

Internship & Seminar ITRN-3000 (5 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 seminar consists of a five-week internship with a local community organization, research organization, business, government agency, or international NGO. The aim of an internship is to enable students to gain valuable experience and enhance their skills in a career field/professional environment related to the core program themes.

SIT will use its extensive network to facilitate internship placements for students; 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 over 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 to be proactive in engaging with local experts to achieve internship objectives. Regular reflection, check-in, and assessment sessions are held with the Academic Director or internship coordinator to review the progress of the internship, learning associated with the internship experience, and to draw out broader issues related to program themes, positionality, culture and ethics in the context of the internship.

Students will be informed of the types of internships available and the placement process early in the semester as well as through pre-launch modules. Students will have ample opportunity to consult with SIT program staff and must decide whether they want to undertake an internship by the third week of the program.

Students complete an internship and submit a culminating portfolio in which they process their learning experience on the job, analyze an issue important to the organization, and present on their focus project. The portfolio should also document a comprehensive schedule and the specific skills and knowledge acquired through the experience. Internship learning will be linked with the program's critical global issue and overall program theme.

Internships through SIT Australia will provide students with the opportunity to apply theory and practice, expand their analytical capacities, develop skills to work with local civil society organizations, concretely in Byron Bay and surrounding regions with a longstanding tradition of

grassroots organizations, international cooperation and institutions that work in the context of Australia.

**Topics and placements may vary according to the availability of each institution.*

Each student will be required to submit a final reflection paper in which they process their learning experience throughout the internship, analyze an issue important to the organization, and apply what they learned to core themes of the program, as part of their portfolio. Approved in advance by the Academic Director and the internship supervisor, the internship reflection paper will involve interviews and other data collection methods relevant to achieving internship learning goals. Students will also prepare a presentation (like the one required of students who are in the independent study seminar) to demonstrate how the internship experience enhanced their understanding of the SIT program themes and its Climate and Environment focus. The final reflection paper should also include a comprehensive schedule, specific skills and knowledge acquired through their experience. Rubrics for the paper and presentation will be shared with students when in country.

Learning Outcomes

The Internship and Seminar course comprises the 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 involved in doing an internship in the context of Australia;
- Describe, analyze, and synthesize their learning experience in the internship in the form of a culminating portfolio inclusive of a reflection paper;
- Articulate new learning from the internship experience in the form of an oral presentation;
- Show understanding of the fundamental principles of Climate and Environment and the responsibilities and obligations;
- Assess the challenges of designing and delivering programs and services that address community needs in diverse contexts;
- Gain meaningful and practical experience in their chosen field.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to the internship through a wide range of venues and regional locales prior to the start of the internship.

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

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 complete a core competency seminar, predetermined by the Academic Director from career specific themes (minimum of 4 core competencies).
- Students will receive a sample of available internship hosts and will start the preparation for the placement process (~1 hour). Internship placements will be organized upon arrival within a week after orientation, and finalized as soon as possible.

Module 1: The Internship Experience: Review and Reflection

This module occurs while students are fully participating in their internship. Critical and guided reflection will play a key role in student development and learning during the internship. Students will keep an internship journal in which they respond to the questions/issues listed below as instructed. Journaling should be done daily, keeping in mind the learning objectives. Students will submit progress reports (in blog format) on their successes and limitations toward achieving learning objectives. Students will also meet with their instructor and other internship students for reflection and discussion during the internship.

Cultural observations: *How is the professional environment different from what you are used to? What are you learning about working collaboratively in this 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 this environment?*

Theory and Practice: Digging Deeper: *How does the work of your internship site connect to important program themes? How has the experience at your internship challenged or affirmed the arguments in a reading or lecture from this semester?*

Skills and Experience: *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?*

Learning Goals: *How much progress have you made toward your learning goals? What experiences or activities have contributed to your ability to meet them? Are you learning something important you didn't anticipate and would like to add to your Learning Goals at this time?*

Session 1: Setting the Stage

This session is an orientation and induction at the internship site. The student will be assigned a place and given an orientation into the organizational structure, introduction to staff, discussion on the rules and expectations of the internship organization. A meeting with the internship advisor to confirm the internship goals and tasks and to review objectives for the internship.

Session 2: The Internship Experience: Review and Reflection

Students will also meet with their instructor and other internship students for reflection and discussion during the internship. The reflection session will include conversation about cultural observations, progress in skill acquisition and achieving learning goals.

Required Readings:

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

Module 2: Processing and Maximizing the Internship Experience

The second module occurs toward the end or after the internship and 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. Students will 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 and setting realistic goals for the future.

