

SYLLABUS

INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN SĀMOA

Instructor Name: Lana Lopesi

Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits:4

Contact Hours*: 40

Total Hours of Student Engagement (THSE) in all course activities*: 120

Level: 400/500

APIA, SĀMOA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Indigenous environmental justice describes an approach to addressing environmental issues that centers Indigenous rights and knowledge over lands, oceans and skies. In Sāmoa, global markets for overfishing and resource extraction as well as climate change and rising sea levels impacts the people, environment, and culture of Sāmoa and other Pacific nations. This program explores issues such as biodiversity loss, rising seas levels, increasing climate disaster and various environmental justice efforts at community and national levels in response. Indigenous environmental justice efforts in Sāmoa provide a holistic understanding of how community resilience, science, the arts, activism and Indigenous sovereignty works together. This course will include National University of Sāmoa guest lecturers, home stays, and excursions and is completed alongside ES 488/588 Samoan Culture: Indigeneity beyond Settler Colonialism.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Understand the culture and context of Sāmoa through first-hand experience.
- Understand environmental issues in Sāmoa such as biodiversity loss, rising seas levels, increasing climate disaster and the connection to global, regional, local interventions.
- Indigenous environmental justice responses to across policy, community initiatives, art and activism.
- Evaluate reflexively environmental justice, responses and discourses from an Indigenous studies perspective.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

Our 4 contact hours per day Monday through Friday will include

- Lectures by UO and National University of Sāmoa (NUS) faculty and, as available, community leaders, policy-makers, indigenous stakeholders, and political activists.
- Discussions among students in the class and lecturers, guest speakers, and community partners.
- Experiential education and excursions will include learning from local leaders, community activists, educators and lead various environmental projects.
- Engagement with scholarly material will include books, articles, films and interviews and will occur primarily during the pre and post-Sāmoa weeks.

- You are also required to keep a physical journal for your daily journal entries (read more below).

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Participation (10%)

As an immersive learning experience participation is a vital component of your learning. 10% of your final grade will be based on in-class and excursion participation this includes participating in discussions as well.

Pre-departure reflection (10%)

You will write a one-page pre-departure reflection. Thinking ahead to the study abroad experience you will respond to the following prompts: What am I most excited to see and do? What am I most nervous about? What are my goals? And who do I want to be at the end of this experience?

Discussion Posts (20%)

During our virtual week pre-departure, you will write two canvas discussion posts of 350-400 words responding to the film *The Forgotten Pacific* and selected excerpts from the book *The Ocean on Fire: Pacific Stories from Nuclear Survivors and Climate Activists*. Both this film and book help to set important context to understanding Indigenous Environment Justice in the Pacific and Sāmoa. In your posts consider the following questions: What do the readings/film tell you about Indigenous Environmental Justice? How does Indigenous Environmental Justice figure within the Pacific? What historical and social context makes the Pacific different to the US?

Journaling (20%)

You will be required to have a physical journal which you bring with you to Sāmoa. Each day you will be responsible for finding time to journal. Your entries should be reflexive and consider things like: your observations around environmental issues and environment justice in this new context, and how your environment is challenging or expanding your preconceived ideas and preexisting knowledge. You should use your journal to focus on each guest lecture, community leader and excursion and reflect on the various approaches to Indigenous environmental justice you are learning about, what makes them different or the same to other US-based examples, how does sovereignty figure in (e.g. the Samoan land tenure system), and how does community initiatives, geopolitics, activism and art come together or not.

Independent Research Project (40%)

Your Independent Study Project will be a self-designed research project related to the course content. Drawing on your newly acquired understandings of the historical and political context of Sāmoa, you will develop a research project that focuses on an aspect of Indigenous environmental justice in Sāmoa. You will submit a single final project that will be graded and count for both courses. The project can be designed as an individual or, with prior faculty approval, a group project. Students are expected to work closely with faculty throughout the course to conceptualize and develop an independent research project that investigates a well-formulated research question focused on Indigenous environmental justice in Sāmoa. You can complete this project as a 10-page paper or you may explore a creative pathway that mirrors the Indigenous environmental justice efforts you have learnt about throughout the course. Examples include a podcast series, a mini-documentary, an activist campaign, a poetry collection.

Some other thoughts/ideas related to an your projects are:

- Look at examples of previous SIT Sāmoa Independent Study Projects' s [here](#).
- Look at the UO Libraries Pacific Islander Studies guide [here](#).
- We MAY be able to:
 - Connect projects to the work of Pacific Climate Warriors, SPREP or the Sāmoan Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
 - Build on existing observed
 - Indigenous environmental justice projects about biodiversity loss, agriculture, climate change, narrative change etc.
 - Histories of environmental and climate impacts, adaptation and mitigation.

Your project will be graded as follows:

- **Stage one:** Generate three distinct project ideas. Write five sentences or more per idea and include at least one citation for each idea (5%).
- **Stage two:** 5-minute project plan in-class presentation which includes a revised questions, a discussion of literature (as access allows) (5%).
- **Stage three:** Final paper or project that includes description of research, review of the field, and conclusions. See Canvas rubric for a more detailed breakdown. **Due August 7, 11.59pm.**

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: (Virtual week, 16–19 June)

Tuesday June 16

What is Indigenous environmental justice?

