Contextual Studies in International Relations and Diplomacy
INTS 3000 (3 credits)

South Africa: Internship in Diplomacy, Politics, and International Relations

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 interdisciplinary seminar begins with an introduction to South African politics and goes on to introduce students to key components of the continental and international system. These include: the state, continental organizations like the African Union, international organizations, and non-state actors. Students are introduced to the concept of foreign policy and the history and functions of diplomacy with special attention focused on the goals and objectives of South Africa's foreign policy agenda.

Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
- Explain the complexity of political transition in post-apartheid South Africa;
- Evaluate South Africa's foreign policy;
- Articulate the positions, goals, and relationships among key decision makers from selected countries within the context of SADC region, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), South-South solidarities and beyond;
- Evaluate the role of the African Union in the context of global power blocks such as BRICS and the United Nations;
- Synthesize the learning acquired in this course in critical analysis papers and an opinion-editorial article.

Language of Instruction
This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well as the narrated nuances of international relations, politics, and diplomacy through expert lectures and their internship experience.

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) Critical Analysis (40%)

During the semester, students will be required to write one critical analysis of a question based on lectures and readings assigned. Contextual details will follow in class. The paper should be five pages long.

2) Opinion-Editorial Article (30%)

Write an opinion-editorial article focused on key challenges and ambiguities in South Africa's foreign policy (contextual details will follow in class). In 1000-2000 words, and suitable for publication in a quality online newspaper or magazine, provide an analysis that sheds fresh light on the issue, taking into account some of the recent writing in the national conversation on the topic.

An opinion-editorial article – usually placed in a newspaper 'opposite the editorial page' – is a relatively brief argument meant to persuade. Think carefully about your readers' perspective, what they know and don't know, and how you might persuade them to take your point of view seriously.

Tips for writing:
- First, choose an appropriate publication.
- Try to start your article with a punchy title and an attention-grabbing idea.

- Academic style referencing is not required. Use direct quotations from people 'in authority' as much as possible. Limit the quotation to at most three sentences. Where appropriate, you can use statistics (remember to cite the source).
- Provide a two-line biographical blurb at the end.

3) Field Visit Report (20%)

   Following a field site visit to the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), students will be expected to prepare a three- to four-page analytical paper focusing on observations made during the visit, issues raised during presentations given by practitioners, and other question(s) assigned by the academic director.

4) 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.

Assessment
Critical Analysis -	40%
Opinion-editorial article -	30%
Field visit report -	20%
Participation -	10%

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 and 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.

- Course Communication: Course documents and assignments will be posted on the learning management system, Canvas. Although the course calendar provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be posted at the course site. You will need to check the course site regularly. You are responsible for letting me know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.
- 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: The State of the Nation

Setting the scene and placing South Africa's past and present under the spotlight, this module gives insights into the transition to democracy and into South Africa's political transformation journey. The module looks at South Africa in relation to other countries in the SADC region, African Union and broader global context. Sessions may include:

> Session 1: Introduction to South African Politics
> Session 2: Politics and the State
> Session 3: People, Society, and State
> Session 4: South Africa and the Global Context

Required Readings:

Calland, R. and Sithole, M.N. (2021). Presidential leadership and accountability from Mandela to Ramaphosa. In N. Bohler-Muller, C. Soudien, and V. Reddy (Eds.), *Ethics, politics, inequality: New directions (State of the nation),* 77-97. Human Sciences Research Council Press. https://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/books/ethics-politics-inequality-new-directions

Clarke, M., & Bassett, C. (2016). The struggle for transformation in South Africa: Unrealised dreams, persistent hopes. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *34*(2), 183-189. https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2016.1202501

Mosala, S.J., Venter, C. M. &. Bain, E.G. (2017). South Africa's Economic Transformation Since 1994: What Influence has the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) had? *The Review of Black Political Economy*, *44*(3-4), 327-340. https://doi.org/10.1007%2Fs12114-017-9260-2

Southall, R. (2016). South Africa- An African peacemaker? In R. Southall (Ed.), *South Africa's role in conflict resolution and peacemaking in Africa*. pp 1-26. Human Sciences Research Council Press. https://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/books/south-africas-role-in-conflict-resolution-and-peacemaking-in-africa

Module 2: International Relations and Diplomacy
This module looks at key components of the international system. Students are introduced to the concept of foreign policy and related theories. Students explore these in order to understand the implications for promoting freedom and democracy

      Session 1: Introduction to International Relations and Diplomacy
      Session 2: Introduction to South Africa's Foreign Policy Agenda
      Session 3: Re-strategizing Africa's Policy

Required Readings:

Owens, P., Baylis, J. and Smith, S. (2020). Introduction: From International Politics to World Politics. In J. Baylis, S. Smith and P. Owens (Eds.), *The globalization of world politics: An introduction to international relations* (8th ed., pp 6-16). Oxford university press. https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-globalization-of-world-politics-9780198825548?cc=za&lang=en&#

Walt, S. M. (2005). The relationship between theory and policy in international relations. *Annual review of political science*, *8*, 23-48. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.7.012003.104904

Zeleza, P. T. (2013). Obama's Africa policy: the limits of symbolic power. *African studies review*, *56*(2), 165-178. https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2013.48

Module 3: South-South Cooperation in International Affairs
This module looks at the recent resurgence of South–South co-operation in international affairs. This is located in the context of a contestation for global space within a new configuration of multilateralism. Students will explore how BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) have emerged as an alternative to Bretton Woods Institutions and moved onto the center stage of world politics, leading to a renewed interest in its historic promise to transform our world order. Sessions in this module may include:

      Session 1: Introduction: The World's Greatest Development Problems
      Session 2: Africa and the International Order
      Session 3: BRICS Challenges to and Accommodations with Global Power Relations
      Session 4: Imperialism, Anti-imperialism and Sub-imperialism

Required Readings:

      Abdenur, A. E. (2014). China and the BRICS development bank: legitimacy and multilateralism in south–south cooperation. *IDS Bulletin*, *45*(4), 85-101. https://doi.org/10.1111/1759-5436.12095

      Ellis, S. (2005). How to rebuild Africa. *Foreign Affairs*, *84*, 135-148. https://doi.org/10.2307/20031711

      IPP Media. (2018, 10 July). BRICS bank should have consulted before lending corrupt Transnet. https://www.ippmedia.com/en/features/sa-brics-bank-should-have-consulted-lending-corrupt-transnet

      Petrone, F. (2022). The future of global governance after the pandemic crisis: What challenges will the BRICS face?. *International Politics*, *59*(2), 244-259. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-021-00301-8

Module 4: Continental Solidarity and the African Union
In this module, students explore how continental solidarity and the architecture of the African political landscape are constructed around the multi-lateral objectives of the African Union (AU). This is located in the context of the African Union's Agenda 2063, where the AU charts Africa's development trajectory over a 50-year time frame. A portion of the class includes site visits to relevant institutions and organizations including with the South African government and parliament and regional institutions such as the Pan African Parliament in Johannesburg. Sessions in this module may include:

      Session 1: Introduction to the Study of African Solidarity
      Session 2: Understanding the African Union

Session 3: Representations of Africa in the African Union's Agenda 2063

Required Readings:

Cilliers, J. (2001). Towards the African Union. *African Security Review, 10*(2), 104-108. https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2001.9627940

Joshua, S., & Olanrewaju, F. (2017). The AU's Progress and Achievements in the Realm of Peace and Security. *India Quarterly, 73*(4), 454-471. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0974928417731639

Moono, J. (2021). Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. *Academia Letters*, 1336, 1-6. https://doi.org/10.20935/AL1336