Session 1: Processing the End of Internship Experience

This session will include a group reflection on the overall internship experience including the progress made toward achieving the learning goals, the challenges and ethical dilemmas encountered, and how the internship helped students to better understand the concepts and themes of the program.

Session 2: Articulating the Experience Through an Oral Presentation

The presentation should take 20 minutes and students are encouraged to use audiovisual aid/handouts to facilitate their presentations. The presentation should include a brief overview of the internship experience, tasks performed, major output and a personal reflection and overall assessment of the experience

Session 3: Internship and Job Opportunities

This session will discuss ways to build on the internship experience in addition to learning how to frame the internship experience in a cover letter and use it to support job and graduate school

applications.

Ethics

The internship experience must reflect SIT's ethics policy and commitment to the values of reciprocity. The student intern should also abide by the policy and regulations of the host institution including dress, punctuality, and employee behavior. Violations of SIT's code of conduct or employee conduct at the host institution will result in an immediate termination of the internship and can lead to further disciplinary sanctions by SIT.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Description and Grading Criteria

Progress Reports (5%)

Progress reports are due each Sunday during the internship period (four in total) and should be emailed to the internship coordinator. Detail what work you completed during the week, document the progress towards each of your learning goals, and the challenges you have faced over the past week and how you dealt with those challenges.

Worksheets and Discussion and Reflection blogs (15%)

A series of worksheets and blogs are due in the period leading up to the commencement of the internship. These document your preparations for the internship. Further worksheets document your progress during the internship. Discussion and reflection blogs are written on a weekly basis during the internship period and are due each Sunday (four in total). You are expected to share your personal experience in the internship with the rest of the internship class and to reflect on the professional learning process. You are expected to read the other students' blogs and each week you must post a comment on at least three other student's blogs.

Internship Performance (35%)

This evaluation, submitted by the student's supervisor at the host institution, assesses the student's internship experience, overall professional achievements, and self-growth. The student's performance is also assessed by the internship coordinator based on evidence contained in weekly reports and the internship worksheets, blogs, and timesheet.

Oral Presentation (10%)

You must attend the oral presentations of students Independent Projects and give a 20 minute oral presentation followed by 5 minutes for questions. In the presentation, you should detail and justify your internship goals, describe and give a brief history of the organization where you interned, give a background to your focus project, detail the work undertaken and methods used to gather data, discuss ethical issues, give the results of your focus project and observations and impressions of your internship organization, and conclude with what you learnt from your internship experience and how you will apply this on your return to the US.

The criteria for grading your oral presentation will be:

- Learning goals and a justification of those goals (5%)
- Description of the host institution, its history, how it advances sustainability, and your focus project and the issues related to it. (15%)
- Description of tasks performed and methods (10%)
- Ethics and positionality (5%)
- Analysis of the focus project and organization (15%)
- Reflection on internship experience. (15%)
- Conclusions and how lessons and new skills could be applied (5%)
- Quality of your responses to questions and questions you ask (5%)
- Professionalism and quality of the presentation (25%)

Final Paper (35%)

The student will submit by 6pm on the due date a 10-15 page paper emailed to the Academic Director and the Internship Coordinator and consisting of the following sections:

- A title, abstract and acknowledgements (5%)
- Description of the host institution, its history, how it advances sustainability, and your focus project and the issues related to it. (15%)
- Learning goals and a justification of those goals (10%)
- Description of tasks performed and methods (10%)
- Ethics and positionality (10%)
- Analysis of the focus project and organization (20%)
- Reflection on internship experience. (15%)
- Conclusions (10%)
- Technical aspects (5%)

Guidelines for the Final Paper

The expectations for each section of the final paper are outlined below.

- **Title, abstract and acknowledgements:** Introduce the internship experience and final paper with an engaging title, summarizing abstract, and meaningful acknowledgements of the individuals and organizations who supported the internship.
- **Description of host institution and focus project:** A minimum 2,000-word organizational overview and literature review giving: the background and history of the organization; the work it does and how it fits in the context of similar organizations in Australia and the U.S., and how it advances sustainability; the background of your focus topic, and an academic literature review on the issues related to it.
- **Learning goals and justification:** A justification explaining why you chose to do an internship, why you chose your particular organization and the learning goals of your internship and why they are important in the context of sustainability.
- **Description of tasks performed and methods:** This should include a description of the tasks you performed. Also specify the days and hours that you worked and the methods you used to gather data on your organization. This must be written in a first-person active voice and make clear what you did as opposed to what others in your team did.

