of the contradictions and tensions between ideas, values and practice. We will look at aspects of social justice that are pertinent to issues around social justice mobilization such as education, language use and social justice organizations, for example.

### **Learning Outcomes**

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

- Demonstrate knowledge of South Africa's political, economic, social and cultural landscape from both historical and contemporary perspectives;
- Assess the principles of social justice as applied to the case of South Africa.
- Illustrate social justice issues and challenges in present day South Africa;
- Investigate the critical topic of social justice in the South African context, for the purposes of understanding its relationship to reconciliation, justice, equity, development, and nation-building; and
- Apply social justice's theoretical principles, with particular focus on the nature and scope of socio-economic rights discourses, policies and rhetoric in South Africa.

### **Required Reading**

Students are responsible for completing all required readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will help students place the classes in their context, to challenge

and engage lectures, to generate questions and to deepen knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class. Additionally students are required to read the weekly newspaper Mail & Guardian, the online news platforms News24.com, dailyvox.co.za and groundup.org.za. Students are also required to watch SABC and ENCA news bulletins. Familiarity with current events and a working knowledge of today's political and economic issues will be assumed in the seminars.

- Beckford-Smith, V. (1995). South African Urban History, Racial Segregation and the Unique Case of Cape Town? *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Vol 21 (1), pp 63-78
- Coetzee, K., Daniel, Roz and Woolfrey, S. (March 2012). An overview of the political economy of South Africa. A paper for presentation to a workshop at the Grenoble Ecole de Management, Grenoble, France.
- Erasmus, Z. (2008). Race. In Robins, S., & Shepherd, N. (Eds.). *New South African Keywords*. Johannesburg, Jacana: 169-181.
- Stubbs, Aelred, (fl. 1978) (ed.) Steve Biko 1946 -1977, I Write What I Like. A selection of his writings. Oxford Heinemann 1987
- Swartz, S. (2016). *Another Country: Everyday Social Restitution*. RedPress.
- Welsh, F. (2000) *A History of South Africa* (Paperback) HarperCollins
- Welsh, D. (2009). *The rise and fall of apartheid*. University of Virginia Press
- Wolpe, H. (1972). 'Capitalism and cheap labour-power in South Africa: From segregation to apartheid'. *Economy and Society*, 1(4):425-456

**PLEASE NOTE:** COURSE CONTENTS, LECTURERS AND READINGS MAY BE MODIFIED AS NEEDED. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED.

## **Program Calendar**

### Module 1 – South Africa: Historical Context of Apartheid

This module introduces students to a wide range of lecturers and field visits that will examine South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid and its visible and deeply felt legacy. These contextual lectures are complemented by visits to the Apartheid Museum, the Constitutional Court, Soweto and sites of memory and resistance in and around Cape Town.

History of South Africa – Dr. Peter Lekgoathi

20th Century History – Dr Peter Delius

History of the Cape – Dr Chris Saunders

History and Memory – Ms H.Gruenbaum

Politics – Mr. Richard Calland

### Module 2—Contemporary Issues and the State of Activism and Activists in South Africa

Engaging a broad range of lecturers and activities, and taught primarily in Cape Town, this module works to develop a critical and nuanced lens through which to review the South African experience. The aim is to provide a common frame of reference for students to more fully explore issues of around which social justice is mobilized. Lectures may include the following topics and speakers:

Education in Transition – Dr. Neville Alexander

Langa History – Mr. Aron Hobongwana  
Land Restitution – Dr. Ruth Hall  
Political Economy – Dr. Adrian Hadland  
Public Health and HIV/AIDS – Ms. Morna Cornell  
Gender Politics – Dr. Helen Moffat

### Module 3 – South Africa in Transition and Visions for the Future

South Africa has made great strides in righting the wrongs of the past, but significant challenges remain. The country is striving to implement a very progressive national constitution, restructure local governments, have all levels of government working to one cohesive end, deliver basic services to all communities, and confront a high rate of societal violence and a still-uneasy racial divide. You'll examine visions for South Africa's future and how South African society strives to overcome the legacies of apartheid. You will explore these issues through meetings with inspiring individuals and at organizations making a difference.

