

Internship and Seminar ITRN-3000 (4 credits)

Madagascar: Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management

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.

Description

This seminar consists of a four-week internship with a local community organization, research organization, business, government agency, or international NGO. The aim of an internship is to enable students to gain valuable experience and enhance their skills in a career field/professional environment related to the program's core themes.

SIT will facilitate an internship placement for students. The organization and the student's internship activities, including the Internship Learning Agreement, must be approved by SIT's academic director. SIT will maintain oversight of internship placements in line with SIT academic policies and student health and security guidelines. Ultimately, each student takes responsibility for being proactive in engaging with internship colleagues and the internship supervisor to achieve internship objectives. Weekly two-hour reflection and guided discussion sessions are held with the academic director or internship coordinator to review the day-to-day proceedings and learning associated with the internship experience and to draw out broader issues related to program themes, positionality, culture, and ethics in the context of the internship.

Students will be informed of the types of internships available and the placement process early in the semester. An interview may be required before an internship placement is finalized. Students will have ample opportunities to consult with SIT program staff and must decide whether they want to undertake an internship by the fourth week of the program.

- Supporting agroforestry efforts, monitoring the locally endemic wildlife, and promoting the area through communications at the Missouri Botanical Gardens in the Makirovana-Tsihomanaomby protected area
- Conserving and breeding endemic Malagasy fish in Andapa with Guy tam Hyock from the APPA Association des Producteurs Privee des Alevins
- Undertaking ecological monitoring and environmental education and developing interpretative materials at the Antanetiambo Nature Reserve with award winning conservationist Desire Rabary
- Developing and monitoring sustainable natural resource use projects—including fuel efficient stoves, aquaculture and environmental education—with the Duke Lemur Center Sava Conservation Program
- Monitoring populations of critically endangered lemurs and building local capacity in the Anjanaharibe Special Reserve with the Lemur Conservation Foundation

- Supporting ecological restoration and monitoring in the Macolline Nature Reserve and community development and livelihoods activities in collaboration with CALA
- Developing sustainability initiatives—including urban agriculture, recycling, youth climate and environmental outreach—through the Think Green Madagascar center in Hell Ville Nosy Be

Each student will be required to submit a final paper in which they process their learning experience on the internship and link those reflections to core program themes. Approved in advance by the academic director, SIT's Study Abroad Review Board (for ethical clearance purposes), and the internship supervisor, the internship paper may involve interviews and other data collection methods relevant to achieving internship learning goals. Students will do a final presentation to demonstrate how the internship experience enhanced their understanding of the SIT program theme and its Critical Global Issue focus. The paper should also briefly document a comprehensive schedule and the specific skills and knowledge acquired through the experience. Rubrics for the paper and presentation will be shared with students before the internship begins.

Learning Outcomes

The internship course comprises 185 hours. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate awareness of the ways in which local cultural practices shape natural resource management outcomes in a tropical context such as Madagascar's;
- Show understanding of the dynamics that shape successes and/or failure of a natural resource management project in a tropical context such as Madagascar's;
- Assess and articulate the benefits, challenges and obstacles that the internship organization encounters in their work;
- Describe, analyze, and synthesize their learning experience in the internship in the form of an internship paper and oral presentation; and
- Gain meaningful and practical work experience in their chosen field.

Language of Instruction

Malagasy is the official language in Madagascar and students should expect that Malagasy will be widely spoken in work and in most field settings of the internship. Nevertheless, if the internship institution is located in a big city such as Antananarivo, a mixture of French and Malagasy will be the everyday used languages at the work place. The Internship and Seminar comprises 30 hours/week of internships, and 8 hours of seminar discussions with the academic director. The pre-internship part of the course, Research Methods and Ethics, prepares students by introducing them to the work norms, practices and ethics in the Madagascar context, and is taught in English by the academic director, assisted by local experts. Further, pre-internship preparations include a 3 credit intensive Malagasy language course, and a thematic seminar course that exposes students to the broader local and global aspects and dynamics of biodiversity and natural resource management.

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.

Course Schedule

Module 1: Making the Most of Your Internship

During this module, students will be introduced to doing an internship in Madagascar as a foreign student by the academic director. They will also prepare for the internship and the writing of the internship paper, have regular meetings with the academic director, reflect on the internship experience, and learn how to use their experience for future professional growth. Complementary reading will be assigned by the academic director. Sample questions/issues:

- Does the student get enough work to do?
- Does the student get an opportunity to observe, participate in meetings or shadow the organization’s employees?
- How relevant is their experience to their career goal?
- What skills are the students hoping to gain?

