CIEE Monteverde, Costa Rica

Course title: Conservation and Sustainability Internship  
Course code: INSH 3003 MTVE  
Programs offering course: Sustainability and the Environment  
Language of instruction: English  
U.S. semester credits: 3  
Contact hours: 45  
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description

As a student, this internship experience will help you to integrate environmental protection and sustainable development theory and practice in rural Costa Rica. You will be matched with a local business, non-governmental conservation organization, education center, farm, or community organization to help them to confront a "sustainability challenge" that they have identified. You may labor in any of these broad realms: agriculture horticulture sustainable landscaping, design, and building, solid waste or waste water management, environmental education or art, water resource management or protection, biodiversity conservation, or, small business development. You will visit organizations that are offering internships where you will learn about their mission and be introduced to the sustainability challenge that they seek to address. You will be matched with one of the organizations, conduct background research to learn about the broad context of the sustainability challenge, and then write a proposal formatted for the United Nations Global Environment Facility Small Grants Program promising specific deliverables. You will then labor on site for one month, carrying out the proposal and producing deliverables for the internship provider. You will later communicate your results in written reports and a blog post, as well as in an oral presentation to peers, homestay families, and community members.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

1. The ability to write a grant proposal for the United Nations Global Environment Facility (GEF), Small Grants Program (SGP)
2. The skills to write a final report for the GEF-SGP
3. Proficiency in preparing and delivering a symposium talk (partly or entirely in Spanish) for the public
4. Experience in writing a blog post that is informative, as well as appropriate for and engaging to, a broad audience of English speakers
5. Expanded insight into real-life sustainability challenges in a rural community of a tropical, developing country and realistic solutions for addressing these challenges
6. Experience in implementing solutions for real-life sustainability challenges, based upon principles of sustainability
7. New skills and knowledge, possibly including: construction practices related to sustainable building materials and natural resource management; design and landscape practices related to horticulture and agriculture; the use of GPS/GIS; biological monitoring techniques and biological or sociological research methods and statistical analyses; pedagogy and development of educational materials; methods and media in art, film making, and building websites
8. Enhanced commitment to being an agent of positive change

Course Prerequisites

None.

Methods of Instruction

This course is taught with a combination of methods that differ based on a 3-part sequence of activities and goals. It includes site visits to internship providers or relevant locations, workshops on proposal writing, report writing, public speaking, and well as a workshop on how to make effective PowerPoint presentations. It also includes a large experiential learning phase during when you are on site, laboring to produce the deliverables that will help your organization overcome their sustainability challenge. During this phase, you are learning the relevant skills and acquiring the needed information in highly individualistic ways, dependent upon the particulars of your internship but always under the mentorship of a daily supervisor and an academic supervisor.

Part 1: Internship introductions, pre-proposal-, and proposal-writing (12 seminar hours)
As a student, you will select your internships based on site visits to possible internship placements. You will meet with representatives of internship organizations or businesses to discuss potential assignments. You will write a pre-proposal that ranks ALL of the internship choices (1 = highest), and includes one paragraph justifying your TOP THREE.

Once you have been given approval, you will then write a proposal formatted for the Small Grants Program (SGP) of the United Nation Global Environment Facility (UN-GEF). You will attend seminars and workshops on how to write UN-GEF proposal, and follow guidelines for content and format.

You will be assigned an academic advisor who, along with a daily supervisor, will meet with you to orient you to the expectations associated with the placement. This phase includes 12 instructional contact hours.

Part 2: Internships On-site (110 field placement hours + 4 seminar hours)

You will spend a total of 110 hours on site at the internship during a four-week period. You should be ready to work from 8:30 AM - 1:30 PM (take a 30-minute lunch break). You should take photos of your progress to show at the weekly meetings and use in your eventual reports. At weekly meetings, you and your academic advisors will decide on the next week’s goals. Your progress toward reaching those goals will be assessed at Weekly Review Sessions and counted toward your grade. Your grade will also be impacted by how well you summarize your daily activities in your Daily Log, which you will show on Friday meeting.

At the end of this on-site period, you will hand in your internship “products” (“deliverables”; explained in each internship description).

During this period, you will also write a blog post that describes, to a broad audience, the significance of this internship to you (personally and professionally) as well as how it helped to overcome a sustainability challenge. You will use photos that you have taken and write 500 words on your experience. See “Blog Post”, below.

This on-site period should be used to the fullest. This period includes 110 hours on site and 4 hours of seminar.
Part 3: Post-internship Synthesis and Reports (9 seminar hours)

In the last phase, you will (a) write 2 drafts of a final report, and (b) prepare and deliver a PowerPoint presentation for the symposium aimed at the community of Monteverde.

The final, public symposium summarizes your internship. Each talk is 8 minutes of speaking. You will deliver your talk to the Monteverde community (including your homestay family and representatives from the internship provider), with a summary in Spanish. (If possible, you can include more written or spoken Spanish). See “Symposium”, below.

