

Sustainability and Environmental Justice Project

IDST-3060 (3 credits)

Portugal: Sustainability and Environmental Justice

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

In this seminar, students select and analyze a relevant sustainability and environmental justice issue in consultation with program faculty. Through hands-on projects in Lisbon, students examine how social and environmental justice intersect within the WEF (Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems) nexus, highlighting the interconnectedness of equitable access to resources and sustainability across communities and ecosystems. Each student conducts research to produce an original academic project and presents their results to the class. The course gives students the opportunity to engage on a deeper level with one of the topics covered in the Seminar Course, while, at the same time, developing their academic skills. Support is provided throughout the project by program faculty, particularly in aiding students in finding resources in Portugal. This course runs parallel to the Environmental Systems, Justice & Technology Seminar throughout the duration of the program.

Learning Outcomes

The Sustainability and Environmental Justice Project course comprises 45 hours of instruction (3 credits). Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders, including local communities, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations,
- Utilize critical thinking skills to research and evaluate sustainable solutions in Lisbon.
- Communicate research findings (proposal, methodology and data gathering design), project outcomes, and recommendations clearly and persuasively through, e.g., written reports, oral presentations, and other multimedia platforms.

Course Schedule

Students will be provided a detailed course schedule during orientation on the program. 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.

Week 1:

Students collaborate with the Academic Director and Program Coordinator to identify their interests and select a topic relevant to the environmental justice interconnecting within the WEF nexus across sustainability subject. Students will explore existing literature, case studies, and data sources

to identify the complex interdependencies and potential trade-offs between these resources. Dedicated time is allocated for students to discuss their ideas with the Academic Director, and they are encouraged to seek guidance from other program faculty members and relevant experts.

Week 2 and 3:

Students will draft their project proposal presentations outlining their research questions, methodologies, and strategies of work-planning. Regular meetings with program faculty provide guidance throughout this process. Students have the option to work individually or in groups of 4-5. Proposals are due, presented, and graded by the end of the third week.

Week 4 and 5:

These weeks are dedicated to research projects, with an emphasis on gathering relevant research data. The Academic Director facilitates student access to appropriate sources, and field research is strongly encouraged. Students analyze their findings and organize their project to be delivered.

Week 6:

Students deliver and present their research projects to the class and invited guests, providing an opportunity for discussion and feedback.

Assignments and Evaluation

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Evaluation is based on successful completion of each component of the individual research project. Grade is determined by:

Research Proposal presentation (20%):

Prior to the presentations, students must complete their project Human Subjects Research forms and submit them to the local review board. During the presentation (e.g., in virtual or other manual format), students outline the research questions driving their objectives, explain the theoretical framework guiding their study, and delineate the methods they intend to employ in data collection and analysis. Additionally, students highlight the relevance of their proposed research within the broader academic discourse and societal context, emphasizing its potential contributions to existing knowledge (finding their research gap). It is advisable to include a brief discussion on limitations to acknowledge and recognize the parameters of the research project (10 minutes presentation). A local review board will be present during students' presentations to provide ethical oversight and guidance, including evaluating the feasibility of the project within the timeline and facilitating the exchange of contacts for student interviews and information gathering.

Research Project (50%):

The research project can have different formats according to student preferences and expected to-be developed skills:

- *Research paper (3000 – 4000 words):* communicates the context of the problem being examined, presents analysis of data collected, discusses the issue in a relevant way, and draws original conclusions from the discussion. Students should prepare and format the paper as the one that is provided on CANVAS.
- *Visual Chronicles (15 – 20 minutes):* The research project in media format provides students with an alternative means of presenting their research findings. Students are tasked with creating a 20-minute documentary or video that explores their chosen research topic in-depth.

The project, in either formats, should effectively communicate the context of the problem being examined, clearly explain the data gathering methodology, which may include interviews and/or

secondary data analysis, depending on the nature of the project, analyze relevant data and evidence, discuss the issue in a pertinent manner, and draw original conclusions from the research findings. The project should be well-structured, with a clear introduction, logical progression of ideas, and a concise conclusion.

Project Presentation (30%):

- *Research paper* - The groups/students deliver a presentation on their research paper (15-20 minutes), and articulate the issue, its context, the analysis, the findings, and a reflection on the research process. Students respond to questions from the class, guests and the Academic Director (up to 10 min).
- *Visual Chronicles*: The groups/students will present their 15-20 minute documentary or video. Following the visualization, students will have 10 minutes to elucidate their rationale and methodology for the piece. During this time, they will explain the significance of their research, convey its relevance, outline their methods, and articulate their conclusions to the audience. Students respond to questions from the class, guests and the Academic Director (up to 10 min).

Assessment:

Research Proposal presentation	10%
Research Project	60%
Project Presentation	30%

Grading Scale

94-100%	A	Excellent
90-93%	A-	
87-89%	B+	
84-86%	B	Above Average
80-83%	B-	
77-79%	C+	
74-76%	C	Average
70-73%	C-	
67-69%	D+	
64-66%	D	Below Average
below 64	F	Fail

Expectations and Policies

- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed (or turned in electronically), and done according to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Comply with academic integrity policies as specified in the [SIT Study Abroad Student Handbook](#).
- 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.

Please note: the syllabus, course content, lecturers, and readings may modified by the Academic Director in order to better suit the needs of the course and its participants. Should any change of class topics or lecturers be necessary, students will be promptly notified.

Academic Policies: SIT prides itself on providing students with an experientially based program; we hold ourselves, and our students, to the highest of academic standards. Students are asked to refer to the **SIT Study Abroad Handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.