

## Global Organizational Culture & Ethics GOCE-3500 (3 credits)

### Australia: Sustainability and Environmental Action

*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 equips students to engage meaningfully and ethically in internship experiences across diverse sociopolitical, cultural, environmental, and global contexts. Using a critical, practice-based approach, students examine the nature and purpose of internships as transformative experiential learning opportunities that connect to the program's Critical Global Issue theme. Emphasis is placed on navigating workplace and organizational cultures, reflecting on identity and positionality in professional settings, and applying ethical principles to working globally with communities, individuals, and environments—particularly in collaboration with vulnerable populations and in sensitive ecological or habitat settings.

Students will develop key professional intercultural competencies, including communication in context, critical self-reflection, and ethical engagement in applied settings. The course guides students through the process of designing a learning plan, establishing shared expectations with host organizations, and presenting a comprehensive internship proposal. While this course does not include a formal academic research component, it supports students in making connections between field-based learning and broader structural, ethical, and cultural considerations. The knowledge and skills learned through this course can be applied to this internship, but also beyond as students embark on their professional journeys.

The overall aim is to equip students with the tools and mindset to approach internships not only as professional opportunities, but also as sites of meaningful cross-cultural learning, solidarity, and critical engagement aligned with the program's thematic focus.

#### Learning Outcomes

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

- Critically reflect on the role of internships as sites of experiential learning within complex social, political, and cultural systems;
- Demonstrate intercultural awareness and adaptability by identifying, respecting and navigating organizational norms, power dynamics, and workplace culture in diverse settings;

- Articulate their own positionality and apply ethical frameworks when engaging with host organizations and communities, especially when working with vulnerable populations and/or sensitive ecological habitats;
- Develop and present a clear, contextually informed internship workplan and proposal—co-created with the host organization—that outlines objectives, tasks, and timelines, and demonstrates an understanding of the organization’s history and sociopolitical context.
- Apply reflective practice to continually examine personal learning, growth, and challenges during the internship preparation phase;
- Establish and negotiate expectations with host organizations through written and verbal communication that demonstrates professionalism, accountability, and cultural humility.

### **Language of Instruction**

This course is taught in the program’s language of instruction of the host country, and students will be introduced to vocabulary relevant to the course content through in-country expert lectures and field visits to a wide range of regional venues.

### **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**

A listing of select readings is available below, after the overview of the Assignments and Modules.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

#### Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

#### **1. Independent Project (IP) model choice and topic idea 5%**

Early in the semester students are required to submit a short assignment which includes an outline of why they are choosing the internship IP model, what their learning goals are, and what their internship interests are.

## **2. Independent Project Proposals**

<b>Preliminary Proposal</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Final Proposal</b>	<b>20%</b>

As the semester unfolds, students are required to submit a 'preliminary proposal' which is their first statement of their internship project. This is reviewed by their internship coordinator, and feedback is shared. That feedback, plus further preparation and background research, will shape their 'final proposal' which sets the foundation for their internship project. Further feedback is shared on the final proposal.

## **3. Assignments in Research Methods: 30%**

Throughout the semester, there are various classes that provide lessons in diverse research methods. Internship students prepare assignments on two field-based research methods: interviews and participant observation assignment, worth 15% each.

3a. Intensive Interviewing Assignment

3b. Observation Assignment

## **4. Participation 10%**

This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions and excursions using the following criteria:

- Attendance - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening - paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.
- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; not keeping others waiting.
- Displaying Respect – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

## **5. Open-book Exam 25%**

Before the internship period begins (around Week 9), there is an open-book research methods and ethics exam which is based on the content covered throughout the course.

## **Assessment Summary**

1. Independent Project model choice and topic idea	<b>5%</b>
2. Independent Project Proposals	
Preliminary Proposal	<b>10%</b>
Final Proposal	<b>20%</b>
3. Assignments in Field-based Research Methods:	<b>30%</b>
3a. Intensive Interviewing Assignment	
3b. Observation Assignment	
4. Participation	<b>10%</b>
5. Open-book Exam	<b>25%</b>

## **CITI Training Certification (Mandatory but not part of assessment)**

Complete online IRB training through CITI programs. This training addresses human subjects research protocols and ethical considerations essential for conducting ethical research. You can find a FAQ for students which includes guidelines on how to access the training at this link: [CITI - FAQ Doc for SIT students.docx](#).