Additionally, you will attend writing workshops. You will submit two drafts of a written report, i.e., a first and final submission, both in English, in which you describe the socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental context and significance of your internship, and how final project advanced the goals of the organization and sustainability. This phase includes 9 instructional contact hours.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. UN-GEF Proposal (and pre-proposal) 10%
2. Daily Logs & Photos (show in weekly reviews) 5%
3. Quality of Performance / Product at Internship 15%
4. Project Cleanup, Product(s) Storage / Donation 10%
5. Blog Post 5%
6. Final Oral Presentation 20%
7. Final Report (First Draft) 20%
8. Final Report (Second Draft) 15%
   TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

UN-GEF Proposal (and pre-proposal)

Daily Logs & Photos (show in weekly reviews)

Daily logs sheets are included in this Internship Booklet. You must show logs and photos taken at each of the Weekly Review Sessions. Include how well you achieved the previous week’s goals. List goals for the next week. Goals are determined with your daily and academic supervisors’ input.

Quality of Performance / Product at Internship

The daily supervisor and the academic supervisor will consult to determine points earned. Grading criteria will include the intern’s attendance, attitude, motivation, level of responsibility, diligence, timeliness in completing tasks, response to criticism and suggestions, overall effort, overall commitment, resourcefulness, creativity, accuracy of information, appropriate data analysis and interpretation, communication skills, quality of workmanship, interpersonal skills, and other indicators.

Project Cleanup, Product(s) Storage / Donation

The daily supervisor and the academic supervisor will consult to determine points earned. We will consider whether you have cleaned, returned, replaced all equipment and materials used in a timely and responsible way. We will consider whether your final products were delivered, stored, or used as appropriate for the particulars of the internship.

Blog Post

This is a 500-word essay aimed at a general audience, but possibly including prospective employers, that describes (a) the focus of your internship; (b) your personal and professional interest in the internship; (c) skills and knowledge that you
have acquired; (d) what you feel are your greatest contributions or accomplishments in this internship. You should submit a minimum of two relevant, good quality photos to accompany this.

Final Oral Presentation

See “Guidelines for Final Symposium”, below.

Final Report (First Draft)

This is worth more points than the second draft because we expect it to be as good as a final draft. Make it as polished and ready for publication as you can. Follow “Tips for Writing” (pg. 21) and “Written Report Content and Guidelines”, below.

Final Report (Second Draft)

We will compare the comments and suggestions made by the academic supervisor on the first draft to the corrections that the student makes for the second draft. The final number of points considers overall quality in addition to how well the suggestions and comments on the first draft were addressed. As usual, follow “Tips for Writing” (pg. 21) and “Written Report Content and Guidelines”, below.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent.
Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to any required field placement. Students may not miss placement/work hours at an internship or service learning site unless approved in advance by the Academic Director and placement supervisor. All students must complete all of the requisite 100 minimum work hours on site at the internship or service learning placement to be eligible for academic credit.

Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Absences for classes will lead to the following penalties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 20%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements; 3% grade penalty &amp; written warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1
Class: Program Orientation & Field Trip #1

Weeks 1-2
No internship classes

Week 3
Class: 3.1 Internship Visits & Introductions

Lecture: “Tips on writing a good grant proposal”

Class: 3.2 Excursion: Visits to internship locations; introduction to internships

Class: 3.3 Excursion: Visits to internship locations; introduction to internships

Class: 3.4 Excursion: Visits to internship locations; introduction to internships

Assignment: Internship Pre-Proposals Due

Assignment: Internship Proposals Due

Week 4
Class: Field Trip #2 / No internships

Week 5
Class: 5.1 Internship execution on site

On-site internship

Class: 5.2 On-site internship
Class: 5.3 On-site internship

Class: 5.4 On-site internship

Class: 5.5 On-site internship

    Weekly progress meeting with Academic Advisor/Daily logs and photos reviewed

Week 6
Class: 6.1 Internship execution on site

    On-site internship

Class: 6.2 On-site internship

Class: 6.3 On-site internship

Class: 6.4 On-site internship

Class: 6.5 On-site internship

    Weekly progress meeting with Academic Advisor/Daily logs

Week 7
Class: 7.1 Internship execution on site

    On-site internship

Class: 7.2 On-site internship

Class: 7.3 On-site internship
Class: 7.4 On-site internship

Class: 7.5 On-site internship

Blog post due; Weekly progress meeting with Academic Advisor/Daily logs and photos reviewed

Week 8
Class: 8.1 Internship execution on site

On-site internship

Class: 8.2 On-site internship

Class: 8.3 On-site internship

Class: 8.4 On-site internship

Class: 8.5 On-site internship

Final products due

Week 9
Class: 9.1 Internship writing

Lecture: “Tips on writing final reports”

Assignments: Final report, first draft due

Week 10
Class: 10.1 Symposium week

Lecture: “How to prepare a professional talk”
Class: 10.2 Final symposium

Week 11
Class: Final report

Course Materials
Readings

Readings are assigned on a case-by-case basis from peer-reviewed journals and references. All past semesters’ internship reports are available for student reference.