

## Internship Practice and Seminar

ITRN-3006 (6 credits)

### Switzerland: Social Impact Internship

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual seminar content varies from semester to semester.*

#### Course Description

This practice and seminar module is based on a framework of four pillars: Internship placement and practice; site visits and briefings to international institutions, companies, NGOs & start-up organizations; thematic lectures on social impact in global contexts; and discussion/reflection sessions on internship experience to enhance professional & personal growth.

This module consists of a 6-week internship (~300 hours in total)-with institutions or organizations in the fields of social impact such as sustainable development, impact investment, innovation & AI, fintech, public health, human rights, environment & climate change, and more. Students will complete an internship in a Swiss or international institution in the Geneva Lake Region and are expected to complete 192 hours at their placement at the internship institution. The remaining 109 hours comprise of an orientation (9h), weekly visits and briefings in various institutions (7h), in-class lectures and discussion sessions (20h) contact hours (50h), 2 one-day study trips (16h) and an end of the program retreat (6h). The aim of an internship practice and seminar is to enable students to gain valuable personal experience, enhance their professional skills and help them build up their career towards a more inclusive and respectful future.

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 on 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 be proactive in engaging with local experts to achieve academic goals and internship objectives.

Students will be informed of the areas of internships available and their placement in the summer semester prior to their arrival in Switzerland. The list of the SIT partner institutions in the summer semester will be available on the SZI webpage in the spring semester. Students

can undertake their internship in areas of social impact such as civil society initiatives, social entrepreneurship, innovation hubs and think-tanks leading to achievement of the SDGs-2030.

There will be pre-launch modules available to students that will explore and assist in career competency development and will prepare students for the application process, interviewing stages, and final placement. Students are highly encouraged to fully engage in this opportunity to prepare for an intensive experience at their internship placement. Upon their arrival in Switzerland, and following the orientation session in the first week of the program, students will visit partner institutions and meet internship mentors in the second week of the program. They will identify, after the briefings of internship institutions and interviews with internship mentors and the SIT Academic Director, the institution of their choice that has an opening and may host them.

### **Learning Outcomes**

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

- Articulate their knowledge on social impact and the skills they developed through their internship experience in the domains such as sustainable development, impact investment, innovation & AI, fintech, public health, human rights, environment & climate change, etc.
- Expand their professional network through their relationships with professionals, mentors, and potential employers within their field of interest.
- Collaborate with colleagues/mentors/supervisors to achieve common goals and contribute to organizational success.
- Interact and communicate across diverse professional and cultural contexts.
- Analyze and demonstrate problem-solving skills for real-world challenges encountered during the internship.

### **Language of Instruction**

This course is taught in English. There are institutions where the working language is English and there are also institutions where the working language is French. Students will be exposed to vocabulary related to the internship through a wide range of venues of social impact. Students will learn about the working practices within the Swiss/international environment and may communicate in French, Spanish, or other languages if they wish in addition to English.

### **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 *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 becoming empowered lifelong learners.

*Required Texts:*

Sweitzer, H. F., & King, M. A. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic Development in Experiential Learning* (4th ed.). Cengage.

Jenny Onyx (2014): A Theoretical Model of Social Impact. *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), <https://doi.org/10.5130/ccs.v6i1.3369>

Vanclay, F., Esteves, A.M. (Eds.). (2024). *Handbook of Social Impact Assessment and Management*. Edward Elgar. <https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollbook-0a/book/9781802208870/9781802208870.xml>

## **Assignments and Evaluation**

### Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

Brief Description of Assignments (additional details will be made available during the internship orientation program).

#### **Progress Reports (20%): (1) and (2)**

The progress report should document the student's advancement towards 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 in the course of their internship experience.

#### **(1) Global Workplace Assignment: Anthropological Observation (10%):**

In this 600-word progress report, students will learn about the internship institution by immersing into its daily activities. Typically, they will engage in observation with participation. They will describe activities of professionals and will reflect about issues related to social impact which may attract their attention.

The assessment can range from an analysis of the dress code, to language and concepts professionals use to communicate among themselves and with partners outside the institution. Students will also consider their work-ethics as well as their professional goals related to social impact in the area of activities of the internship institution. Students will focus their observation on three different levels of communication within the institution and will discuss:

1. Swiss/Francophone culture or international culture of the working environment;
2. Corporate culture of the institution, its mission statement and code of conduct, and how institutions makes professionals converge to the achievement of corporate goals;
3. Professional culture within the institution and how different professionals communicate with each other, what specific concepts and vocabulary they use, and how once vocation may shape the working environment, how to define issues and seek for solutions in their area of work.

Students will assess the internship institution from the anthropological perspective by looking at the meaning/purpose that professionals give when working for institution.

## **(2) Interview Assignment (10%):**

In this 600-word progress report, students will undertake three brainstorm or semi-structured interviews with professionals from the internship institution and/or its network. The scope of this exercise is to learn about social impact from the experience and viewpoint of the professional from that area or industry and their impact on society. Students will reflect about their positionality and cognitive bias towards the knowledge they have acquired on the social impact.

The interview assessment is a free format exercise and related to the activity of the internship institution, their corporate and their professional cultures. Students will prepare a list of questions that they use to conduct an interview.

Possible topics: Global governance, multilateralism, humanitarianism; Sustainable development, sustainable finance, circular economy; Environment, climate change, green economy; Innovation, Fintech, AI; PPP, public health, strategy and foresight.

**Internship Performance (35%):** This assessment conducted by the Academic Director aims to evaluate the student's internship experience, encompassing their overall professional achievements, personal development and self-growth. The performance evaluation will be carried out during a field visit organized by the Academic Director to the students' respective organizations. During this visit, the Academic Director will assess various aspects, including the students' commitment to attending, participating, and fulfilling their responsibilities in accordance with ethical, professional and academic guidelines as reported by their internship mentors. Additionally, the evaluation will consider the students' accomplishments and contributions to their organizations. The internship mentor will submit a report in the form of a reference letter (previously sent to all on-site supervisors) on student's performance which is taken into account by the Academic Director when evaluating the student's input.

**Internship Reflection Journal (10%):** Students are expected to maintain an internship reflection journal (2'500 words) throughout their internship experience. The electronic journal is

confidential between the student and Academic Director. All entries need to be weekly and dated. Students should keep notes daily and complete their journal at the end of each week to capture and summarize all relevant internship information. In responding to the reflection prompts, students should include any event, issue, conversation, experience, information, impression, emotion, or conclusion that seems relevant. The journal should be professionally written, well-organized, and capture thoughtful reflection of internship practice.

**Discussion and Reflection Sessions (10%):**

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.

**Final Portfolio (25%):** The final portfolio is composed of 6 components, detailed below. Rubrics for the final portfolio and presentation will be shared with students in-country.

- Representative work samples (50%)
- Internship Learning Agreement (10%)
- Revised Resume (5%)
- LinkedIn Profile (10%)
- Oral Presentation (20%)
- Attendance and Participation (5%)

**(1) Representative Work Samples (50 %):** Work samples are tangible examples of the tasks, projects, or achievements completed during the internship. These samples showcase the intern's skills, contributions, and overall performance. The specific work samples can vary widely depending on the nature of the internship. Common examples include reports, data gathering and analysis, presentation materials, marketing assets (website content, social media posts, brochures, etc.), training materials, etc. When compiling work samples, students will consider confidentiality and privacy agreements, ensuring that the materials shared comply with the policies of the internship host organization.

**(2) Internship Learning Agreement (Three-Parties Agreement, Internship Convention) (10%):** Preparation of the agreement between the student and internship placement site that outlines objectives, scope of assignment (research activities and/or projects), and the roles and responsibilities of each party to the agreement.

**(3) Revised Resume (5%):** Students will update their resumes to reflect appropriately the knowledge, skills, core competencies, responsibilities, and accomplishments amassed via their internship experience.

**(4) LinkedIn Profile (10%):** Students will create or update their LinkedIn profile to integrate the knowledge skills, and accomplishments from their internship experience.

**(5) Oral Presentation (20%):** Students will prepare and deliver a presentation to demonstrate how the internship experience enhanced their understanding of the SIT program theme on social impact.

**(6) Attendance and Participation (5%)**

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.

**Assessment of the Internship**

Global Workplace Assignment: Anthropological Observation	10%
Interview Assignment	10%
Internship Performance	35%
Internship Reflection Journal	10%
Discussion & Reflection Sessions	10%
Final Portfolio	25%

**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

- Have internships assignments completed on schedule and done according to the specified requirements.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism, cheating or use of ChatGPT, full compliance to ethical standards is expected).
- Respect differences of opinion (colleagues, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the internship). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across differences 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. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Off-task usage is not acceptable.
- Internship Communication: Internship documents and assignments will be posted on OneDrive. You are responsible for informing the Academic Director about any network-related problems that may influence your participation in this internship.
- 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. When possible, students 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 internship because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with the Academic Director and/or seek help from counseling services.

## 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*

## Pre-Arrival Preparation and Placement Process

- Students will have an online meeting with the Academic Director and Academic Coordinator (~1 hour) to prepare for the internship summer program .
- Students will complete a core competency seminar (~1 hour in Canvas), predetermined by the Academic Director from career specific themes: Interviewing tips and tricks, Introduction to Career Competencies, Launch into your Internship, Workplace Culture in Switzerland.
- Students will start the application process upon arrival in Switzerland and after the Orientation session in the first week. On the second week of the program, they will visit internship institutions and meet internship mentors and do interviews on site. The Academic Director will facilitate student placement to institutions of student interest and following availabilities in internship institutions.

## WEEKLY OVERVIEW

### WEEK 1: ARRIVAL IN SWITZERLAND AND ORIENTATION IN THE GENEVA LAKE REGION

- Arrival and Orientation (Thu & Fri)
- Preparing for the Internship (Fri)

This week prepares students for the “Switzerland: Social Impact Internship” Summer Program. Students attend the orientation session on the first two days of the program. They discuss career objectives and prepare for internship placement. Students receive general information on the Geneva Lake Region and opportunities to do internship with SIT partner institutions. Students review their cover letter, resume and learning outcomes from the internship placement and prepare for the meeting with internship mentors on the week 2.



## WEEK 2: ORIENTATION AND BEGINNING OF THE INTERNSHIP

- Introduction to Social Impact and Future of Society (lecture). Information session and preparation for internship placement, CV and Cover Letter, Anthropological & Interview Assignments, Internship Reflection Journal, LinkedIn profile, Internship performance (workshop) (Mon)
- Meeting with the internship mentors (Tue & Wed)
- One day excursion to Bern (Thu)
- Visit and briefing in international institutions, NGOs or start-ups and creative workshop on Strategic Foresight (Fri)

Students have lectures on Social Impact and workshops on how to prepare for the internship. They then visit internship institutions, meet internship mentors who will present activities of their institutions. Students have on-site interviews with internship mentors. The Academic Director will facilitate student placement by assisting and advising students and internship mentors in all stages of the selection process. Students then go on a one-day excursion to Bern, where they have a walking tour in the capital city of Switzerland and visit the Museum of Albert Einstein. Students also visit the international institutions and will have a lecture on Strategic Foresight.

### Thematic lecture: **Social Impact and Future of Society**

This session introduces the concept of social impact and discusses international decision making under conditions of uncertainty. Students explore key concepts of strategic foresight and futuring such as the 2x2 Matrix and Futures Cone.

#### *Required Text:*

Cornish, Edward. Futuring. The Exploration of the Future. World Future Society, Bethesda, ML, p. 203-228 (2006)

#### *Recommended Text:*

Rhydderch, Alun. Scenario Building: The 2x2 Matrix, Prospective and Strategic Foresight Toolbox, Futuribles, Paris (2017)

### Thematic lecture: **Strategic Foresight and Scenario Building : Global Warming 2050 – PESTEL and Futures Wheel (creative workshop)**

This creative workshop combines PESTEL analysis and the Futures Wheel approach in assessing the impact of global warming on international society.

#### *Required Text :*

Jerome C. Glenn (2021). The Futures Wheel. In *Futures Research Methodology 3.0* (pp.Chapter 6). *The Millenium Project*.

#### *Recommended Text:*

UNICEF (2024). *SWOT AND PESTEL*. <https://knowledge.unicef.org/resource/swot-and-pestel>

### WEEK 3: INTERNSHIP, VISITS, LECTURES.

- One-day excursion to Gruyère and the Cailler Chocolate Factory (Mon)
- Internship starts: All students undertake internship training on-site from Tuesday to Friday, from 9 AM to 5 PM.

Students have a one-day excursion to Gruyère to learn about sustainable tourism and will visit a Swiss chocolate factory. Students do their internship from Tuesday to Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM and can expect to spend 4 days/32 hours per week at the institution.

### WEEK 4: INTERNSHIP, VISITS, LECTURES

- Visit and briefing in international institutions, NGOs or start-ups (Mon)
- Thematic lecture on social impact (Mon)
- Discussion on internship experience (Mon)
- Internship (Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri)

#### Thematic lecture: ***Leading with Strategy in the Age of Climate Change***

This session provides students with a strategic lens to understand the implications of environmental and regulatory shifts, including emissions reporting and ESG standards. Students will explore how to build resilient organizations that address climate risk, develop science-based transition plans, and engage stakeholders in a sustainable transformation.

