

Internship & Seminar

ITRN-3000 (4 credits)

South Africa: SIT Choice

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 national or international organization that is working on a topic relevant to the program theme within the South African context. The internship enables students to obtain skills and knowledge in methods, principles of and obstacles to promoting racial reconciliation and peace within societies that have been highly polarized by racialized social welfare policies and a racialized national politics, as was the case in South Africa for many decades.

SIT will use its extensive network to place students in organizations working on social change, community organizing, racial reconciliation, and human rights. 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, the learning associated with the internship experience and to draw out broader issues related to positionality, culture, and ethics as they relate to the program themes.

Students complete an internship and submit a paper that describes, assesses and analyzes their learning in the area of multiculturalism, human rights, and identity in South Africa. The internship paper also outlines the tasks that the students completed and knowledge acquired through the politics, reconciliation and peacebuilding internship, reporting relationships, challenges encountered and how the student overcame them.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Demonstrate understanding of the principles and methods through which human rights and social change may be promoted among societies that were highly polarized by racialized welfare policy and racialized national politics;
- Assess and articulate the benefits, challenges and obstacles that the internship organization encounters in their work;
- Gain meaningful and practical work experience in their chosen field.

Language of Instruction

English is the official language in South Africa and students should expect that English will be widely spoken in work and field settings during the internship. The pre-internship part of the course prepares students by introducing them to the work norms, practices and ethics in the South African context, and is taught in English by the academic director and academic coordinator, assisted by local experts. Further, pre-internship prep work includes a three credit intensive Xhosa language course, a three credit Multiculturalism and Human Rights in South Africa Seminar and a three credit Narratives of Identity and Social Change Seminar to expose students to the broader theories and practices of human rights work and social change in the South Africa context, and set the context for the internship experience in South Africa.

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

See course schedule for readings.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

Weekly two-hour 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 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 and adherence to the highest ethical standards.

THE FINAL PAPER

The final paper shall consist of the following four sections:

- Description of the host institution
- Description of tasks performed on the job
- Business plan design, grant proposal, or other major output of the internship experience
- Personal assessment of your job performance

GUIDELINES FOR THE FINAL PAPER

Expectations for each section of the final paper are outlined below. These, however, are guidelines and may be adapted to the specificities of your internship.

Description of host institution: a brief description (one page) of the host institution for the internship. This should include the nature of the services offered and a profile of the customers who use them. The student may also provide brochures or collateral material that further describes the institution.

Description of tasks performed: this should be written in third person as if the student, acting as a manager, were writing it for a new employee/associate. It should be written in outline form, except for the job summary section. Headings should be used to identify each of the sections. A suggested outline for this description is listed below:

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

Output of the internship experience: this can be a proposal for a strategic response to an existing problem, a creation of a sustainable plan, a grant proposal, or a research that responds to the need of an organization. The proposal should also outline the human and financial resources needed for the implementation of the proposed model and measures of its success.

Personal assessment of the experience: in this section provide 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. Included

in this section is a reflection on the internship experience, including the output of the internship (mentioned above), as it relates to political and social transformation in South Africa.

Assessment

Progress reports and reflection sessions:	20%
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.
- 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](#), [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 lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs*

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. Complementary reading will be assigned by the academic director.

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 Critical Reflection

These sessions focus on the review and reflection process of the internship experience. Students set weekly learning objectives, keep an internship journal, and write two progress reports on their learning experience.

Session 4: Talking About the Internship Experience

This session allows students to reflect on the internship experience and begin to process the learning that occurred in a safe and supportive context. The session 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 job, and setting realistic goals for the future.

Session 5: Next Steps and How to Include Your Internship on Your Résumé

This final session occurs in the final weeks of the program, as part of re-entry discussions. Students discuss fears and strategies for successful re-entry into their home setting, 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, résumés and how to use this experience for future professional growth.

Suggested reading:

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