## **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**

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 the reason for the request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted. 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.** For an interactive course to succeed, you must be present, on time, and have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Being prepared with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone. Moreover, the content of this course is learned collaboratively, meaning that when a student isn't here, they take away from everyone's opportunity to learn. The only way to maximize our collective learning potential is if we are all here contributing. 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
- **Submit assignments on time:** 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.
- **Bring your curiosity:** Ask questions in class. Engage the guest lecturers, as these are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak. Remember, there are no foolish questions, and your inquiries might help others in class who have similar ideas/thoughts. By actively participating and showing curiosity, you demonstrate respect for our guests and contribute to creating a dynamic learning environment for everyone.
- **Maintain academic Integrity:** As members of a learning community, we all want to submit work that reflects our own ideas and efforts. Even if it is unintentional, plagiarism can have serious consequences. Before you submit each assignment, ask yourself these questions:
  - Did I reference ideas, quotes, phrases, or facts I read about in a book, article, or website, without citing the author and year of the source where I read about them?
  - Did I paraphrase by changing only a word or two or moving the words around?
  - Did you answer "yes" to any of the above questions? If so, you are committing plagiarism and need to give credit to appropriate sources before you submit your assignment
- **Principled Disagreement:** Learning often involves discomfort. Some discomfort can facilitate personal and collective growth. You, your peers, guest lecturers, instructors, and local constituents, have diverse experiences, values, beliefs, affiliations, and identities. Reflecting on these differences can be emotionally challenging, even when it

deepens self-awareness and mutual understanding. In this course, we aim to encourage brave spaces where principled disagreement is encouraged rather than avoiding difficult conversations. *This is challenging work, and we will inevitably make mistakes.* Our goal is to thoughtfully critique ideas rather than attacking individuals. We aim to embrace productive discomfort and minimize unproductive discomfort, striving for principled disagreement.

- **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 brave 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.
- **Our social identities** – Our social identities – race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual identity, religion, mental and physical ability, size, national origin, citizenship status, and more – shape how we are perceived, represented, and treated. They also influence what knowledge and learning is deemed valuable and legitimate. To challenge hegemonic paradigms and perspectives, this course intentionally includes readings, topics, videos, and assignments from authors and perspectives of diverse backgrounds. However, there may be gaps we have overlooked. Your constructive feedback is always welcome on how to make this course more inclusive and transformative.
- **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 despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- **Personal Technology Use:** If used appropriately, cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities, unless advised otherwise. Off-task usage is not acceptable. Sometimes you will be advised to close all computers and put phones away. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- **Course Communication:** Although the course calendar provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be posted at the course site. You will need to check the course site regularly. You are responsible for letting me know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.
- **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 lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs*

## **MODULE ONE: SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN AN INTERNSHIP CONTEXT**

**Guiding Questions:** What is field-based research in an internship context? How do we develop researchable questions? How does theory guide field-based research? How do we move from abstract concepts to measurable variables? How do we critically engage with existing methodological approaches? How can we minimize our environmental impact while studying in Australia? What cross-cultural issues should interns be aware of travelling from the US to Australia?

### **Class content may include:**

- The nature and purpose of field-based organizational research
- Developing research questions and hypotheses
- Overview of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches
- The role of theory in field-based research
- Literature reviews to support project development
- From research question to methodology selection
- Critical cross-cultural analysis of US and Australia stereotypes
- Developing a 'sense of place' as an intern, field-based researcher and environmentalist

### **Possible class activities:**

- Practice developing research questions from social phenomena
- Choosing appropriate methods based on research questions
- Exploring individual research questions through different methods, preparing for internship proposal development

## **MODULE TWO: RESEARCH ETHICS FOR INTERNS**

**Guiding Questions:** What is required to conduct an ethically appropriate internship project? What types of ethical issues arise that need to be considered? What is your 'positionality' as an intern and how might this affect your field research? What does responsible, ethical field-based research look like? How do power dynamics between interns and participants affect the research process? What are the specific ethical considerations for conducting research in global contexts?

### **Class content may include:**

- Ethical principles for field-based research in an internship context
- Cultural sensitivity and research with marginalized populations
- Power dynamics in the internship relationship
- IRB processes, SARB applications, and CITI training introduction
- Ethics and positionality in qualitative research
- What is a positionality statement?
- What does 'intersectionality' mean in an internship context?
- Whose voices and experiences might be missing from research?
- What are some ethical considerations in collecting, analyzing, and reporting data?

