

Samoa

Pacific Communities and Social Change

Explore traditional society and social transition in Oceania.

Coursework

Pacific Communities and Social Change Seminar

PACI 3000 / 6 credits / 90 class hours

An interdisciplinary course conducted in English with required readings and relevant educational excursions. Students examine the impacts of Christianity, the shift from subsistence to a 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 that Pacific peoples, including those in Hawaii, face today. Lectures and activities at the University of the South Pacific in Samoa and Suva, Fiji, and at the American Samoa Community College 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 and clashes of traditional governance and the rule of law; human rights and democracy in Samoa; social, ethnic, and political issues in Fiji's post-coup culture; the role of migration and remittances in a globalized world; comparison of social change and development in Samoa, American Samoa, and Fiji.

Geography and Political Economy

Physical and human geography; environmental concerns in small island states; climate change and the threat of sea-level rise to Pacific island communities; sustainable development and governance; the shift from village-based subsistence agriculture to a 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

A look at traditional society and the contemporary Pacific through the eyes of Pacific poets, authors, and documentary filmmakers; 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 in Samoa; a natural history excursion to the island of Savai'i to examine the diversity of Samoa's topography and ecology; and 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

Acquisition of basic speaking and comprehension skills through classroom and field instruction emphasizing daily communication and interactions with homestay families in both Samoa and American Samoa.

Field Study Seminar

ANTH 3500 / 2 credits / 30 class hours

A course in the concepts of learning across cultures and from field experience to prepare for the Independent Study Project. Materials include cross-cultural adaptation and skills building; selecting and refining ISP topics; choosing appropriate fieldwork methodologies; developing contacts and finding resources; practicing observation and interviewing; gathering, organizing, and communicating data; maintaining a work journal; field study ethics and the World Learning/SIT Human Subjects Review Policy.



Credits 16

Orientation Base East West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii

Program Base University of the South Pacific—Alafua Campus, Apia

Language Study Samoan

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

Other Accommodations Local university housing with Pacific Island housemates

Independent Study Project 4 weeks

Prerequisites None

Independent Study Project

ISPR 3000 / 4 credits / 120 class hours

Conducted in an area of Samoa appropriate to the project. Sample topic areas: sustainable agricultural practices and food security; the impact of social networking sites on Samoan youth; microfinance and the importance of social networks; the reality of poverty and hardship in Samoa; perspectives on and threats to religious freedom; human rights in Samoa; the role of coconut products in the Samoan economy; indigenous business development; brain drain as form of service to family; the development of a new urban center in Savai'i.

“SIT Samoa allowed me to see and interact with a community, a country, and a culture that I knew nothing about, but now love dearly. ... I made the decision to give back to the world community and join the Peace Corps.”

ANDREA GORTON, University of Puget Sound