#### *Required Texts:*

World Economic Forum (2025). *WEF Global Aviation Sustainability Outlook 2025* (White Paper)  
<https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-aviation-sustainability-outlook-2025/>

#### *Recommended Text:*

Ali Khalfallah Sustainable Manufacturing and Green Processing Methods (2024). *Machines*.  
<https://www.mdpi.com/2075-1702/12/11/815>

Tim van Erp, Nubia Gabriela Pereira Carvalho, Mateus Cecilio Gerolamo, Rui Gonçalves d, Niels Gorm Malý Rytter, Bartłomiej Gladysz (2024). Industry 5.0: A new strategy framework for sustainability management and beyond. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, (461),  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.142271>

## Discussion on Internship Experience: ***Anthropological Observation of Internship Experience***

This session focuses on cultural observations of the professional setting. Students reflect and discuss the following questions: How is the professional environment different from what you are used to in the USA? What are you learning about working collaboratively in this professional 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 the Swiss context and member of the expat community in the Geneva Lake Region?

### *Required Text:*

Sweitzer, H. F., & King, M. A. (2013). Chap. 3-4 (pp. 50-109) in *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic Development in Experiential Learning* (4th ed.). Cengage.

## **WEEK 5: INTERNSHIP, VISITS, LECTURES**

- Visit and briefing in international institutions, NGOs or start-ups (Mon)
- Thematic lecture on social impact (Mon)
- Discussion on internship experience (Mon)
- Internship (Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri)

### Thematic lecture: ***Social Impact, Microfinance and Helping the Poor***

This lecture focuses on microfinance as a channel of intermediation between the small businesses and households lacking access to banking services and investors. It provides an overview of the role of microfinance institutions and NGOs in developing countries as well the impact of microcredit and insurance on regional development.

### *Required Text:*

Ledgerwood, J. (Ed.). (2013). *The New Microfinance Handbook. A Financial Market System Perspective*. The World Bank: Washington, D.C., 15-48.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/12272/9780821389270.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>

## Discussion on Internship Experience: ***Reflections on Social Impact in the Professional Environment***

This session focuses on digging deeper into the theory and practice of the professional environment. How does the experience of your internship site connect to important program themes on social impact? How has the experience at your internship challenged or affirmed the arguments and discussions you had during various courses at your home university?

### *Required Text:*

Sweitzer, H. F., & King, M. A. (2013). Chap. 8 (pp. 209-249) in *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic Development in Experiential Learning* (4th ed.).

Cengage.

## WEEK 6: INTERNSHIP, VISITS, LECTURES

- Visit and briefing in international institutions, NGOs or start-ups (Mon)
- Thematic lecture on social impact (Mon)
- Discussion on internship experience (Mon)
- Internship (Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri)

### Thematic lecture: ***Bridging the Collaboration Gap: From Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and Innovative Technologies to Social Impact***

Explore the dynamic realm of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and their pivotal role in shaping the future of infrastructure development, public services and economic growth. This lecture explores multistakeholder coalitions between governments, the private sector, civil society and innovation hubs as a tool for promoting SDGs 2030.

#### *Required Texts:*

Vassileva, A. (2022). Green Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as an Instrument for Sustainable Development. *Journal of World Economy: Transformations & Transitions*, 2(05):22, 1-18.

Digital Watch. Geneva Internet Platform, Diplofoundation (2023). *AI and Sustainable Development (2023)*. <https://dig.watch/topics/sustainable-development#ai-and-sustainable-development>

### Discussion on Internship Experience: ***Reflections on Social Impact, Challenges and Opportunities***

This session focuses on experiences acquired in the internship institution: 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?

#### *Required Text:*

Sweitzer, H. F., & King, M. A. (2013). Chap. 12 (pp. 329-358) in *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic Development in Experiential Learning* (4th ed.). Cengage.

## **WEEK 7: INTERNSHIP, VISITS, LECTURES, RETREAT, PRESENTATIONS**

- Visit and briefing in international institutions, NGOs or start-ups (Mon)
- Internship (Tue, Wed, Thu)
- Retreat: Student presentations on internship experience (Fri); Reflection and discussion on social impact (Fri)

During the last week of the ISZ program, students visit international institutions on Monday and do internship on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. On Friday, students have a retreat outside the SIT office on the Lake Geneva riviera.

### **Retreat and Final Activities**

Students meet with the ISZ program leadership and faculty outside of the SIT office to evaluate overall internship experience and professional objectives. Through their presentations, students reflect on how to integrate knowledge on social impact they acquired in Switzerland with their home university's curriculum and career goals. They address the issue of how to contribute to positive social change through engagement in their local communities and involvement in grass-root activities and innovation. The program leadership animates role-play designed to enhance student reflection on social impact. While student presentations are summative, the retreat is a formative module.