

Internship & Seminar

ITRN 3000 (5 credits)

Australia: Sustainability and Environmental Action

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 five-week internship with an environmental non-profit organization, or a government department or agency focused on environmental issues along with a seminar which will help you prepare for and process your internship. Permission may be granted to undertake an internship with a for-profit entity but this will only be given if the entity is primarily focused on environmental outcomes and has a designated sustainability or environmental officer whom you can work with. The aim of an internship is to enable the student to gain valuable work experience in the field of sustainability and enhance their skills in an international work environment. A minimum of 150 hours must be spent working for the organization.

While SIT will suggest organizations, which are willing to take on our students as interns, it is ultimately each student's responsibility to apply for and secure an internship placement. Whether a student is accepted at any particular organization will, in large part, depend on the organization's requirements in that semester and on the student's skills, and academic and employment background. The organization and the student's internship activities, though, must be approved by the Academic Director having regard to both the program's academic goals and safety requirements. Normally only one student at a time can intern with any particular organization. The internship must also be approved by the SIT Study Abroad Review Board (SARB) for ethics considerations. You will consult regularly with the SIT internship coordinator to review your progress in setting up and undertaking the internship and learning associated with the internship experience. Students must decide whether they want to undertake an internship or Independent Study Project.

Once an internship has been arranged it will not be possible for you to change to another internship without the permission of the Academic Director. This permission will only be given if there is a clear and compelling reason for the change and if there will be no damage to the internship program for future students.

Students undertaking an internship must be concurrently enrolled in the Research Methods and Ethics course, which will help prepare you to successfully undertake the internship, and as part of this course you will submit a detailed proposal before beginning your internship. The proposal will include an extensive literature review covering the background and history of the organization, the issues it focuses on, how it fits in the context of similar organizations in Australia and the U.S., and how it advances sustainability.

Students, in consultation with their internship organization and the SIT internship coordinator, will identify a focus project that they will spend the majority of their internship hours working on and a responsible person at the organization who will act as their internship supervisor. Regular reflection and assessment meetings are held with the Internship coordinator to review the progress of the internship and learning associated with the internship experience.

Students complete an internship and submit a paper in which they discuss the overall structure and work of the organization, process their learning experience on the job and analyze their focus topic. The paper must also document a comprehensive work schedule and the specific skills and knowledge acquired through the experience and how the student intends to apply these skills and knowledge upon return to the United States. A focus will be on linking internship learning with the program's theme of sustainability.

Learning Outcomes

The Internship and Seminar course comprises 225 hours of internship, briefings, in-class instruction and reflection, preparation of final assignments, interactive learning, and research activities. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Apply relevant ethical concepts in the undertaking of their internship in the Australian context;
- Describe, analyze, and synthesize their learning experience in the form of an internship paper;
- Articulate the output of the internship experience in the form of an oral presentation;
- Show understanding of how the concepts of sustainability are applied in their internship organization;
- Use effective field study methods and techniques to gather data;
- Gain meaningful and practical work experience in their chosen field.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content 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.

Required Texts

Readings and articles as assigned.

Course Schedule

Preparing for the Internship

Classes will be held during the first 9 weeks of the semester which will prepare students for the internship and the writing of the internship paper. You will document your preparation for your internship in a series of worksheets and blog entries. You will also submit two proposals and liaise with the Internship Coordinator during this period.

Central to the successful internship experience is the development of the Internship Learning Agreement. The internship coordinator will work with students to review the purpose of the Internship Learning Agreement. The Agreement also helps to ensure a clear understanding of the objectives of the internship among the student, the internship coordinator, and the internship supervisor.

During the Internship

Students must complete 175 hours of work at their internship organization undertaking work for the organization and record their work hours each day in an online timesheet. Lunch breaks, commuting time, time spent writing your blogs and worksheets, collecting data to inform your paper, writing your paper, and progress reports do not count towards this requirement. Your timesheets must be signed off each week by your internship supervisor.

You must also document your progress in a series of worksheets, submit weekly progress reports to the internship coordinator, and write four blogs and comment on at least three other internship students blogs each week.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

The final paper

The student will submit by 4pm on the due day a 15–20-page paper emailed to the Academic Director and the Internship Coordinator and consisting of the following sections:

- A title, abstract and acknowledgements (5%)
- Description of the host institution, its history, how it advances sustainability, and your focus project and the issues related to it. (15%)
- Learning goals and a justification of those goals (10%)
- Description of tasks performed and methods (10%)
- Ethics and positionality (10%)
- Analysis of the focus project and organization (15%)
- Reflection on internship experience. (15%)
- Conclusions (10%)
- Technical aspects (5%)
- A further 5% of grade will be allocated to effort.

Guidelines for the Final Paper

The expectations for each section of the final paper are outlined below.