- *The Forgotten Pacific*, documentary. (Watch [online](#)).
- Gilio-Whitaker, D. 2019. "Environmental Justice Theory and Its Limitations for Indigenous Peoples" in *As Long as Grass Grows*. Beacon Press.

Wednesday June 17

Sovereignty, Narrative change and Indigenous empowerment

- Anaïs Maurer, *The Ocean on Fire: Pacific Stories from Nuclear Survivors and Climate Activists*. Duke University Press: Introduction. "We Are Not Drowning–We Are Fighting," pp. 1-30.
- Terisa Siagatonu, Layers, spoken word poem (Watch [online](#)).
- The First Digital Nation, website [see here](#). (Have a look around the website)

Thursday June 18

Relationality, reciprocity and the more than human

- His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi. 2018. "Prelude: Climate Change and the Perspective of the Fish," in T. Crook and P. Rudiak-Gould (ed), *Pacific Climate Cultures: Living Climate Change in Oceania*. Warsaw: De Gruyter Open Poland, ix-xiii.
- Kimmerer, R. W. 2013. "Learning the Grammar of Animacy," in *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Editions, 56–66.

Friday June 19

No school — Juneteenth

Due this week:

- Discussion Post: *The Forgotten Pacific* (10%), Tuesday 16 June (before class)
- Discussion Post: *The Ocean on Fire: Pacific Stories from Nuclear Survivors and Climate Activists* (10%) Wednesday 17 June (before class)
- Pre-departure reflection (10%), Sunday 21 June, 11.59pm

Students arrive Faleolo International Airport, on or before Sunday June 28. Check in to Tivoli Aparthotel.

Week 2: (Sāmoa, 29 June–3 July)

Monday June 29

Accommodation: Tivoli Aparthotel

- SIT Orientation to Sāmoa Day 1 at National University of Sāmoa, Dr. Fetaomi Tapu-Qiliho
National University of Sāmoa, National University of Sāmoa,
- Expectations, Health & Wellness, Risk Management, Ethics and Values, Cultural Expectations & Intercultural Experiences
- UO Course introduction & overview, Prof Lopesi

Tuesday June 30

Accommodation: Tivoli Aparthotel

- SIT Orientation to Sāmoa Day 2 at National University of Sāmoa, Dr. Fetaomi Tapu-Qiliho
- Guest Lecture: Sāmoan History, Context, Culture & Pacific Worldviews, Dr Brian Alofaituli
- Guest Lecture: Cultural Heritage, Conservation & Indigeneity, Dr Dionne Fonotī
- Guest Lecture: Biodiversity & the Environment, Mr Lātū

Wednesday July 1

Accommodation: Tivoli Aparthotel

- Site visit: South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP)
- Site Visit Debrief Homestay Orientation
- Survival Sāmoan Language Class
- Church Visit Briefing: Culture and Religion in Sāmoa; Indigenous Knowledge– Dr. Fetaomi Tapu-Qiliho

Thursday July 2

Accommodation: Lefaga, Faimafili Village Resort Fales

- Excursion day to Faleseela Village, Faleseela Environment and Protection Society
- Guest Lecture: Marine Conservation, Indigeneity & the Environment (at Faimafili), Mr Lātū
- ‘Ava Welcome Ceremony and Group
- Hike & Tree Planting Activity

Friday July 3

Accommodation: Homestay

- Excursion day to Savaia Village, Savaia Marine Reserve
 - Hike and Giant Clams, Mangrove Exploration
 - Meet & Move in with Homestay families
-

Week 3: (Sāmoa, 6–10 July)

Monday July 6

Accommodation: Homestay

- Weekend Debrief & Group Homestay
- Site Visit: Tiapapata Art Gallery Pacific Activism and Art in Response to Climate Threats

Tuesday July 7

Accommodation: Homestay

- Survival Sāmoan Language Class
- UO class time: Discussion on themes covered so far and focus on independent research projects

Wednesday July 8

Accommodation: Homestay

- Survival Sāmoan Language Class
- Guest Lecture: Climate Change in Sāmoa: Vulnerability & Resilience, Assoc. Prof Anita Latai
- UO class time

Thursday July 9

Accommodation: Manono Island

- Guest Lecture: Blue Economies & Climate Change, Prof Taua‘a
- UO class time

Friday July 10

Accommodation: Homestay

- Island Ecologies & Indigeneity, Star Mounds & Island Walk, Manono Island

Due:

- First journal hand in. Wednesday July 8 (in class)
- **Stage one:** Generate three distinct project ideas. Write five sentences or more per idea and include at least one citation for each idea (5%). **Due Wednesday July 8, 11.59pm.**

Week 4: (Sāmoa, 13–17 July)

Monday July 13

Accommodation: Homestay

- Site Visit & Discussion: Ms. Sunshine Organic Farm in Tuana’i: ‘Gender, Indigeneity & Agribusiness’ - Ms. Floris Niu

Tuesday July 14

Accommodation: Homestay

- Survival Sāmoan Language Class
- UO class time

Wednesday July 15

Accommodation: Homestay

- Survival Sāmoan Language Class

- UO class time

Thursday July 16

Accommodation: Homestay

Sails Restaurant Dinner & Show

- Survival Sāmoan Language Class
- UO class time

Friday July 17

Accommodation: Homestay

- South Coast Day Trip
- Site Visit: Coastal walk, O le Pupu Pu'ē National Park Falealili
- Site Visit: Poutasi Village, Tsunami affected areas.

