

Pacific Communities in Transition ANTH-3010 (3 credits)

Samoa: Social and Environmental Change in Oceania

This syllabus is representative of a typical 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 Hawai'i and continues until week ten. A 5-day village stay and interactions with Samoan homestay families are key elements of this course. The course has components in Hawai'i, 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 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

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the values of Pacific Island communities in Samoa, Hawai'i, and Fiji, and assess

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.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well as the nuances of social and environmental change through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) Participation (10%)

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

- Attendance - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening - paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.

- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; not keeping others waiting.
- Displaying Respect – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

2) Essay (30%)

CHOOSE AN ESSAY TOPIC BELOW. In 1500 words, reflect on experiences you have had in Samoa. Integrate at least 3 scholarly articles to support your arguments and ideas.

1. Critically examine Migration and its impact on contemporary Samoan society.
2. Discuss religion and society and evaluate change evident in Samoa today
3. Explore an aspect of gender and Samoan society and discuss associated contemporary tensions

3) Annotated Bibliography (30%)

Find 5 scholarly articles relating to a contemporary social issue in other small island developing states outside of Oceania. The topics you could think of are vast i.e. youth unemployment, teenage pregnancy, child labour, human trafficking, drug and alcohol abuse, urban drift, violence, poverty, homelessness, identity loss, cultural heritage and identity preservation etc.

Your annotation of each article must include a summary of the article's main points in no more than 20 lines. The annotation must also include an analysis of how this contemporary issue relates to or compares to Oceania.

4) Facilitated Discussion (30%)

Find a reading with reference to Oceania, on the topic assigned to you. In a tutorial presentation summarise your reading and facilitate a discussion eliciting group responses about its correlation to the thematic seminar. The topics are: globalization, urbanisation, tradition and culture, indigenous knowledge, decolonisation, sustainable development, development, gender, education, health, religion, or tourism. By week 7 circulate your reading so that everyone has time to read it. In week 9 – in 5 minutes summarise your reading and facilitate a 20-minute discussion on your reading. THERE IS NO WRITTEN PAPER FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT. You will be assessed only for your tutorial presentation and the facilitated discussion.

Assessment

Participation – 10%

Essay – 30%

Annotated Bibliography – 30%

Facilitated Discussion – 30%

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Example: Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

Grading Scale

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| 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 |

Program Expectations

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).

- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.
- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

Course Schedule

Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

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 Epele 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 Hawai'i.

Lecture and discussion time in Hawai'i 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.

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 Hawai'i. 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 Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i

This lecture looks at contemporary issues of Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i 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.

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 Hawai'i 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.

Reading:

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.

Reading:

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, 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.

Reading:

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*. Lepapaigalagala, 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.

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)

A five-day village stay in Amaile 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) *Samoa 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
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: Rethinking 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*.

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.