



MASTER OF ARTS IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

Program Director Letter, 2018 - 2019



DEAR STUDENT,

Welcome to the Master of Arts in Climate Change and Global Sustainability program! I look forward to meeting all of you soon and guiding you through your year-long experience with SIT Graduate Institute.

BACKGROUND AND ROLE AS PROGRAM DIRECTOR

My name is **Richard Walz**. I completed a PhD in anthropology at the University of Florida, graduate coursework in East African history and ecology at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and a BA in African studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I have spent more than seven years in Tanzania. I have worked in various cross-cultural contexts researching, advising, and lecturing on a wide range of topics, including East African history and ecology, biological and cultural conservation, traditional landscape use, indigenous medicine, and rural development. My work has consistently engaged local and international public education and produced scholarly and popular publications.



As the program chair, my role is to coordinate all administrative and academic aspects of the program and to facilitate your learning. I am not expected, however, to do those things on my own. There is a strong network of faculty and staff in Iceland, Zanzibar, and in the US who work with me to help ensure that you have every opportunity to explore the causes and impacts of climate change and the various efforts to mitigate these effects and adapt to our changing world. On behalf of the staff and our program partners - our “SIT family” - I look forward to receiving and working with each of you during the coming year.

PROGRAM STAFF INTRODUCTION

To give you a better idea about our backgrounds, the following are brief introductions to the SIT staff:

Nicolas Stahelin, Practicum Coordinator and Faculty, United States



Nicolas Stahelin is an educator and political ecologist who has worked in the field of experiential learning, international and cross-cultural exchange, school-community partnerships, and higher education for nearly 15 years. He has a BA in environmental studies from Oberlin College, an MA in international educational development from Columbia University, and an EdD in international and comparative education, also from Columbia. His teaching and research engage with sustainability in global and comparative perspectives at the intersection of political ecology, environmental justice, globalization studies, and the sociology of education. In his recent research, Nicolas examined the ideological divergence between critical environmental education movements in Brazil and UNESCO’s Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. He is an alum (fall 2000) and former program assistant (spring 2001, 2003–2004) of an SIT Study Abroad program in Brazil. More recently, he was the director of the Peace Corps Fellows Program at Columbia University. Nicolas is active on several research fronts and has published in academic journals, including the *Journal of Environmental Education* and *Environmental Education Research*. He is a research collaborator on global climate change education policy programs with the Sustainability and Education Policy Network of the University of Saskatchewan (Canada) and

is engaged in a collaborative project investigating how a theoretical framework for climate justice can inform critical education for sustainability curricula and program design in post-secondary international education. Originally of Swiss-Brazilian nationality, Nicolas lived for 20 years in Brazil and Venezuela and is fluent in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.

Peter Weiss, Graduate Program Manager, Iceland

Since its founding in 2005, Dr. Peter Weiss has been director of SIT's key partner in Iceland, University Centre of the Westfjords in Ísafjörður. Previously, he taught linguistics and literature at the University of Iceland's Department of Nordic Languages and German. He also served as head of its Language Centre and director of Goethe Zentrum Reykjavík. Dr. Weiss earned a PhD in linguistics and Scandinavian languages, with a dissertation on the history of ideas and the development of linguistic thinking in Sweden in the 17th and 18th centuries, at the University of Greifswald in Germany. In addition, Dr. Weiss holds a master's degree from the University of Kiel in Germany and a bachelor's degree from the University of Iceland.



Jiddawi Narriman, Graduate Program Advisor, Zanzibar, Tanzania



Dr. Jiddawi Narriman holds a PhD in marine biology from the University of Dar es Salaam, where she is a senior lecturer at the university's Institute of Marine Sciences. She also earned an MS in fisheries biology and management from the University of North Wales. Dr. Narriman has researched the age, growth, reproductive biology, and fishery of Indian mackerel (*Rastrelliger kanagurta*) in Zanzibar. Her current studies engage gender, productivity, and climate change in the tropics.

Caitlin Holden, Student Affairs Coordinator, United States

Caitlin Holden is the student affairs coordinator for graduate programs and has been working with SIT since the fall of 2016. She holds a master's degree in environmental studies from Antioch University and a bachelor's degree in sociology from Brandeis University. She is passionate about education, the environment, and the transformative power of intercultural connections. Her first introduction to SIT was when she studied with SIT Study Abroad in Melbourne, Australia, which prompted her to work at a Boston-based educational travel company for several years. As the student affairs coordinator for graduate programs, she is the first point of contact for graduate students in the field and on campus at SIT Graduate Institute. In her spare time, she enjoys being outside and traveling.



Jennifer Smith, Graduate Program Associate, Iceland



Jennifer Smith holds graduate degrees in environmental management from the University of Akureyri in Iceland and in international relations from Johns Hopkins University, as well as a BA from Reed College. She has studied and worked in Iceland, China, and France, and is proficient in Icelandic. Jennifer also has worked with SIT as academic director for the SIT undergraduate program, *Iceland and Greenland: Climate Change and the Arctic*, and SIT's Iceland summer program.

Amina Kashoro, Graduate Program Associate, Zanzibar, Tanzania

Amina Kashoro earned a BA from Zanzibar University. She is the project coordinator for the Decentralized Climate Finance Project, which addresses climate change impacts to community members who produce honey, seaweed, and citrus fruits in Zanzibar. In the past, Amina served as the program officer for the Zanzibar Climate Change Alliance. She actively contributes to climate change adaptation, mitigation, and policy discussions in East Africa.



PROGRAM SITE INFORMATION

Iceland

Ísafjörður is a town of about 2,600 people located on a narrow spit of land in the fjord of Skutulsfjörður. It is surrounded by dramatic mountains and the Atlantic Ocean. The town is an urban center in the rural Westfjords, with public services such as a hospital, schools, and cafés. Traditionally a fishing town, Ísafjörður has in the past few decades expanded into knowledge-based industries, as well as developed ecotourism. Ísafjörður, and the Westfjords in general, is only visited by a small proportion of tourists to Iceland and remains off the beaten track. Our partner organization in Iceland is the University Centre of the Westfjords (Háskólasetur Vestfjarða, <http://www.uw.is/>). You will take your classes there. Likewise, Dr. Peter Weiss - SIT's graduate program manager - is based there.

Zanzibar

The SIT Tanzania-Zanzibar office is in the World Heritage Site of Stone Town. The program office serves as a classroom, resource center, and administrative hub. The Institute of Marine Sciences and most administrative offices for the region's non-governmental organizations are in Stone Town, a place of winding streets, carved wooden doors, and beautiful mosques and gardens. Most of the people in Zanzibar follow the Islamic faith, and throughout the island visitors hear the daily call to prayers by the local muezzins. Religious and cultural traditions on the island require conservative dress by residents and tourists. Swahili is spoken throughout Zanzibar. Zanzibar experiences a warm tropical climate, with an average temperature of 85 degrees with ocean breezes.



SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH

During semester orientations and throughout the program you will be reminded about safety, security, and health precautions. You can find further program information about these topics in the pre-departure documents at the following links:

<https://graduate.sit.edu/documents/graduate/2018-ccgs-safety.pdf>

<https://graduate.sit.edu/documents/graduate/2018-ccgs-health-guidelines.pdf>

Iceland

Iceland is eccentric due to its isolation, rugged environment, and small population. Icelanders, especially outside the capital, can be very friendly towards visitors. While Iceland is very safe in many ways, some of the hazards are different than those found in other countries. In some parts of Iceland, one can travel four hours without seeing any other people or infrastructure. It is easy to become lost, and help might not be close at hand. Thus, it is important to travel in groups and let others know where you are going. Icelanders expect people to always exercise their own common sense. Likewise, we expect you to use good common sense and not approach cliffs or venture into unsafe circumstances.

Varying weather conditions combined with the high latitude in Iceland can lead quickly to hypothermia. The weather changes often and quickly. Freshwater rivers and lakes as well as the ocean are very cold around Iceland. Hot water is also a significant hazard in geothermal zones. Always stay on marked paths. Though infrequent, a number of natural disasters also are possible, including volcanic eruptions, avalanches, earthquakes, floods, and hurricane-force winds.

Zanzibar

Most visits to Zanzibar are trouble-free, but you should take sensible precautions. Avoid walking after dark and do not carry large sums of cash on the street or wear expensive-looking jewelry. While traveling, it is a good idea to divide your cash and keep it in different places. Although it is likely that you will have an incident free semester, it is wise to write down credit card account numbers, phone numbers, and any other pertinent information and keep it separate—so you can quickly report lost or stolen items and get replacements. Packing lightly, as much as possible, is very helpful in keeping everything organized, providing less hassle for you and fewer opportunities for theft.

Follow the health precautions in the SIT guidelines. You will be in Zanzibar during the tropical summer. Drink plenty of sanitized water and eat healthily and wisely. The food is both diverse and tasty! Water safety in the ocean is a necessity, as swimming and snorkeling in Zanzibar are regular activities. Take your malaria prophylaxis, sleep under a mosquito net, use a ceiling fan to keep cool at night, and enjoy the sunshine with sunscreen and sunglasses.

U.S. State Department

It is a good idea to review the US State Department's Consular Information Sheet about Iceland and Tanzania before you depart each respective semester. You can access this information, in particular, at:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Tanzania.html>

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Iceland.html>

SIT will register your participation in the program with the US State Department website designed for that purpose before each semester of the program begins.



ACADEMIC AND GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

The program's learning environment is different from what you may be used to. Your base studies will be in the classroom but you also will learn directly from the environment, and from projects, activities, and communities involved in climate change research, mitigation, and adaptation. How you do this, what you learn, and the kind of knowledge produced is up to you and your efforts. There are two broader considerations to keep in mind: first, you will be asked to make synthetic, intellectual sense of your first-hand experience in Iceland and Zanzibar; and, second, you will be

expected to be proactive about what the program offers in terms of learning opportunities. Usually, the students who learn and benefit the most from these types of programs are those who choose to be the most engaged in the program and with local communities and the environment.

Finally, no one can change Iceland or Zanzibar to make you happier or more comfortable. You must be flexible, challenge your comfort zones, and adopt some new habits that may seem inconvenient, but which will enable you to accept and respect local realities. This requires a significant amount of patience and open-mindedness, and a positive attitude.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Each portion of the program begins with an orientation. In Iceland, we will spend one night as a group in Reykjavik at a hotel before traveling to Ísafjörður, where you will begin your stay in the dormitory starting from your first night. Following a short orientation period, your classes will begin at the University Centre of the Westfjords on August 27th, 2018 and end on November 16th. In Zanzibar, the orientation begins upon arrival on January 10th, 2019 and ends on the 13th of January. The classes for semester 2 begin on January 14th and extend to April 5th. The Semester 3 practicum launches on May 20th and the program concludes on August 11th, 2019. The courses and in-semester student professional development sessions teach content and skills for you and your career. See further schedule details below.

Classes occur at the University Centre of the Westfjords in Iceland and at the SIT program office in Zanzibar. One course in semester 1 and one course in semester 3 are delivered through an on-line mechanism. The instructors in Iceland and Zanzibar are experienced and recognized experts on their climate- and sustainability-related topics. The faculty and staff associates deliver content in class, but also will take you and your fellow students on occasional in-country excursions aligned with class activities. Also, in semesters 1 and 2 preliminary meetings guided by SIT staff will help you determine an advisor, institutional practicum partner, and capstone project for semester 3, which is at a location of your choice.

Dress Guidelines

Dressing warmly is important in Iceland, especially beginning in October when temperatures typically decline. Clothing and footwear should be warm and sturdy for all excursions. Sunscreen and sunglasses are a useful accessory in snowy areas.

Appropriate dress in Zanzibar is important. Zanzibar has a conservative Muslim culture. The Muslim community finds the shorts and skimpy tops often worn by visitors to be offensive. The way you dress while you are in Zanzibar will directly impact how you are perceived. For these reasons, we follow a dress code throughout semester 2. Despite the heat and humidity, students are not permitted to wear shorts or skirts above the knee in public or to wear tank tops, sleeveless shirts, crop-tops, or transparent clothing. Light and baggy clothing is recommended.



INDEPENDENT TRAVEL AND VISITORS

SIT Graduate Institute does not prohibit students from bringing family members. It is important to recognize that the academic components and acculturation require extensive time and energy. Students are expected to engage in all program activities including courses, excursions, and guest lectures. Students will not be excused from program components to attend to visitors. Days sometimes are long with itinerary shifts due to local realities and rigorous assignments.

There are no long breaks during the schedule in either Iceland or Zanzibar, but independent travel is permitted on the weekends. During orientation in each country the SIT staff will provide guidelines for independent travel. Please note that any visitors during the course of the program must independently plan their own accommodations.

Let your family know that we will contact SIT in Vermont to inform them of everyone's safe arrival in both Iceland and Zanzibar. If they want to confirm your arrival or if they must contact you at any point during the semester, they can communicate with the SIT Graduate Institute in Vermont directly at 1-802-258-3212 or 1-888-272-7881. During non-working hours, your call will be answered by an answering service who will notify our on-call staff.

IMPORTANT PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

Please take the time to read carefully through all the materials SIT provides about the SIT Graduate Institute and MA program. Be sure to review the pre-departure materials, which you can find at:

<https://graduate.sit.edu/admitted-students/climate-change-and-global-sustainability-pre-departure/>

This link includes:

- FAQs
- Flight, Passport, and Visa Information
- Safety and Security Information
- Health Guidelines and Requirements
- Readings and Resources

If you have not already done so, please complete any necessary immunizations at this time.

SIT Graduate Institute policies and program expectations will be reiterated during orientation.

RECOMMENDED READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

To enable you to make the most of your time with SIT, we strongly advise you to begin now to monitor local and international media coverage of the country and region. Upon returning to the US, former SIT students repeatedly emphasize that reading beforehand makes a difference in the quality of the student experience abroad. You can access your recommended – but, not required – readings at:

<http://libguides.sit.edu/gcc/recommended>

For books listed at the above link, you may locate these titles at your local public or institutional library, or through an online or brick and mortar bookstore. Your local library may also participate in interlibrary loan. Open Access articles should be freely available on the internet. Other articles may only be accessible for a fee, or within a local college campus that subscribes to the journal.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services (DS) for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Students can contact the Assistant Director of Disability Services for SIT at disabilityservices@sit.edu or +1-802-258-3390. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services can be found on the DS website at <https://graduate.sit.edu/student-support/disability-services/>.

If you have questions before departing for Iceland, please do not hesitate to contact your admissions counselor.

Richard Walz

Program Director

P.S.: Take a look at the program schedule on the next page. You should pack the schedule with you on the plane.

MASTER OF ARTS IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM SCHEDULE 2018-2019

This schedule is subject to changes based on curricular, logistical, or security reasons.

Date	Activity
August 22, 2018	Arrive in Iceland, orientation begins in Reykjavik
August 23 - 26	Orientation continues in Ísafjörður
August 27 - November 16	Semester 1: Classes at University Centre of the Westfjords, and linked excursions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human-Climate Interface: Energy and Climate Change in Iceland • Political Economy of Sustainable Development and Environmental Change (on-line) • Science of Global Climate Change • Climate Change in the Arctic: Environmental Methods and Impact Assessment
Early November	Professional development meeting I: student career exploration and mapping
November 18	All students depart Iceland
January 10, 2019	Arrive in Zanzibar
January 11-13	Orientation in Zanzibar
January 14 - April 5	Semester 2: Classes in Zanzibar, and linked excursions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change on Tropical Coasts: Social and Environmental Methods • Human-Climate Interface: Water, Food, and Climate Economics in Zanzibar • Natural Resource Management in East Africa • Climate Change and Sustainable Livelihoods in the Indian Ocean Region
Early February	Professional development meeting II: student materials (CVs, cover letters, and LinkedIn)
April 7	All students depart Zanzibar

<p>May 20 - August 4</p>	<p>Semester 3 (at location of individual student's choice): Practicum and Capstone Project, plus on-line course: International Environmental Policy and the Challenge of Climate Diplomacy</p>
<p>August 5-11, 2019</p>	<p>Capstone presentations (Program ends August 11)</p>

***Note:** Please do not forget to travel with your passport and WHO vaccination card (or a copy of your immunization record). You should make a copy of the two facing pages of your passport, which have your photo, and the two facing pages of your visa (travel with these kept in a separate location than your passport). It is also a good idea to leave other copies of these documents at home.

UPON YOUR ARRIVAL IN ICELAND

Your program staff will meet you at the airport. The meeting location is in the Keflavík International Airport arrival hall. If you encounter delays or have any issues in the USA or while in transit, please call our Student Affairs Department at 1-888-272-7881 or 1-802-258-3212.

If you've reached Iceland and are unable to meet the group or encounter other difficulties, please contact Caitlin Holden via whatsapp at +1 603 236 6226.

UPON YOUR ARRIVAL IN ZANZIBAR

At the International Airport in Zanzibar, our staff member will greet you outside of the airport building with a large SIT sign. If you encounter delays or have any issues in the USA or while in transit, please call our student affairs department at 1-888-272-7881 or 1-802-258-3212.

If you've reached Zanzibar and are unable to meet the group or encounter other difficulties, please contact Said Omar at 011255 754 689 907 (calling from a US-based phone) or 0754 689 907 (calling from a Tanzania-based phone).