



Samoa

Pacific Communities and Social Change

Credits 16

Orientation Base Honolulu, Hawaii

Program Base Apia

Language Study Samoan

Homestays 'Upolu, 10 days; Fiji, 4 days; American Samoa, 4 days

Educational Excursions Fiji, Savai'i, American Samoa

Independent Study Project 4 weeks

Prerequisites None

Pacific Communities and Social Change Seminar

PACI 3000 / 6 credits / 90 class hours

An interdisciplinary course conducted in English, with required readings, examining traditional society and social change in Oceania. Changes examined include the impacts of Christianity, the shift from subsistence to cash economy, migration patterns, globalization challenges, and development. Initial sessions at the University of Hawaii provide an overview of the region and an introduction to the challenges Pacific peoples face today. Lectures and activities, at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Samoa and Suva, Fiji, and at the American Samoa Community College (ASCC), generally include the following topics:

History and Politics

Prehistory and settlement of Oceania; sovereignty issues in Hawaii; Christianity and its impact on Samoan culture and politics; traditional village organization; the changing *matai* system of local governance and the rule of law; human rights and democracy in Samoa; comparison of social changes resulting from globalization, migration, and development in Samoa, American Samoa, and Fiji; social, ethnic, and political issues in the current "coup culture" in Fiji.

Geography and Political Economy

Physical and human geography; environmental concerns in small island states; climate change and sea-level rise threats to Pacific island communities; sustainable development and governance; the shift from village-based subsistence agriculture to cash economy; development and changing land use; indigenous business development; the development of sustainable tourism; the role of aid.

Cultural Anthropology and Sociology

Contemporary social life and traditional customs; archaeology; gender roles and social change; changing religious practices and traditions;

impacts of globalization on social, political, and economic life; the role of education in preparing future generations to balance culture and social change.

Arts and Humanities

Pacific poets and authors and their views on traditional society and the contemporary Pacific; traditional arts, crafts, music, and dance and their transformations; tattooing, tapa making, and weaving; contemporary visual art, tourist art, and the creation of new art forms and expression.

Educational Excursions

The program includes visits to cultural and historic sites on the island of Oahu, Hawaii; a village stay in rural 'Upolu and visits to places of interest around Apia; a natural history excursion to the island of Savai'i to examine the diversity of Samoa's topography and ecology; visits to American Samoa and Fiji for comparative analysis of Pacific communities and traditions in transition.

Intensive Language Study: Samoan

SAMO 1000 / 4 credits / 60 class hours

Emphasis on beginning speaking and comprehension skills through classroom and field instruction. The Samoan language course emphasizes daily communication, with further language practice available during homestays in both Samoa and American Samoa. Bilingual surveys are also a key feature of ISP research.

Field Study Seminar

ANTH 3500 / 2 credits / 30 class hours

A course in the concepts of learning across cultures and from field experience. Introduction to the Independent Study Project. Materials include cross-cultural adaptation and skills building; project selection and refinement; appropriate methodologies; field study ethics and the World Learning/SIT Human Subjects Review Policy; developing contacts and finding resources; developing skills in observation and interviewing;

gathering, organizing, and communicating data; maintaining a work journal.

Independent Study Project

ISPR 3000 / 4 credits / 120 class hours

Conducted in an approved location in Samoa appropriate to the project. Sample topic areas: sustainable agricultural practices and their impact on local villages; social analysis of youth culture; microfinance and the importance of social networks; the reality of poverty and hardship in Samoa; perspectives on religious freedom; human rights in Samoa; the role of coconut products in the Samoan economy; indigenous business development; re-evaluation of brain drain from the Samoan perspective of service to family.

Homestay

Ten days in a village on 'Upolu, Samoa, plus shorter stays in Fiji and American Samoa. Other accommodations during the program include student housing at a local university.

A traditional process is used to make tapa, a decorative bark-based cloth. Photo by Eliana Bernstein.

