Study Abroad

SIT Study Abroad Samoa: Social and Environmental Change in Oceania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Apia, Samoa</th>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Term</td>
<td>Autumn Semester / Spring Semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>16 semester credits per session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisites</td>
<td>None.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Manager</td>
<td>Shannon Quinn</td>
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<td>Application Deadline</td>
<td>May 15 (Autumn Semester)</td>
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<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>All accepted students can apply for need-based and scholarships, grants, and loans. Students can also apply for the SIT Pell Grant Match, which provides matching grants to all students receiving Federal Pell Grant funding.</td>
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Study in the cradle of Polynesian history and culture, and hear diverse perspectives on the human dimensions of climate change and social transitions in the Pacific. At the same time, see the effects of climate change and tourism on Pacific communities and landscapes on a variety of excursions.

WHAT MAKES SIT UNIQUE

SIT Study Abroad offers a field-based, experiential approach to learning.
Each program has a small group of students (typically 10–35).
SIT students gain access to many different stakeholders and experts relevant to the program-specific issues.
Incorporates extensive out-of-classroom learning through excursions to field stations, NGO headquarters, more.
Many students use their Independent Study Projects as a basis for senior theses on their home campuses.
Many students use this experience to successfully apply for fellowships such as Fulbrights and Watsons.

WHY STUDY SOCIAL CHANGE IN SAMOA?

The launching point for the settlement of Polynesia, in 1962 Samoa became the first Pacific island to achieve independence. After a weeklong orientation in Hawai'i—where you will meet members of Hawaii's indigenous community and visit the Bishop Museum—travel to Samoa where you will live in Apia, the cosmopolitan capital and the program's base, and study social justice issues and efforts to protect the environment across the Pacific. Hear perspectives on social transitions, conservation, and resilience from Hawaiians, Samoans, and other Pacific Islanders and interact with Samoan university students. Visit Samoa's largest island, the volcanic island of Savai'i, to see the sea arches, blow holes and lava flows of the South Pacific. Journey to Fiji and witness how Oceania's diverse communities are supported by the environment but impacted by development, tourism, and climate change. Experience a traditional taro loi in Hawai'i and, if you choose, the slaughter, roasting, and serving of a small pig in Amaile, Samoa. In the final month of the
program, undertake a self-designed research project on a topic of your choice with experts to guide you.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Hear perspectives on the human dimensions of climate change in the Pacific.
- Swim the turquoise waters and explore the beaches and wildlife of Oceania.
- Experience the Oceanic lifestyle in rural homes, as well as urban landscapes.
- Study globalization issues in the cradle of Polynesian history and culture.

**PREREQUISITES AND LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS**

None.

**CREDITS AND CONVERSATION SCALE**

You will approx. receive 24 UW credits per term. How our office will determine the amount is through our [Credit Conversion Scale](#) for the program.

If you would like some assistance, schedule an appointment with one of our Program Assistants [here](#).

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

There is no "typical day" on an SIT program. Activities may take place on any day of the week and at any time of day to be in accordance with local norms and to take advantage of once-in-a-lifetime learning opportunities. Thus, the schedule and structure of the program are likely very different from what students are used to on their home campuses. The semester progresses in phases:

- The program begins with a thorough orientation.
- During the first two and a half months of the program, students are engaged in foundational coursework, including:
  - thematic seminars, including education excursions,
  - language instruction focused on improving practical communication skills, and
  - a field research methods and ethics course that prepares students to conduct independent research.
- For the last month of the program, students conduct an Independent Study Project (ISP) on an approved topic of their choosing.
- Finally, students present their project, participate in program evaluations, and prepare to return home.

**COURSES**

Students will take courses that cover the following topics:

- Climate change, vulnerability, and resilience in Oceania
- Changing values and perspectives on wealth, poverty, and social class
- The intersection of contemporary social and environmental issues
- The economic, social, and political position of Samoan women
- Youth, education, and social change
- Varying perspectives on communal, individual, and human rights in Samoa
- Freedom of religion in a predominantly Christian society
- Environmental issues related to water resources, soil conservation, and invasive species
- The development of sustainable tourism
Changing land use patterns and the development of local agri-business
The changing matai system and the rule of law
Comparative perspectives on program themes in Hawai‘i, Samoa, and Fiji

During the final four weeks of the program, students will use their new language and cultural skills and the academic knowledge they have acquired to complete an Independent Study Project (ISP) on a topic of interest to them. Sample topics include:

- The impacts and future of technology in Samoa
- Sustainable agricultural practices and their impact on local villages
- Attitudes of youth to tradition and change
- Resilience and adaptation to climate change
- Natural disasters and vulnerability
- Microfinance and the importance of social networks
- Impact of climate change on the Samoan language
- Poverty and hardship in Samoa
- Changing definitions of class
- Perspectives on religious freedom

Please visit the program website to learn more about the courses.

If you're looking for a record of how courses from this institution have been transferred in the past, visit the credit equivalency database to help you determine what foreign courses might satisfy your academic needs here at the UW.

For more information about receiving credits for your study abroad, visit Earning credits abroad.

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