

Internship & Seminar ITRN-3000 (4 credits)

Cameroon: Development and Social Change

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 internship with a Cameroon-based local NGO, research organization, or international NGO. The goal of the internship is to enable students to gain valuable learning experience and enhance their professional skills in an international setting.

The internship contributes to the student's experiential learning and is not a paid activity. SIT has a long and established partnership with local civil society and international organizations in Cameroon. Each student is expected to choose an organization identified by the academic director as suitable and satisfying the program's requirements. A list of approved organizations will be made available to students upon their arrival, but they can also choose an organization with no established partnership with the program with approval from the academic director.

Regular reflection and assessment sessions will be held with the academic director to review the progress of the internship, and the learning process associated with the internship experience. Students will submit a final paper upon completion of their internship. In the final paper, students will process their learning experience, analyze an important organizational issue, as well as their experience and observations, as related to the program theme. The final paper and presentation will demonstrate how the students' goals are achieved, how their experience links to the program theme and how the student intends to apply these skills and knowledge upon return to the United States.

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 to:

- Demonstrate awareness of the ethics of internship in the context of Cameroon;
- Describe, analyze, and synthesize their learning experience during the internship in the form of a final paper;
- Articulate the output of the internship experience in the form of an oral presentation;
- Show understanding of the role of civil society in Cameroon;
- Gain meaningful and practical professional experience in their chosen field;

- Assess the challenges of civil society organizations in a society in transition such as Cameroon.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English and French, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well as the nuances of economic change and development 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.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weekly reflection and assessment meetings are held with the academic director or internship coordinator to review the progress of the internship and learning associated with the internship experience.

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

1) Internship performance (35%)

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. Students might be required to submit some materials developed during their internship where possible. Depending on the circumstances, these sessions may be held in person or virtually. The AD or internship coordinator will do check-ins with the organization on the student's performance.

2) Three Journal Reports (10%)

During the internship period, students will be expected to keep a specific journal devoted entirely to recording their experiences at the workplace. Students will document progress on their internship and practice effective note-taking and general reflection.

3) Internship Mentor Evaluation (10%)

This evaluation by the Internship Mentor at the NGO assesses the student's internship experience, overall professional achievements, and self-growth.

4) Oral Presentation (10%)

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.

5) Final Internship Paper (35%)

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 a number of references, 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. (Example at the end of syllabus.)

Assessment

Internship Paper - 35%

Internship Presentation - 10%

Internship performance - 35%

Internship journal - 10%

Internship advisor/mentor - 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, 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 Excellent

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 Fail

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](#), [Accessibility 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 lectures' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

During the internship month students are required to attend four reflection sessions. These sessions focus on the review of, and reflection process on, the overall internship experience. Prior to each session, students will submit their progress report to the academic director.

Module 1: Making the Most of Your Internship

During this module, students will prepare for the internship and the writing of the internship paper, have regular meetings with the academic director, reflect on the internship experience, and learn how to use their experience for future professional growth.

Session 1: Setting the Stage

This session reviews objectives for the internship. Students meet with the academic director following confirmation of their internship placement and discuss expectations, timeframes and other logistics, structural components of the final internship paper, content, layout, and general guidelines.

Sessions 2 & 3: The Internship Experience: Review and Reflection

Central to the successful internship experience is the development of the Internship Learning Agreement. The academic director will work with students individually and as a group to review the purpose of the Internship Learning Agreement. He or she will discuss student strategies for working with the internship supervisor to design the contents of the Internship Learning Agreement in adherence to internship learning objectives and in collaboration with the internship supervisor at the host organization. The Agreement also

helps to ensure a clear understanding of the objectives of the internship among the student, academic director, and internship supervisor.

Required Readings:

ADs should assign readings specific to the local context.

Recommended Readings:

Switzer, F. and King, M. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole (chapter 12).

Module 2: Internship Final Paper and Presentation Design and Content

This module focuses on the design and mechanics of the internship final paper. The module covers the final paper's structural design, organization, and guidelines for effective self-reflection on the internship experience and appraisal of acquired experience.

