

SYLLABUS

SAMOAN CULTURE: INDIGENEITY BEYOND SETTLER COLONIALISM

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

The independent nation of Sāmoa has a vibrant history from its precolonial era to colonial occupation and active missionization in the 19th century to independence in 1962. Today, the archipelago has a majority Samoan population at 92%, Samoan language is spoken by nearly 100% of the total population, and 80% of land is customarily owned giving a different kind of meaning the phrase “Land Back.” The Sāmoa context then is very different to the context of settler colonial context of Native America. In this course, students will learn about Samoan culture and develop a comparative approach to thinking about Indigeneity beyond settler colonialism. This course will include Samoan language and culture lessons by National University of Sāmoa guest lecturers, home stays, and excursions and is completed alongside ES 488/588 Indigenous Environmental Justice in Sāmoa.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Understand the language, culture and context of Sāmoa through first-hand experience.
- Understand the colonial, decolonial and post-colonial history of Sāmoa.
- Evaluate reflexively the role of globalization and capitalism on Indigenous culture and also Indigenous resilience within this context.
- Develop comparative analysis of Indigenous cultures across postcolonial and settler colonial settings.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

Our 4 contact hours per day Monday through Friday will include

- Lectures by UO and National University of Sāmoa (NUS) faculty and community leaders.
- Discussions among students in the class and lecturers, guest speakers, and community partners.
- Experiential education and excursions will include learning from local leaders and educators to significant cultural sites and to explore various cultural practices.
- 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 Orator* and the article 'Our Sea of Islands'. Both this film and article reveal aspects of culture and perspective. In your posts consider the following questions: What do the readings/film tell you about Indigenous Pacific/Samoan culture and worldviews? What kind of narratives are being empowered? 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 Samoan culture and custom 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 place of Indigenous knowledge, how does sovereignty figure in (e.g. the Samoan land tenure system), and how what you are experiencing is similar and/or different to the US.

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

Introduction to Sāmoa

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

Wednesday June 17

Sovereignty, Narrative change and Indigenous empowerment

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

Thursday June 18

Relationality, reciprocity and the more than human

- *O le Tulafale/The Orator*, film (Watch [online](#)).
- His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi. 2010. 'Bioethics and the Samoan indigenous reference,' *International Social Science Journal* 60, 195. 115–124.

Friday June 19

No school — Juneteenth

Due this week:

- Discussion Post: 'Our Sea of Islands' (10%), Wednesday 17 June (before class)
- Discussion Post: *The Orator* (10%) Thursday 18 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
- Survival Sāmoan Language Class
- 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.**
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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%).
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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.