- **Description of host institution and focus project:** A minimum 2000-word literature review giving: the background and history of the organization; the work it does and how it fits in the context of similar organizations in Australia and the U.S., and how it advances sustainability; the background of your focus topic, and the issues related to it.
- **Learning goals and justification:** A justification explaining why you chose to do an internship, why you chose your particular organization and the learning goals of your internship and why they are important in the context of sustainability.
- **Description of tasks performed and methods:** This should include a description of the tasks you performed. Also specify the days and hours that you worked and the methods you used to gather data on your organization. This must be written in a first-person active voice and make clear what you did as opposed to what others in your team did.
- **Positionality and Ethics:** Should include an acknowledgement of your views, values, beliefs and other aspects of your personal background that may have influenced your internship experience. Also, a discussion of any ethical considerations and your ethics approval and conditions.
- **Analysis of the focus project and your internship organization:** Analysis of the focus project will vary depending on the nature of the project. Expectations for this section of the report must be clarified with your SIT internship coordinator well before

you begin writing your paper. This section should also include your observations and impressions of the organization and how it advances sustainability.

- **Reflection on internship experience:** Examine the extent to which you achieved each of your goals and how those goals changed or evolved over the course of the internship. In the context of sustainability, detail what you learnt from your internship experience (relate this to your learning goals). Include a personal evaluation of your performance in the internship with suggestions of how you could have improved your performance.
- **Conclusion:** Summarize the main lessons and insights of the internship and detail how you might utilize these in the future and how you intend to apply these new skills and knowledge when you return to the USA.

Academic and ethical integrity

The internship experience must reflect SIT's ethics policy and commitment to the values of reciprocity. Students must respect, protect, and promote the rights and the welfare of all those affected by their work by doing everything in their power to protect the dignity and privacy of the people with whom they work. Likewise, respect, care and attention should be given to protecting, conserving and restoring the natural environment.

The student intern should also abide by the policy and regulations of the host institution including dress, punctuality, employee behavior, and in particular, confidentiality. 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.

Students must not represent as their own work, either in speaking or writing, materials or ideas, directly taken from other sources. They must give full credit in speaking or writing to all those who have contributed to their work. Severe academic penalties apply for deliberate plagiarism or other academic dishonesty. Falsely stating hours worked will be regarded as academic dishonesty and will result in a grade of F.

Evaluation and grading criteria

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, the student's work and their adherence to the highest ethical standards.

Description of Assignments

Progress Reports (5%)

Progress reports are due each Sunday during the internship period (four in total) and should be emailed to the internship coordinator. Detail what work you completed during the week, document the progress towards each of your learning goals, and the challenges you have faced over the past week and how you dealt with those challenges.

Worksheets and Discussion and Reflection blogs (15%)

A series of worksheets and blogs are due in the period leading up to the commencement of the internship. These document your preparations for the internship. Further worksheets document your progress during the internship. Discussion and reflection blogs are written on a weekly basis during the internship period and are due each Sunday (four in total). You are expected to share your personal experience in the internship with the rest of the internship class and to reflect on the professional learning process. You are expected to read the other students' blogs and each week you must post a comment on at least three other student's blogs.

Internship Performance (35%)

This evaluation, submitted by the student's supervisor at the host institution, assesses the student's internship experience, overall professional achievements, and self-growth. The student's performance is also assessed by the internship coordinator based on evidence contained in weekly reports and the internship worksheets, blogs and timesheet.

Final Paper (35%)

You must submit by email to the Academic Director and Internship Coordinator a 15-20 page paper at the end of your internship experience by 4pm on the due day. The final paper must follow the guidelines listed above.

Oral Presentation (10%)

You must attend the oral presentations of students Independent Projects and give a 20 minute oral presentation followed by 5 minutes for questions. In the presentation, you should detail and justify your internship goals, describe and give a brief history of the organization where you interned, give a background to your focus project, detail the work undertaken and methods used to gather data, discuss ethical issues, give the results of your focus project and observations and impressions of your internship organization, and conclude with what you learnt from your internship experience and how you will apply this on your return to the US.

The criteria for grading your oral presentation will be:

- Learning goals and a justification of those goals (5%)
- Description of the host institution, its history, how it advances sustainability, and your focus project and the issues related to it. (15%)
- Description of tasks performed and methods (10%)
- Ethics and positionality (5%)
- Analysis of the focus project and organization (15%)
- Reflection on internship experience. (15%)
- Conclusions and how lessons and new skills could be applied (5%)
- Quality of your responses to questions and questions you ask (5%)
- Professionalism and quality of the presentation (25%)

Assessment

Final Paper -	35%
Internship Performance -	35%
Worksheets and discussion and reflection blogs -	15%
Oral Presentation -	10%
Progress Reports -	5%

Expectations and Policies

Show up prepared, on time, and appropriately dressed for your internship. Comply with organization rules.

If for some reason (e.g. illness) you are not able to attend your internship as scheduled, you need to notify the Academic Director and the Internship Coordinator in advance. Missed time must be made up.

Have progress reports and blogs completed on schedule and done according to the specified requirements.

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, falsifying of timesheets, nothing unethical).

Respect differences of opinion (those of your internship supervisor and colleagues, classmates, lecturers). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

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.
- 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.
- 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.

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.