Week 5: (Sāmoa, 20 July–24 July) Independent research project week

Monday July 20

Accommodation: Homestay

- Introduction to Independent research project week
- Guest Lecture: Indigenous Research Methodologies Indigenous Research Methodologies, Dr Dionne Fonotī
- Guest Lecture: Field Methods and Ethics, Dr Brian Alofaituli

Tuesday July 21

Accommodation: Homestay

- Independent research project presentations in class.

Wednesday July 22

Accommodation: Homestay

- Lalomanu excursion and beach day.

Thursday July 23

Accommodation: Homestay

- No class today, prepare for final celebration dinner.
- Celebration and farewell dinner.

Friday July 24

- Goodbyes to host families and depart from Apia

Due:

- Final journal hand in. Monday July 20 (in-class).
- **Stage two:** 5-minute project plan in-class presentation which includes a revised questions, a discussion of literature (as access allows) (5%).

Week 6: (Remote 27 July–1 Aug) Project final week

- Day 1: Work plan for project completion; plans to overcome obstacles.
- Day 2: Writing up.

- Day 3: Writing up.
- Day 4: Writing up.
- Day 5: Finalizing projects for submission.

Due:

- **Stage three:** Final paper or project that includes description of research, review of the field, and conclusions. See Canvas rubric for a more detailed breakdown. **Due August 7, 11.59pm.**

COURSE READINGS

Gilio-Whitaker, D. 2019. "Environmental Justice Theory and Its Limitations for Indigenous Peoples" in *As Long as Grass Grows*. Beacon Press.

Maurer, A. *The Ocean on Fire: Pacific Stories from Nuclear Survivors and Climate Activists*. Duke University Press: Introduction. "We Are Not Drowning—We Are Fighting," pp. 1-30.

Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi. 2018. "Prelude: Climate Change and the Perspective of the Fish," in T. Crook and P. Rudiak-Gould (ed), *Pacific Climate Cultures: Living Climate Change in Oceania*. Warsaw: De Gruyter Open Poland, ix-xiii.

Kimmerer, R. W. 2013. "Learning the Grammar of Animacy," in *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Editions, 56–66.

Hau'ofa. E. 1994. 'Our Sea of Islands'. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 6(1).

O le Tulafale/The Orator, film (Watch [online](#)).

The Forgotten Pacific, documentary. (Watch [online](#)).

Untold Pacific History: NZ's colonization of Samoa & the Mau Movement, documentary. (Watch [online](#)).

Terisa Siagatonu, Layers, spoken word poem (Watch [online](#)).

The First Digital Nation, website [see here](#).

Academic Misconduct

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at <https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>.

Generative AI Course Policy

Students may not use GenAI tools in this course to produce course materials or assignments in whole or in part. All work you submit for this course toward completion of course requirements must be your own original work done specifically for this course and without substantive assistance from others, including GenAI. Work you've completed for previous courses or are developing for other courses this term also should not be submitted for this course. In accordance with UO policy, if I believe you've handed in work created all or in part by GenAI, I will submit a report of suspected academic misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for that office to make a determination of responsibility. If you have any questions or doubts, please ask!

Accessible Education

The University of Oregon and I are dedicated to fostering inclusive learning environments for all students and welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Accessible Education Center (AEC) assists students with disabilities in reducing campus-wide and classroom-related barriers. [If you have or think you have a disability](#) and experience academic barriers, please contact the AEC to discuss appropriate accommodations or support. Visit 360 Oregon Hall or aec.uoregon.edu for more information. You can contact AEC at 541-346-1155 or via email at uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Reporting Obligations

I am a designated reporter. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see [Employee Reporting Obligations](#) on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website. Students experiencing sex- or gender-based discrimination, harassment or violence should call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE [7244] or visit safe.uoregon.edu for help. Students experiencing all forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment may contact the Dean of Students Office at 541-346-3216 or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator/OICRC at 541-346-3123 to request information and resources. Students are not required to participate in an investigation to receive support, including requesting academic supportive measures. Additional resources are available at investigations.uoregon.edu/how-get-support.

I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

Pregnancy Modifications

Pregnant and parenting students are eligible for academic and work modifications related to pregnancy, childbirth, loss of pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, lactation, and related medical conditions. To request pregnancy-related modifications, students should complete the [Request for Pregnancy Modifications form](#) on the OICRC website. OICRC coordinates academic and other modifications for pregnant and parenting students to ensure students can continue to access their education and university programs and activities.