#### **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

##### **Social Justice and Social Change Seminar assignments**

Students are expected to prepare for, attend, and participate in the lectures, discussions, and field visits. Also, in addition to completing the required readings, students are encouraged to read local newspapers and other popular media for more local context. The academic director assigns all final grades. 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.

Book Review	50%
Student-Led Seminar Discussion	30%
Participation	20%

**Book Review:** The book review offers you the time and space to select and explore one piece of professional academic literature from South Africa in a variety of topics such as cultural identity, history and memory, contemporary politics, political economy, gender, xenophobia, education, human rights or multicultural policies, theory or discourse. You may wish to use this opportunity to read something that maybe relevant for your ISP.

#### Requirements

You are required to review a South African book relevant to the course theme. The book selected can be a scholarly book, edited collection, biography, autobiography or work of fiction. You should plan to discuss your interests during your first one-on-one meeting after orientation and make a book selection shortly after. The SIT library is well stocked and current, but books are available on a "first come, first served" basis. Your review should be approximately 2000 words, and has the following objectives:

- To provide students with an opportunity to read in-depth a scholarly work, edited collection or biography concerned with current issues in South Africa;
- To provide students with an opportunity to explore a potential research topic;
- To expose students to the art of critical reading and analysis of academic literature;
- To encourage students to practice literature selection, synthesis and writing skills.

#### Assessment

In your analysis should include, but not be limited, to the following –

- a brief description of the book's general thesis;
- a summary of the book's main argument/s;

- your views on the merits or otherwise of these arguments, providing support from lectures, observations, interviews, information from local or national media, other scholarly sources, etc;
- in the case of an edited collection, provide an assessment of the strength or weakness of the various chapters;
- your overall assessment on the text and whether you would recommend it to other SIT group members (supporting your views of course).

All quotes and references from either primary or secondary sources must be properly cited, and points will be awarded papers which are clear, concise, well written, free of typos or grammatical errors, and engaging.

**Student-Led Seminar Discussion:** Each discussion session will be led and moderated by a small group of students, and every student will be part of at least one facilitating group. The facilitating group will need to meet before the seminar discussion to agree on which topics/readings/lectures/excursions to cover, and how. You may also want to include issues that haven't been covered, and relate them to current affairs. The facilitators should compile an outline for their session which must be distributed before the discussion. Every student is expected to provide the facilitators one or two discussion questions based on the week's readings a day before the seminar discussion group meets. This will allow the group presenting the opportunity to consider everybody's questions and points of view as they determine a focus. Each discussion should be approximately one (1) hour long. This will include a presentation, facilitated discussion and a question and answer period.

#### Objectives

- To gain experience in group work, including the ability to delegate tasks and compile data for coherent presentation;
- To practice and refine presentation skills;
- To practice group facilitation skills;
- To offer a forum for deeper academic exploration on your particular topic.

#### Assessment

- The presentation will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
- The ability to synthesize module data and present a coherent explanation of a topic or series of topics based on lectures, readings, field trips, home-stay experiences and current events.
- The ability to explain your presentation and what it represents in a logical and compelling manner. Also under consideration will be the pace and flow of the presentation as well as creativity;
- The ability to answer questions and facilitate an interesting group discussion;
- Full and equitable participation of all group members.

**Participation:** Participation is assessed as followed:

- Attendance: promptness to class, and positive presence in class;
- Active listening: paying attention in class/during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm, entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes;
- Involvement in class discussions: either in small or large groups sharing knowledge and information;
- Group accountability: participates as part of a group during field excursions and classes;
- Respect: culturally-appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

**Grading Scale:** The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

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 64F

### **Grading Criteria**

All grades assigned will take into account the students' special circumstances and challenges they face as foreign students. An "A" grade for an assignment entails superior (not just "very good") performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of Class Participation, an "A" grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students' participation will be monitored and taken into account.

### **Student Expectations**

#### **Class Participation**

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto: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>.

**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 and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.