

## Internship and Seminar ITRN-4000 (4 credits)

### Ghana: Globalization, Cultural Legacies & the Afro-Chic

*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 consists of a four-week internship with a local community organization, research organization, business, or international NGO. The aim of an internship is to enable students to gain valuable internship experience and enhance their skills in an international internship environment.

SIT will use its extensive network to place students in organizations working on social change, technology innovation and diffusion, emerging business start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises in Ghana. In addition, students may petition SIT for approval of internship placements that they find on their own initiative. However, in all cases, the organization and the student's internship placement must be approved by SIT's academic director, and SIT will maintain oversight over internship placement in line with SIT academic policies, student health and security guidelines. Ultimately, each student takes responsibility for making optimal use of resources available at the organization and to be proactive in engaging with local experts to achieve their internship objectives. Weekly two-hour reflection and assessment classes are held with the academic director or internship coordinator to review the progress of the internship and learning associated with the internship experience.

The students complete an internship and submit a focus project paper in which they process their learning experience on the internship, analyze an issue important to the organization, and/or design a socially responsible solution to a problem identified by the organization. Approved in advance by the academic director, SIT's Local Review Board (for ethical clearance purposes), and the internship supervisor, the internship focus project may involve interviews and other data collection methods relevant to achieving internship learning goals. The paper and final presentation reveal how those goals are linked to the theme of Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the critical global issue of development, economy, and inequality. The paper should also 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.

## Learning Outcomes

The Internship and Seminar course comprises 185 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:

- Demonstrate knowledge of how Ghanaian cultural norms and practices shape the workplace environment and outcomes;
- Articulate the ways in which organizations attempt to negotiate tensions between Western and local cultural norms and practices;
- 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

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

## 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.

## Internship Seminar 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*

The internship placement and the internship seminar go hand in hand. The internship seminar is the academic aspect of the internship placement. A student completing the internship placement without the internship seminar does not receive SIT credit.

## **Week One (Part 1): Introduction, Positionality and Internship Ethics**

*Reflection Question: How is the cultural environment at your internship placement different from what you are used to and how are you adjusting to this cultural difference? How is your identity (racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, class, etc.) influencing how you relate to others in this environment and how they relate to you?*

*Assigned Reading:*

- Miner, Horace "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema". *American Anthropologist*, 1956, 58(3), 503-507
- Ritzer, George. (1983). "The McDonaldization of Society." *Journal of American Culture*, 6 (1), 100-107

## **Week One (Part 2): Setting the Stage (not graded)**

*Submit questions that you may have about the final paper, expectations, and how to maximize benefit from the experience. Students are encouraged to respond to each other's questions and the instructor responds as well.*

## **Week Two: Cultural Observations (First Progress Report Due Date TBD)**

*Reflection Question: What are you learning about working collaboratively in this culture? What difficulties and what joys are you experiencing? What might you change about your style (manner of dress, communication, demeanor and interactions) to enhance your learning and performance at the internship?*

*Assigned Reading:*

- Weaver, Gary R. (2000) *Culture, Communication and Conflict: Readings in Intercultural Relations* 3rd ed. London: Pearson. Chapter 3: "Understanding and coping with cross cultural adjustment stress."
- Kohls, Robert. "The Values Americans Live By."

## **Week Three: The Theory of Practice: Digging Deeper**

*Reflection Question: How have your courses on this program (Language, RME and Thematic Seminars) informed your internship experience and your performance of the internship?*

*Assigned Reading:*

- Thomson S. Ansom A & Murison J (2013) "Emotional and Ethical Challenges for Field Research in Africa: The Story Behind the Findings". Chapter 1.

## **Week Four: Learning Goals, Skills and Experience (Second Progress Report Due TBD)**

*Reflection Question: Briefly describe what you have learnt from the internship placement. What could you have done differently to enhance your learning? Identify key talking points for presenting about your internship to your school back home.*

*Assigned Reading:*

Switzer, Frederick and King, Mary (2013) "The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4th Edition). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole. Chapters 3, 9 & 12)

## **Assignments and Evaluation**

### Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

#### Weekly response papers

Students are required to submit weekly written responses to reflection sections as shown below. In addition, each student is expected to compose one response that addresses issues raised by at least three other students. Written responses should incorporate assigned reading.

The course instructor will in turn provide written feedback to the entire student group. The goal is to foster interaction and discussion among the students and between the students and the course instructor.

Written responses should be no less than half a page, single space and no more than a full page, approximately 350-700 words.

#### Progress Reports

The progress report is a bi-weekly reflective synthesis of the professional and personal issues that the student has encountered over the course of the two preceding weeks. The progress reports may be used to inform writing of the critical reflection component of the final internship report.

We anticipate that students will need to spend about two hours each week doing the assigned reading and preparing their response papers.

#### Internship Performance

This evaluation by the by the internship supervisor or someone at the internship organization 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, and the responsibilities undertaken. The oral presentation should relate the learning associated with the focus project

and reflect on its relevance to the program theme and Critical Global Issue. You should demonstrate effective management of the discussion with the audience and attend to the aesthetic elements of the delivery. A summary of the oral presentation assessment rubric will be shared with students in advance.

### Final Paper

Students are expected to submit a 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 a number of references, detailed description of internship accomplishments, and strong and innovative aspects of the organization. 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.

### Assessment

Weekly Response Papers and Progress Reports 20%

1. Written response to reflection questions: 10 points each (4 x 10 points): 40 points maximum
2. Written response to issues raised by other students: (4 x 5 points) 20 points maximum
3. Progress Reports (2 x 20 points each): 40 points maximum

*Late submissions are penalized by 2 points for every additional 24 hrs.*

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 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.