

## **Internship & Seminar**

ITRN-3000 (4credits)

### **Vietnam: Culture, Social Change and Development**

*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 seminar consists of a four-week, 140-hour internship with a local community organization, research organization, business, or international NGO focused on the intersection of culture and socioeconomic development or human-environment interaction in contemporary Vietnamese society. 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 core program themes.

SIT will use its extensive network to facilitate an internship placement for students where interviews may be required. 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 over internship placements in line with SIT academic policies and student health and security guidelines. Ultimately, each student will need to take responsibility for making optimal use of resources available at the organization and to be proactive in engaging with local experts to achieve internship objectives. Normally, only one student at a time can intern with any particular organization. Regular reflection and assessment meetings are held with the academic director or internship coordinator to review the progress of the internship, 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.

Each student will be required to submit a final paper in which they process their learning experience on the internship, analyze an issue important to the organization, and apply what they are learning at the internship site to the core themes of the program. Approved in advance by the academic director and the internship supervisor, the internship paper may involve interviews and other data collection methods relevant to achieving internship learning goals. Students will also 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 focus project paper and presentation will be shared with students in country.

## Learning Outcomes

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

- Demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the Vietnamese context;
- Identify, describe, critically analyze, and synthesize the development dimensions and social changes associated within the Vietnamese social systems;
- Articulate the output of the internship experience in the form of an oral presentation; and in the form of an internship paper;
- Use effective field study methods and techniques to gather data;
- Assess the challenges of language barriers and issues of local protocols;
- Gain meaningful and practical experience in their chosen field;
- Enhance professional skills in an international work environment by drawing on the wide network of community organizations, activists, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and academics connected to the SIT program.

## Language of Instruction

This seminar is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to the internship through a wide range of venues and regional locales prior to the start of the internship.

## Instructional Methods

[Instructors use this space to articulate how the course is designed to create the conditions for learning. For instance, this space may be used to articulate how the course embraces experiential learning, collaborative learning, critical pedagogy, and/or other pedagogies. The explanation should be clear and concise and formatted in either paragraph or bulleted list.]

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.

## 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.

## **Assignments and Evaluation**

### Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

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

### **Discussion and Reflection Sessions**

Discussion and reflection sessions take place on a weekly basis. Students are expected to discuss experiences in the internship, reflect on the professional learning process, and respond to any prompts assigned by the internship instructor. These discussion and reflection sessions are key elements for personal, academic, and professional development during the internship. Depending on the circumstances, these sessions may be held in person or virtually.

### **Progress Reports**

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 during their internship experience.

### **Internship Performance**

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

### **Oral Presentation**

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.

### **Final Paper**

Students are expected to submit a 15–20-page 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 summarizes the work and history of the organization and incorporates several references, a detailed description of the activities accomplished, and strong and innovative aspects of the organization. The final paper must include thoughtfully articulated analytical writing that 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. (See attached.)

<b>RUBRIC: Internship Paper</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Possible Considerations</b>
<b>Title / Acknowledgements / Abstract/Technical Aspects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The title is succinct and captures the essence of the internship experience</li> <li>-The acknowledgements are complete and professionally written</li> <li>-The abstract clearly summarizes the internship experience and learning outcomes</li> <li>-Table of contents, In-text citations, and reference list or bibliography are done correctly and completely</li> <li>-There are no mistakes in writing &amp; grammar, spelling &amp; punctuation</li> <li>-The paper is clean, legible, well-formatted, professional in appearance, and aesthetically pleasing</li> </ul>
<b>Contextualization and Organizational Profile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Important themes and background information are provided so reader understands the field in which the internship organization operates</li> <li>-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</li> <li>-The organizational structure, including division of responsibilities and the goals, objectives and activities of the organization are well elaborated</li> <li>-Care is taken not to harm by criticism, nor evaluate</li> <li>-The community served by the organization is described in sufficient detail</li> </ul>
<b>Internship Focus/Objectives/Justification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The paper specifies the focus area of the internship within the organization's broader work</li> <li>-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.</li> <li>-The student's internship tasks/duties at the organization are presented and justified.</li> </ul>
<b>Information Acquisition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-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)</li> <li>-A clear and complete description of the work undertaken is given, including dates and hours worked (put in an addendum).</li> </ul>
<b>Positionality and Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The paper acknowledges the intern's views, values, beliefs and other aspects of their personal background that influence their worldview.</li> <li>- The paper demonstrates ongoing self-reflection throughout the internship experience in relation to their positionality.</li> <li>-Human Subjects policies and ethical guidelines are adhered to and thoroughly discussed</li> <li>-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</li> <li>-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</li> <li>-The internship project is responsive to host organization and/or host community needs, as applicable</li> </ul>