Session 1: Setting the Stage

This session reviews objectives for the internship. Students meet with the academic director, following confirmation of their internship placement, and discuss expectations, timeframes and other logistics, structural components of the final internship paper, content, layout, and general guidelines.

Recommended Readings:

Individual reading: K. Oberg. (2006). “Cultural Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments” in *Practical Anthropology*; Vol. 7 pp177-182

A. Cynthia. (1996). “Using Student Journals to Improve the Academic Quality of Internships” in the *Journal of Education for Business*, Vol. 72 Issue 2 pp113-138. (basic readings but helpful).

Session 2 &3: The Internship Experience: Review and Critical Reflection

These sessions focus on the review and reflection process of the internship experience. Students set weekly learning objectives, keep an internship journal, and write two progress reports on their learning experience. During the reading discussion, students reflect on where they are in terms of work place: work ethos and work ethics.

- What assignments were you given and how engaging would you rate them on a scale of 1-10?
- What cultural issue struck you at the internship?
- What has been the main role you played this period?
- How has it influenced, challenged or informed your perspective on biodiversity and natural resource management?

Recommended Readings:

Switzer, F. and King, M. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole (chapter 3&10)

Sandra, L. Bryan and M. Sprague. (2012). "The Effect of Overseas Internships on Early Teaching Experiences" in *The Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, pp 199-201.

Session 4: The Internship Experience: Review and Critical Reflection continued

This session allows students to reflect on the internship experience and begin to process the learning that occurred in a safe and supportive context. The session discusses ways of acknowledging both the successes and failures of the internship, of completing tasks, handing over projects to and sharing insights with colleagues on the job, and setting realistic goals for the future.

Recommended Readings:

Switzer, F. and King, M. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole (chapter 12).

Lee, E. R. and Elechi, O.O. (2006). "Student Attitudes Towards Internship Experiences: From Theory to Practice" in *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, pp297-312.

Session 5: Next Steps and How to Include Your Internship on Your Résumé

This final session occurs in the final weeks of the program, as part of re-entry discussions. Students discuss fears and strategies for successful re-entry into their home setting, opportunities for professional growth, and how to make optimal use of the internship experience. They will discuss ways to describe the experience gained and skills learned in their internship in cover letters, résumés and how to use this experience for future professional growth.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weekly two-hour reflection and assessment meetings are held with the academic director or internship coordinator to review the progress of the internship and learning associated with the internship experience.

At the end of the internship period, students are expected to present their work to the group. Assessment of both written work and the oral presentation is based on the quality of research and academic scholarship and adherence to the highest ethical standards.

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) Final Internship Paper (35%)

Students are expected to submit, at minimum, 15-20 pages final paper at the end of their internship experience. The final paper should include a title, list of acknowledgments, and an abstract. The paper should also have an introduction which describes the work and history of the organization and incorporates several references, detailed description of the activities accomplished, and strong and innovative aspects of the organization. The final paper must include thoughtfully articulated analytical writing that addresses positionality and ethics and connects learning at the internship to the broader themes of the semester program and/or the investigation of one or more specific questions. The paper should be well written, well organized, and aesthetically pleasing. A summary of the final paper assessment rubric will be shared with students in advance. (Example at the end of syllabus.)

The final paper shall consist of the following four sections:

- Description of the host institution
- Description of tasks performed on the job
- Business plan design, grant proposal, or other major output of the internship experience
- Personal assessment of your job performance

Guidelines for the final Internship Paper

Expectations for each section of the final paper are outlined below. These, however, are guidelines and may be adapted to the specificities of your internship.

Description of host institution: a brief description (one page) of the host institution for the internship. This should include the nature of the services offered and a profile of the customers who use them. The student may also provide brochures or collateral material that further describes the institution.

Description of tasks performed: this should be written in third person as if the student, acting as a manager, were writing it for a new employee/associate. It should be written in outline form, except for the job summary section. Headings should be used to identify each of the sections. A suggested outline for this description is listed below:

- Job title and place of employment
- Job summary—narrative summary of the activities of the position
- Qualifications—education and experience required and/or desired
- Working conditions—uniform requirements, physical surroundings, working days, hours, etc.
- Job relationships—who is the mentor and to whom reported
- Specific duties and responsibilities—a list should be provided to indicate all duties performed by the individual in this position

Output of the internship experience: this can be a proposal for a strategic response to an existing problem, a creation of a sustainable plan, a grant proposal, or a

research project that responds to the need of an organization. The proposal should also outline the human and financial resources needed for the implementation of the proposed model and measures of its success.