- **Positionality and Ethics:** Should include an acknowledgement of your views, values, beliefs and other aspects of your personal background that may have influenced your internship experience. Also, a discussion of any ethical considerations and your ethics approval and conditions.
- **Analysis of the focus project and your internship organization:** Analysis of the focus project will vary depending on the nature of the project. Expectations for this section of the report must be clarified with your SIT internship coordinator well before you begin writing your paper. This section should also include your observations and impressions of the organization and how it advances sustainability.
- **Reflection on internship experience:** Examine the extent to which you achieved each of your goals and how those goals changed or evolved over the course of the internship. In the context of sustainability, detail what you learnt from your internship experience (relate this to your learning goals). Include a personal evaluation of your performance in the internship with suggestions of how you could have improved your performance.
- **Conclusion:** Summarize the main lessons and insights of the internship and detail how you might utilize these in the future and how you intend to apply these new skills and knowledge when you return to the USA.

Assessment

Final Paper	35%
Internship Performance	35%
Worksheets and discussion and reflection blogs	15%
Oral Presentation	10%
Progress Reports	5%

Academic and ethical integrity

The internship experience must reflect SIT's ethics policy and commitment to the values of reciprocity. Students must respect, protect, and promote the rights and the welfare of all those affected by their work by doing everything in their power to protect the dignity and privacy of the people with whom they work. Likewise, respect, care and attention should be given to protecting, conserving and restoring the natural environment.

The student intern should also abide by the policy and regulations of the host institution including dress, punctuality, employee behavior, and in particular, confidentiality. Violations of SIT's code of conduct or employee conduct at the host institution will result in an immediate termination of the internship and can lead to further disciplinary sanctions by SIT.

Students must not represent as their own work, either in speaking or writing, materials or ideas, directly taken from other sources. They must give full credit in speaking or writing to all those who have contributed to their work. Severe academic penalties apply for deliberate plagiarism or other academic dishonesty. Falsely stating hours worked will be regarded as academic dishonesty and will result in a grade of F.

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, on time, and appropriately dressed for your internship. Comply with organization rules.
- Have progress report assignments completed on schedule and done according to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions when in the field/office. Engage yourself in everyday life of the organization and initiate interaction.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (those of your internship supervisor and colleagues, classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with onsite 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.

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.

RUBRIC: Internship Reflection Paper

Category	Possible Considerations
Title, Abstract & Acknowledgements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The title is clear, engaging, and reflects the internship focus• The abstract concisely summarizes the internship experience and paper's main sections• Acknowledgements appropriately recognize individuals and organizations who supported the internship• These elements introduce the paper effectively and follow academic conventions
Description of Host Institution, Focus Project & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The context (setting, role, environment) provides enough detail for readers to understand the internship backdrop• The background and history of the organization is described with sufficient detail, the organization's work is positioned within the context of similar organizations in Australia and the U.S., and how the organization advances sustainability is clearly articulated• The focus project is introduced with adequate background• An academic literature review addresses the issues related to the focus topic• The minimum 2,000-word requirement is met with substance and quality: content is well-structured by theme or issue; ideas are developed in depth rather than surface-level description, and; academic and non-academic sources are appropriately cited throughout
Learning Goals & Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial goals, expectations, or assumptions before/during the experience are identified.• A rationale is provided for choosing an internship and this particular organization• Connections to broader academic, professional, or personal development themes are made
Description of Tasks Performed & Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student describes key tasks and responsibilities with sufficient detail, and the description connects tasks with the broader focus project• Days and hours worked are specified• Methods used to gather data about the organization are clearly described, with specific tools included in an appendix (e.g. interview guides, participant observation frameworks)• The description uses first-person active voice to clearly indicate what the student did (versus what others did)
Ethics & Positionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student critically reflects on how personal identity, background, values, or beliefs shaped their perspectives• Ethical awareness is evident (respect, responsibility, cultural sensitivity, confidentiality when relevant) and considerations relevant to the internship context are identified and discussed• The community, stakeholders, or people involved are described respectfully and thoughtfully• The paper shows honesty and depth in acknowledging challenges, tensions, or moments of growth
Analysis of Focus Project & Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical thinking is evident in examining the focus project and organizational structures, practices, or impacts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The analysis addresses how the project and organization advance sustainability. • Observations and impressions of the focus project and organization are substantive and supported by specific examples • The analysis goes beyond description to connect insights to larger academic, professional, or societal themes (sustainability, social change, organizational practice) • Ideas are developed in depth with sustained, thoughtful engagement, and evidence is provided of growth in understanding critical themes. • Focus project outputs/portfolio are included in an appendix where relevant
Reflection on Internship Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection connects the internship experience with relevant theories, concepts, or frameworks discussed in the program • Reflection goes beyond description by analyzing moments of significance, why experiences were meaningful, and what was learned • The extent to which learning goals were achieved is examined, and shifts or evolutions in goals and expectations over the course of the internship are explored • Lessons learned are specific, supported by examples, and connected to future professional or personal growth. • The student identifies strengths and areas for improvements in their own performance.
Conclusions & Forward-Looking Insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student synthesizes main insights gained through the internship experience, focus project and organizational analysis, and reflective process. • Future applications of the learning are articulated (e.g., how insights will shape academic paths, career goals, or community engagement). • If appropriate, suggestions for peers/future participants or further work are included.
Technical Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is well-structured with clear headings and smooth transitions between sections, and subheadings are used to organize content effectively • Writing is clear, free from grammar and spelling errors, and maintains a professional/academic tone • Formatting (spacing, font, headings) follows academic standards • In-text citations and references are used appropriately following APA style, the reference list is complete and correctly formatted • The 10-15-page requirement is met with substance and quality (not filler).