<b>Critical Reflection on Internship Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The description of tasks and responsibilities is clear.</li> <li>-The paper examines the extent to which objectives were achieved, how objectives changed or evolved over the course of the internship experience.</li> <li>-Key professional lessons learned through the internship experience are described with specific examples</li> <li>-A personal evaluation of performance in the internship is included with suggestions of how it could have been improved.</li> <li>-Ways in which student identity may have shaped their insights of the internship experience are described</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis of Critical Issues/Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The manner in which the organization and its work are linked to the core themes of the program is described.</li> <li>-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.</li> <li>-Clear articulation of how the intern's knowledge and understanding of the core themes of the program were enhanced through the internship experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusions &amp; Recommendations for Future Interns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The main insights and lessons learned through the internship experience are detailed</li> <li>-Recommendations of opportunities or projects for future interns are described.</li> </ul>

### Assessment

Discussion and Reflection Sessions	10%
Progress Reports	10%
Internship Performance	35%
Oral Presentation	10%
Final Paper	35%

### Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each 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, on time, and appropriately dressed for your internship. Comply with organization rules.
- Have work journal and progress report assignments completed on schedule and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions when in the field/office. Engage yourself in the everyday life of the organization and initiate interaction.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (those of your internship supervisor and colleagues, classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on-site 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.

### **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 Internship Experience: Review and Reflection

This module occurs while students are fully participating in their internship. Critical and guided reflection will play a key role in student development and learning during the internship. Students will keep an internship journal in which they respond to the questions/issues listed below as instructed. Journaling should be done daily, keeping in mind the learning objectives. Students will submit two progress reports on their successes and limitations toward achieving learning objectives. Students will also meet with their instructor and other internship students for reflection and discussion during the internship.

**Cultural observations:** *How is the professional environment different from what you are used to? What are you learning about working collaboratively in this culture? How do you find yourself reacting to and adjusting to cultural practices that are different from what you are accustomed to? How does it feel to be a foreigner in this environment?*

**Theory and Practice: Digging Deeper:** *How does the work of your internship site connect to important program themes? How has the experience at your internship challenged or affirmed the arguments in a reading or lecture from this semester?*

**Skills and Experience:** *What insights into this field have you gained through your internship? What skills are most valuable for this internship site and what opportunities have you had to improve your skills in this area? What has challenged you and how are you handling those challenges? How do you see this experience preparing you for future opportunities?*

**Learning Goals:** *How much progress have you made toward your learning goals? What experiences or activities have contributed to your ability to meet them? Are you learning something important you didn't anticipate and would like to add to your Learning Goals at this time?*

Assigned Readings:

Sasges, G. (2013). *It's a Living: Work and Life in Vietnam*. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press.

Recommended Readings:

Switzer, F. & King, M. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic Development in Experiential Learning*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) Brooks/Cole.

## **Module 2: Processing and Maximizing the Internship Experience**

The final module occurs toward the end or after the internship and focuses on ways of processing and articulating the internship as well as equipping students with practical tips and strategies for making the most of the experience personally, academically, and professionally. Students will reflect on the internship experience and process the learning that occurred in a safe and supportive context. The internship may have been a different experience than expected, may challenge the student's expectations of interning in a diverse and challenging environment, and may change the student's perspective of life projects or professional goals. The module discusses ways of acknowledging both the successes and failures of the internship and setting realistic goals for the future.

### Additional seminar content will include:

- Processing the End of the Internship Experience
- Closure with Colleagues and Supervisors
- Articulating the Experience through an oral presentation
- Next Steps: How to include your internship on your résumé, how to frame the internship in a cover letter, and other ways to build on this experience.