Session 1: Description of the Host Institution

This session focuses on the general guidelines for the description of the host institution. The session walks the student through samples of a brief description (one page) of the host institution for the internship, the nature of the services offered, and a profile of the customers who use them. The session also highlights the importance of including brochures or collateral material that further describes the institution.

Session 2: Description of Tasks Performed on the Internship

This session provides guidelines for effective ways of describing tasks performed as an intern. The session covers the importance of third-person narration (as if the student, acting as a manager, were writing it for a new employee/associate), outline form (except for the internship summary section), and headings for each of the sessions. A suggested outline for this description includes:

- Internship role/title and place of employment
- Internship summary—narrative summary of the activities of the position
- Qualifications—education and experience required and/or desirable
- Internship conditions—uniform requirements, physical surroundings, internship days, hours, etc.
- Internship relationships—who is the mentor and to whom does the student report
- Specific duties and responsibilities—a list should be provided to indicate all duties performed by the individual in this position

Section 3: Output of the Internship Experience

This session focuses on output of the internship experience, which may include a proposal for a strategic response to an existing problem, a creation of a sustainable plan, a grant proposal, or research that responds to the need of an organization that links back to the program theme and [CGI].

Session 4: Personal Assessment of the Internship Performance

This session provides guidelines for an assessment of the key learning milestones acquired on the internship experience, the challenges faced, and the possible impact of the experience on the student's academic and professional career. The session also covers a reflection on the internship experience, including the output of the internship (addressed in Session 3), as it relates to the critical global issue central to the program theme.

Session 5: Oral Presentation of the Internship Final Paper

This module focuses on the mechanics and guidelines for the presentation of the internship final paper. The presentation should take 20 minutes and students are encouraged to use audiovisual aid/handouts to facilitate their presentations.

Session content includes:

- Presenting a brief overview of the internship experience
- Communicating assigned responsibilities and tasks performed
- Articulating major output of the experience
- Providing personal assessment of the internship performance.

Required Readings:

ADs should assign readings specific to the local context.

Recommended Readings:

Switzer, F. and King, M. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Module 3: Processing and Maximizing the Internship Experience

This module 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.

Session 1: Talking About the Internship Experience

This session allows students to 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, of completing tasks, handing over projects to and sharing insights with colleagues on the internship, and setting realistic goals for the future.

Session content includes:

- Processing the End of the Internship Experience
- Closure with Colleagues and Supervisors
- Articulating the Experience and Setting Plans for the Future

Session 2: How to Include Your Internship on Your Résumé

During this session, students will learn appropriate ways of including their internship on their résumés and in online professional platforms such as LinkedIn.

Session 3: Next Steps

This final session occurs in the final week of the program, as students plan their next steps, academically and professionally. Students discuss fears and strategies for building on this experience in other internship settings, opportunities for professional growth, and how to make optimal use of the internship experience. They will discuss ways to describe the experience gained and skills learned in their internship in cover letters and how to use this experience for future professional growth.

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Appropriate consideration is given to informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality of participants, in keeping with human subjects protocols and the SARB - approved internship learning agreement -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 -The internship project is responsive to host organization and/or host community needs, as applicable
Critical Reflection on Internship Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The description of tasks and responsibilities is clear. -The paper examines the extent to which objectives were achieved, how objectives changed or evolved over the course of the internship experience. -Key professional lessons learned through the internship experience are described with specific examples -A personal evaluation of performance in the internship is included with suggestions of how it could have been improved. -Ways in which student identity may have shaped their insights of the internship experience are described
Analysis of Critical Issues/Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The manner in which the organization and its work are linked to the core themes of the program is described. -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. -Clear articulation of how the intern's knowledge and understanding of the core themes of the program were enhanced through the internship experience.
Conclusions & Recommendations for Future Interns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The main insights and lessons learned through the internship experience are detailed -Recommendations of opportunities or projects for future interns are described.
Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Determinations of effort vary by program.