RUBRIC: Internship Portfolio	
Category	Possible Considerations
Portfolio Organization & Technical Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The portfolio is complete (weekly journals, projects, culminating reflection paper, oral presentation). -All elements are clearly labeled, organized, and easy to navigate (digital files or electronic submission).

	<p>-Written work is free of grammar and spelling errors, well-formatted, and professional in appearance.</p> <p>-Multimedia files (video, audio, graphics) are functional, accessible, and professional in quality.</p>
Reflection Journal	<p>-Journal entries are weekly and dated (recommended: daily notes compiled weekly).</p> <p>-Entries capture thoughtful, honest reflection on experiences, events, emotions, and insights.</p> <p>-Writing demonstrates critical thinking, personal growth, and self-awareness.</p> <p>-Journal is well-organized and responsive to provided prompts.</p> <p>-Confidentiality and professionalism are maintained.</p>
Internship Projects (Multimedia/Deliverables)	<p>-Projects (reports, campaigns, graphics, videos, podcasts, etc.) are complete, relevant, and demonstrate substantive effort.</p> <p>-The content is clear, accurate, and connected to the student's internship role and goals.</p> <p>Format-Specific Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Written reports: 5–10 pages, professional structure, clear objectives, references if appropriate. ● Video projects: 5–7 minutes, clear audio/visual quality, well-edited, professional tone. ● Podcasts: 8–12 minutes, clear audio, engaging structure (intro, main content, conclusion). ● Graphic campaigns/designs: Minimum of 3–5 polished pieces, coherent theme, professional quality. <p>-Projects demonstrate creativity, professionalism, and alignment with organizational and course learning outcomes.</p>
Culminating Reflection Paper (8-10 pages)	<p>- Paper is well-structured with introduction, body, and conclusion.</p> <p>-Context of the internship is described concisely (setting, role, tasks).</p> <p>-Critical self-reflection demonstrates growth, challenges, and lessons learned.</p> <p>-Paper integrates broader academic/professional themes (career competencies, intercultural learning, ethics).</p> <p>-Writing is clear, professional, and adheres to academic standard; follows rubric provided)</p>
Oral Presentation	<p>- Presentation clearly communicates key insights, experiences, and learning outcomes.</p> <p>-Organization is logical, with an engaging introduction, body, and conclusion.</p> <p>-Presentation style is professional (clear voice, appropriate pace, confident delivery).</p> <p>-Visual aids (slides, graphics, examples) are clear, effective, and professional in design.</p> <p>-Time is respected (18–20 minutes).</p>
Depth of Reflection & Integration	<p>-Portfolio demonstrates consistent, thoughtful reflection across formats.</p> <p>-Connections are made between internship experiences, academic concepts, and personal/professional development.</p> <p>-Evidence of growth in NACE-aligned competencies (self-development, intercultural communication, collaboration, global leadership, equity/inclusion, etc.).</p> <p>-Student articulates how the experience will influence future goals or practice.</p>

Effort & Professionalism

- Evidence of consistent effort across all elements of the portfolio.
- Work reflects professionalism, respect for host organization, and responsiveness to feedback.
- Multimedia and written work meet expectations for quality and completeness.
- Submission is on time and follows all guidelines.