Personal assessment of the experience: in this section provide an assessment of the key learning milestones acquired on the internship experience, the challenges faced, and the possible impact of the experience on the student's academic and professional career. Included in this section is a reflection on the internship experience, including the output of the internship (mentioned above), as it relates to biodiversity and conservation in Madagascar.

2) Internship Oral Presentation (10%)

In the presentation, you should provide a succinct and clear description of the internship experience, a brief history of the organization where you interned, the activities undertaken, and key insights gained that are related to the core program themes. You should demonstrate effective management of the discussion with the audience and attend to the aesthetic elements of the delivery.

3) Progress Reports (2) (20%)

The progress report should document the student's progress toward achieving their learning objectives during the internship. Students also document the challenges they face and how they try to deal with those challenges. Students submit two progress reports in the course of their internship experience.

4) Internship Performance (35%)

This evaluation by the Academic Director assesses the student's internship experience, overall professional achievements, and self-growth.

Assessment

- Final Internship Paper – 35%
- Internship Oral Presentation – 10%
- Progress Reports – 20%
- Internship Performance – 35%

Ethics

The internship experience must reflect SIT's ethics policy and commitment to the values of reciprocity. The student intern should also abide by the policy and regulations of the host institution including dress, punctuality, and employee behavior. Violations of SIT's code of conduct or employee conduct at the host institution will result in an immediate termination of the internship and can lead to further disciplinary sanctions by SIT.

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

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.

RUBRIC: Internship Paper	
Category	Possible Considerations
Title / Acknowledgements / Abstract/Technical Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The title is succinct and captures the essence of the internship experience -The acknowledgements are complete and professionally written -The abstract clearly summarizes the internship experience and learning outcomes -Table of contents, In-text citations, and reference list or bibliography are done correctly and completely -There are no mistakes in writing & grammar, spelling & punctuation -The paper is clean, legible, well-formatted, professional in appearance, and aesthetically pleasing
Contextualization and Organizational Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Important themes and background information are provided so reader understands the field in which the internship organization operates -The history and work of the internship organization, how its work relates to the program theme, and how it fits into the context of other similar organizations are all accurately described -The organizational structure, including division of responsibilities and the goals, objectives and activities of the organization are well elaborated -Care is taken not to harm by criticism, nor evaluate -The community served by the organization is described in sufficient detail
Internship Focus/Objectives/Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The paper specifies the focus area of the internship within the organization's broader work -The objectives of the internship are clearly presented and appropriate; how the objectives relate to the program theme and/or Critical Global Issue are clearly described. -The student's internship tasks/duties at the organization are presented and justified.
Information Acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How information was gathered in order to compose the final internship paper is explained in a clear and accurate manner and supporting materials are included in appendices (if applicable) -A clear and complete description of the work undertaken is given, including dates and hours worked (put in an addendum).
Positionality and Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The paper acknowledges the intern's views, values, beliefs and other aspects of their personal background that influence their worldview. - The paper demonstrates ongoing self-reflection throughout the internship experience in relation to their positionality. -Human Subjects policies and ethical guidelines are adhered to and thoroughly discussed -Appropriate consideration is given to informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality of participants, in keeping with human subjects protocols and the LRB-approved internship learning agreement -The internship strengthens relationships and contributes to mutual trust between the author, the organization and its clientele in ways that are respectful, culturally appropriate, and collaborative -The internship project is responsive to host organization and/or host community needs, as applicable
Critical Reflection on Internship Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The description of tasks and responsibilities is clear. -The paper examines the extent to which objectives were achieved, how objectives changed or evolved over the course of the internship experience. -Key professional lessons learned through the internship experience are described with specific examples -A personal evaluation of performance in the internship is included with suggestions of how it could have been improved. -Ways in which student identity may have shaped their insights of the internship experience are described

Analysis of Critical Issues/Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The manner in which the organization and its work are linked to the core themes of the program is described. -Analysis is given by comparing and contrasting the theory of the work/field studied throughout the semester with the practice of the work at the specific internship site. -Clear articulation of how the intern's knowledge and understanding of the core themes of the program were enhanced through the internship experience.
Conclusions & Recommendations for Future Interns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The main insights and lessons learned through the internship experience are detailed -Recommendations of opportunities or projects for future interns are described.