### **Possible class activities:**

- Case studies analyzing ethical research dilemmas
- Identifying your positionality as a researcher in global contexts, and an intern in an organizational context
- Introduction to SARB application requirements and processes

## **MODULE THREE: QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS**

**Guiding Questions:** How do we document and interpret field observations? What are the strengths and limitations of qualitative approaches? How do we collect and analyze qualitative data effectively? How to conduct an interview? What makes a rigorous and effective survey? How to conduct participant observation? What is content analysis and how is it practiced?

### **Class content may include:**

- Interview techniques and focus group facilitation
- Observational methods and field notes
- Document and content analysis
- Qualitative coding strategies
- Comparing strengths and limitations of different approaches
- Designing effective surveys
- The strengths and limitations of quantitative data
- Presenting data effectively

### **Possible class activities:**

- Practice conducting interviews and focus groups
- Field observation exercise with detailed field notes

- Coding workshop using sample qualitative data
- Developing a conceptual framework for mixed methods research
- Operationalizing abstract concepts into measurable variables
- Survey construction workshop
- Data analysis and interpreting results
- Interpretation of quantitative findings

## **MODULE FOUR: PROJECT PROPOSALS AND PREPARING FOR INTERNSHIPS**

**Guiding Questions:** What is an internship? How does experiential learning relate to field-based research? How do we create compelling field-based proposals for internships? How do we justify our methodological choices? What have we learned about designing research for internship contexts?

### **Class content may include:**

- Choosing an internship and developing learning goals
- Internship proposal development, including establishing shared expectations with host organizations
- Course reflection and application
- Submitting your ethics application
- Writing an internship report
- APA referencing
- Writing a good title
- Library and research skills
- Communication and presentation

### **Possible class activities:**

- Peer review of research proposals
- Practice presentations of research designs
- Development of proposal in stages (draft, revision, final)

**SELECT COURSE READINGS** (subject to change, reviewed and revised each semester to reflect contemporary issues):

Content in student handbook (to be provided during orientation)

Sweitzer, H. F., & King, M. A. (2021). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic Development in Experiential Learning* (5th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications. (Chapters 3-4)

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). Mixed methods procedures. In *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (6th ed., Chapter 10). SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). Quantitative methods. In *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (6th ed., Chapter 8). SAGE Publications.

Anti-Colonial Research Library. (2023) Welcome to the Anti-Colonial Research Library. - <https://www.anticolonialresearchlibrary.org/>. This Library holds a collection of open-access articles and books, websites, and YouTube videos on Indigenous and anti-colonial research methodologies.

McGuirk, P. & O'Neill, S. (2005). Using questionnaires in qualitative Human Geography. Chapter 10, in Iain Hay, (Ed.), *Qualitative research methods in Human Geography*. Second Edition. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Hay, I. (2002). Communicating with figures and tables. Chapter 6 in Iain Hay, *Communicating in Geography and the Environmental Sciences*. Second Edition. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press. (Pp 96-107 and 119-120 compulsory)

Guest, G.S., Namey, E.E., & Mitchell, M.L. (2013). Participant Observation. Chapter 3 in *Collecting Qualitative Data: A Field Manual for Applied Research*. London: Sage Publications. (Pp. 89-99 compulsory for assignment)

True, J. (1989). Indirect and observational methods of data collection. Chapter 5 in J. True, *Finding Out: Conducting and evaluating social research*. Second Edition. Belmont: Wadsworth. (Pp 154-158 compulsory, the rest is recommended).

Lockie, S. (2006). Capturing the sustainability agenda: Organic foods and media discourses on food scares, environment, genetic engineering, and health. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 23, 313–323. DOI 10.1007/s10460-006-9007-3 (Pp. 313-314 compulsory, the rest is recommended as example of content analysis).

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). Qualitative methods. In *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (6th ed., Chapter 9). SAGE Publications.

Rogers, Z. & Bragg, E. (2012). The power of connection: Sustainable lifestyles and sense of place. *Ecopsychology*, 4 (4), 307-318. doi: 10.1089/eco.2012.0079. (*Recommended as an example of a social science paper in APA format*).

Castañeda, E., & Smith, C. (2023). Conducting research with marginalized populations: Methodological, ethical, and IRB considerations. *Journal of Applied Social Science*, 17(1), 111-131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19367244221141326>

Hay, I. (2002). Referencing and Language Matters. In I. Hay (Ed.) *Communicating in Geography and the Environmental Sciences*. Second Edition. Pp. 195-200. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Hay, I. (2002). Preparing and giving a talk. Chapter 8 in Iain Hay, *Communicating in Geography and the Environmental Sciences*. Second Edition. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

APA reference guide (latest edition): <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples>