

Pitzer College in Nepal

Pre-Departure Orientation Handbook
Spring 2018



Cover photo by Ana Berry
Pitzer in Nepal, Spring 2011

MAP OF NEPAL



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CULTURAL IMMERSION AND ADAPTATION

Cultural Immersion

One of the most important modes of learning employed by the Pitzer in this program is learning through cultural immersion. By cultural immersion we mean,

A commitment to participate as fully as possible in the local lifestyle, language and culture of your host family and community in order to understand something of what it means to be a member of the host culture.

Notice the word *commitment*. Immersion doesn't happen automatically. It takes a certain commitment over the course of the program– a mindfulness of why you came in the first place and faithfulness to that.

Pitzer's Study Abroad programs ask students to engage the local lifestyle, language and culture as fully as possible. Our programs provide ample opportunities for interaction as well as experienced cross-cultural guidance. You make the commitment to take those opportunities and follow that guidance when you participate in a Pitzer program.

We help you move beyond passive observation to active participation in the life of the host community. We ask you to meet the culture on its own terms and share the common experiences that make up the everyday lives of typical community members. You will accomplish this within the program structure of intensive language study, family stays, and field exercises that require interaction with members of the host culture.

We expect you to limit your daily living options to those available to typical members of the host community. This may mean living with little privacy and few amenities, opting for crowded and sometimes unreliable local transportation, using local health facilities that require long waits, or going into town to make a call home or send an email rather than using the program office phone or computer. This is hard work and requires a strong commitment on your part. We provide the structure and encouragement for cultural immersion, but you must choose between engaging the culture on its own terms and retreating to more convenient and familiar options.

With this in mind, it will be helpful for you to think about ways you can participate more fully in the life of your host family and community. To get you started, here are some ideas that past students have come up with. Reflect on these and add your own. Refer back to this during the course of your program to make sure you are taking full advantage of the many opportunities for cultural immersion learning on your program.

Strategies to deepen cultural immersion learning:

Ways to participate fully in the life of my host family:	Ways to participate fully in the local community where I am living:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help around the house• Run errands with your family• Play with the kids• Go out with host brothers or sisters, help with homework, read to them, go to school, share daily activities and ask about host family's life,• Shop for a meal, prepare and cook food, eat, and clean up together• Go to clinics or hospitals or local healers with host family <p>Other strategies:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteer in social work agencies• "Just get out"• Visit local markets• Check out community theater groups• Get involved in sports• Take local transportation• Eat in restaurants frequented by locals• Go to church/temple/mosque• Participate in community activities• Go to local hangouts (park, restaurants, cafes), frequent the same path so you can get to know locals <p>Other strategies:</p>

Cultural Appropriateness

Given that we want you to participate fully in the host culture, we want you to do this in a way that reflects the host culture's values. This is what we mean by cultural appropriateness:

A commitment to learn about and increase your understanding of the host culture and then interact, communicate and behave in ways that respect the host culture's values.

This may mean you need to dress differently, eat new foods, or new quantities of food. You may need to change certain concepts of time, personal space and privacy. You will certainly need to develop a new set of non-verbal behaviors and to give up certain things you value. Most importantly, you will need to develop tolerance and respect for many other things that you may not understand or cannot accept.

Committing yourself to cultural appropriateness is hard work, but the rewards are considerable and last a lifetime. The depth of your immersion experience and the character of the relationships you develop are dependent on your ability to make a serious attempt to understand and respect others. We believe the quality of your learning experience is directly related to these efforts.

A commitment to cultural appropriateness:

- is a reflection and measurement of ongoing culture learning and therefore factors into your core course grade.
- demonstrates that you care about what is important to your hosts and that you are making an honest attempt to respect their values.
- has a profound effect on the type of experience you will have.
- promotes meaningful interactions and language learning.
- increases safety and helps to prevent harassment.
- speaks well of your home college, your program, and your program staff and faculty.

A Higher Level of Cultural Sensitivity

Sensitivity to another culture requires more than mastering rules of etiquette. Of course, such rules are important, but they cannot be learned in isolation from actual experience. The best way to prepare for upcoming cross-cultural encounters is to imagine the type of person you will attempt to be during the program. Pitzer expects a sustained commitment to developing and maintaining a higher level of cultural sensitivity. What does that mean? Consider the following three characterizations:

- 1) The tourist level – represented by the sentiment: “I am oblivious to the effects my actions have on locals and never stop long enough to even question my behavior.”
- 2) The sojourner level – represented by the attitude: “How can I continue to live my life, interact and behave the way I always have without offending my hosts?”
- 3) A higher level – represented by the question: “What must I change in order to show I respect the host culture's values, facilitate meaningful relationships, and have a deeper more meaningful learning experience?”

We expect you to make a commitment to being at the higher (proactive) level of awareness and sensitivity. At this level you move from a “What can I get away with and not offend my hosts?” attitude to a higher level of sensitivity represented by this questions: “What can I do (How must I change?) to show I respect the host culture's values and through this, facilitate meaningful relationships with members of the host culture and have a deeper, more enriching learning experience?” If you commit to this higher level, a list of do's and don'ts is not necessary. You will be actively engaged in culture learning throughout your experience and your behavior and interactions will reflect this. People will see your respect for their culture and help you to learn. Even cultural blunders or faux pas (which we all make) will be accepted by members of the host culture gracefully when you are at this level.

Cultural Appropriateness as an Indicator of Learning

Cultural appropriateness is an ongoing effort throughout the course of your semester to learn about the host culture and reflect that in your interactions and behavior. It is not a list of dos or don'ts or something you can simply learn in orientation. It is a commitment to ongoing culture learning. As such, *cultural appropriateness as an indicator of learning* makes up a portion of the grading criteria of both the language and the core course. We believe that successful and appropriate participation in the local culture is just as much a demonstration of learning as a well-written paper or a top mark on an exam.

A Role Model for Cultural Appropriateness

All of culture is contested and in a process of change. It is easy in any culture to find exceptions to the norm. There will always be members of the host culture who question, challenge, disagree with, and even openly go against certain cultural practices. Students often point out such exceptions and say, "Look. She is from this culture and she's dressing like that, so why can't I?" or "He's from here and he's doing that. How can you say that is culturally inappropriate?" Our role model for cultural appropriateness is behavior that is typical for the community and host family where we live and study, not the liberal or conservative extremes that can be found in any culture. The fact that a particular cultural practice is being contested by certain members of the culture does not mean we can disregard or disrespect that practice if it is the norm for the situation we are in and the people with whom we would forge meaningful relationships.

We expect you to respect the cultural practices of the situation you are in, even as you engage in a critical exploration of how, by whom, in what context and to what extent certain aspects of the culture are being contested. We certainly don't want to enter your host family, for instance, having made pre-judgments, perhaps from certain readings, that certain of their cultural practices are oppressive to women. Rather, we want you to enter in with an open and non-judgmental attitude. Learn about the cultural practices of your host family, allow their values and beliefs to inform your own behavior as a gesture of respect, and in this context, explore from the Nepali perspective whether and to what extent a certain practice is being contested or is seen as oppressive. These two approaches to culture learning (critical analysis and respectful participation) are not incompatible.

Since there is such a diversity of cultural practices out there, initially, it will be difficult for you to know if behavior you observe is on the fringe or fairly typical for the community you are in. It takes a while to figure this out. Early on, you should proceed with caution and let program staff and host families serve as guides and role models for cultural appropriateness. Later on in the semester, as you commit to the process of culture learning, you will be more and more able to figure this out on your own.

Cultural Appropriateness and Your Own Core Values

A common question students often struggle with is this: *Won't a serious commitment to cultural appropriateness require me to compromise my own core values?* The answer is no. You do not need to give up your own core values to appreciate and respect the existence of contrasting values in others. Cultural appropriateness does not require us to do this, but it does require that we learn about and respect a different set of values in the way we behave and interact as long as we are guests in the host culture.

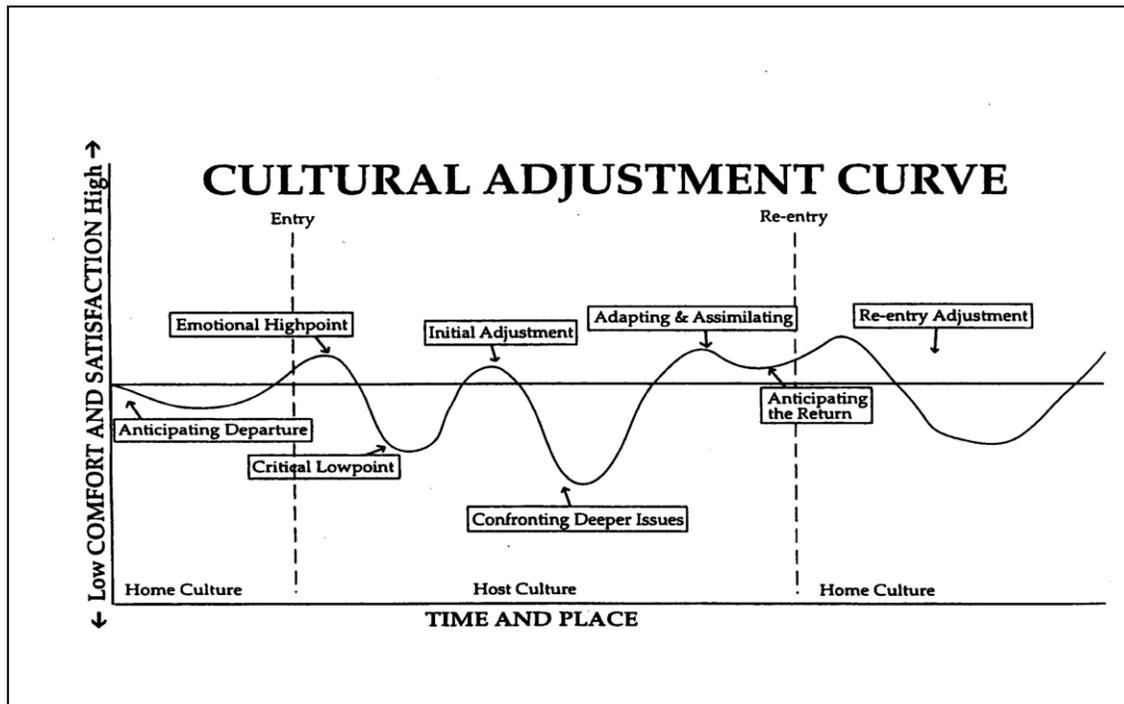
Your role as a student on this program is not to judge the host culture, especially not to judge it based on your own values, but to understand it based on its own beliefs and values and to honor these host culture values in the way you interact and behave. Again, you can do this without compromising your own core values. Cultural appropriateness is not a process of giving up or diminishing who we are, but of adding on.

"When you commit to cultural appropriateness, that is, when you are willing to see the world through the eyes of the host culture and reflect that in the way you behave and interact, you don't become less of an American, you become more of a human being." *Cap Miller SJ - Anthropologist in Nepal who has conducted research on Jhaankris and on Decision Making in Village Nepal.*

Humility and the willingness to change are the hallmarks of a higher level of cultural sensitivity. Respect for the host culture and your willingness to change should lead you to sort through your own values and struggle with better understanding your own culture. Persistent conscientious effort will enable you to eventually define a comfortable cultural boundary for yourself that neither compromises you or offends those with whom you live and learn. It is vitally important to realize that you do not need to discard your own core values to appreciate and tolerate the existence of opposing values in others. You will need to examine your values from a new perspective and be open to modifying your behavior to accommodate host culture values, but Pitzer does not believe you should ever abandon who you really are. Our programs are journeys of self-discovery as much if not more than they are journeys into the lives and experiences of others.

Cultural Adjustment

What we are trying to describe is often referred to as cultural adjustment, or acculturation. One recognized model of the process is the U-curve developed by Lysgaard in 1955



The curve depicts your emotional state as you adjust to contact with another culture. You feel uneasy leaving friends and family, and a little anxious about stepping forward into the unknown. Once you arrive, and become familiar with your new surroundings, anxiety gives way to a euphoric feeling of excitement supported by a natural fascination with the exotic and different. This is an accomplishment within reach of any earnest tourist. You, however, are more than a tourist, and must go deeper into the culture. Here is where the difficulties really begin.

The very differences that excited and attracted you slowly begin to confuse and frustrate your attempts to function in the new culture. You begin to experience what is often referred to as “culture shock”; a characterization that became popular in the 1960’s and is still used today to refer to periods of emotional discomfort that are depicted as low points on Lysgaard’s U-graph. The use of the word “shock” is a bit misleading since it lends itself to the suggestion that these feelings are provoked by incidents that would not be so shocking with proper preparation. Consider the following hypothetical description taken from Craig Storti’s *The Art of Crossing Cultures*:

Let’s conjure up a typical morning in the life of an expatriate development worker in Tunisia, and, to load the equation, let’s make her a woman. She enjoys a quiet breakfast in the sanctity of her home and then begins the drive to work. The streets are thronged with pedestrians, choked with donkey carts, and full of aggressive Tunisian drivers who take regular and prolonged solace in their car horns. She is alternately immobilized by all the confusion and driven to fits of frightening recklessness. She stops briefly at the post office, long enough to be intimidated by the throng of men pressed around the stamp seller’s window, and leaves without mailing her letters. At ten o’clock she reports for an appointment at the Ministry of Health and sits down to wait for the man she has come to see, assured by his secretary that he is due any minute. After forty-five minutes and several more assurances from the secretary, she leaves (and learns later that the man was out of town for the day and, further, knew that he would be when she pressed for the appointment). On her way back to her office she stops to buy the International Herald Tribune and have a cup of coffee. The paper isn’t available, though the vendor assured her the day before it would be (God’s will, he shrugs), and she is harassed by several male customers as she tries to relax with her coffee.

From the safe and comfortable confines of wherever you are reading this booklet, you are probably thinking that these kinds of incidents won’t bother you. You are ready. But imagine waking up to the expectation of similar incidents every day you are abroad. Imagine facing these daily disappointments while suffering from the frequent intestinal and

respiratory illnesses that often attend extended stays in foreign lands. Imagine not understanding most of the verbal and non-verbal communication attending these incidents, and the treatment of your illnesses. Imagine experiencing all these things alone, without the emotional support of family and friends. Are you really ready? Can you be? Can anyone?

Probably not, at least according to most interculturalists, who agree that culture shock is natural. It is a common experience for anyone making a serious attempt to adjust to another culture. Overt manifestations can range from mild irritability to deep psychological panic and crisis. It is often associated with feelings in the learner of resentment, estrangement, anger, hostility, indecision, frustration, sadness, loneliness, homesickness and even physical illness. The person undergoing culture shock often vacillates between feeling angry with others for their lack of understanding, and being filled with self-pity. It is much more than the simple shock of being confronted with unexpected behaviors.

Though it may seem like a liability, culture shock is actually beneficial. It presents an opportunity for one of the most meaningful types of learning. When you find yourself on the low point of the Lysgaard curve your instinctive fight or flight response will lead you to three well-documented coping strategies. You may withdraw from the host culture, seek out the company of other expatriates, or project your discomfort onto members of the host culture, and see them as the source of your pain and suffering. All of these responses end in failure. The way to overcome culture shock is both simple and challenging. You need to continue to participate in the host culture. Without continued participation your learning experience stops at the low point, and you fall off the curve altogether. Simple persistence will get you through to the next peak where you will be able to see your experiences differently. Over time the curve should flatten out, the emotional roller coaster should subside, and at the end of the journey you will be a remarkably more mature person.

You may be hoping to avoid culture shock, but if you do you may not learn anything at all. Most experts believe that culture shock is a prerequisite for true cross-cultural effectiveness. Gary Weaver believes individuals who claim to have never experienced any form of culture shock probably did not have a genuine cross-cultural encounter.¹ Douglas Brown argues that failure here may affect language learning as well. His research suggests that adjustment through avoidance leads you through the low points with a psychology that weakens the drive for greater fluency. If you find a comfortable niche requiring minimal participation in the culture, the inevitable result is the acquisition of a stunted version of the language that meets minimal needs. Your speech remains grammatically fossilized and functionally inadequate.²

It is clear that the low points are the most critical moments of your experience abroad. You must choose to remain involved in the new culture and not to retreat into the expatriate, tourist or foreign student community lifestyle. Learning how to recognize and check this impulse to retreat is essential. Program staff will be able to help. It is their responsibility to keep you in the game. They will create opportunities for interaction and help you up when you fall. At the same time, however, they will insist you continue to confront your difficulties head on and not lead you around them. Remember that you cannot overcome culture shock by thinking about how the other culture is different or even by reading about the other culture. The only way to successfully acculturate is by trial and error. You must make mistakes, misunderstand, and suffer embarrassment. Only then can you gradually learn to read the underlying cultural conditioning in yourself, and in others. Eventually, with effort, you will be able to interact successfully and appropriately.

Immersion and Community Integration through Family Stays

Pitzer study abroad programs emphasize experiential learning through immersion into local cultures and communities, and an essential ingredient of this, wherever possible, is family stays. Family stays are much more than just a convenient solution to the room and board problem. They are an important dimension of the academic program designed to give you an opportunity to understand something of what it means to live in the host culture and deal with a range of issues important to the local community and the country.

In fact, family stays often become the focal point of our commitment to cultural immersion and appropriateness. They allow for fuller participation in community life and integration into the local culture on as many fronts as possible. Living with a family allows you to develop meaningful relationships with family members and neighbors who will vary in age, gender, ethnicity, and educational background. This compels you to give a human face to ideas and theories presented in the core course lectures and readings. Indeed, family stays allow you to feel the pulse of a community, to test and verify the assumptions offered by community agencies and governing bodies, and to explore issues from a variety of

¹ Weaver, Gary. R. 1993. "Understanding and Coping with Cross-Cultural Adjustment Stress." In R. Michael Page (ed.), *Education for the Intercultural Experience*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

² Brown, H. Douglas. 1991. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

perspectives. J. Daniel Hess, author of [The Whole World Guide to Culture Learning](#), has observed that one can learn more by living with a family for six weeks than living in a dorm or alone in an apartment for a year. While family stays are one of the most effective tools for culture and language learning, they are also, without question, one of the most challenging dimensions of a study abroad program (for both you and the people who host you). You are expected to make a commitment to building a relationship with your host family, to participate as fully as possible in their lives and to respect their habits, lifestyle and values. This is hard work. It usually means making some significant changes in lifestyle and behavior for three to four months and forgoing much of the social life you may be accustomed to on your home campus. Nonetheless, most students who embrace this challenge realize that it results in an experience that would be impossible to have on campus (or even living alone, in an apartment in the community), and find it to be one of the most personally rewarding and academically valuable parts of the program.

Expectations for Students

Remember that there is no such thing as a typical family, neither in the US nor in your host country. Your family may consist of a retired couple, a large family with children, a single adult, or several generations living under the same roof. Most host families have been selected because of their interest in sharing their culture with an American student, not because they live in the most convenient location, have the best house, or can provide all the conveniences of your own home. Here are some tips for your home stay:

- Treat your host family as a family, not just as a place to eat and sleep.
- Make a real commitment to building a relationship with your family.
- Respect your family's values, lifestyle and customs, such as meal times, quiet times, use of television, taste in music, appropriate dress, coming home at a reasonable time, smoking restrictions, appropriate language, conversational topics, etc. (*The question a student should ask here is not, "Will my family accommodate my needs for my lifestyle and my preferences?" Or even, "What is the most I can get away with and still not offend them?" But rather, "What can I do to better fit in with my family members (and their culture) and respect their needs and their lifestyle so that I can have a deeper, more meaningful relationship with them?"*)
- Time with your family will be limited. Commit to sharing as many meals with your family as possible. Notify your family ahead of time if you won't be there for meals.
- Commit to participating as fully as possible in your family's life and their involvement in the community. This may include visits with family to churches or temples, schools, medical facilities, markets, etc.
- Take responsibility as a full member of your family (this might include, depending on what is culturally appropriate, yard work, farming chores, washing dishes, cooking, babysitting, house cleaning, shopping, etc.)
- Occasionally, throughout the semester, engage your family (or certain members of your family) in social and community activities such as movies, theater, eating out, and visits to relatives' houses or areas of cultural interest.
- Observe scrupulously the laws of your host country and community and the values of your family. Do not do anything that would embarrass, endanger or hurt your family.
- Explore theories and issues raised in the core course with your family and incorporate their perspectives into discussion sessions and writings for the course.
- Be patient. It takes time and energy to make this work, but Pitzer College has been facilitating thousands of these types of family stays throughout the world, and students almost always agree that the rewards of building a meaningful relationship with a host family make the effort worthwhile.
- If you have any concerns about your home stay, talk to your program director early on.

The Role of Program Staff

Program staff members are committed to help facilitate your intercultural learning. In order to do this they will often ask you make the hard choice for cultural immersion and appropriateness over the more familiar, easier option. This is sometimes seen by students as a lack of support, but to the contrary, our staff would be remiss if they did otherwise. When staff insist you do something on your own, in the same way the locals do, rather than doing it for you, they are

helping you to develop your own creative problem solving solutions in the new cultural context. They are, in fact, supporting you in your own culture learning and adjustment, which is their job. Staff members are not there to become your friends, but to facilitate your learning. By the end of the program you will appreciate this when you are capable of operating independently, appropriately and successfully in the new culture.

However, when you are in the midst of the cultural adjustment process it is often difficult to appreciate what the staff is doing in terms of supporting your culture learning. We hope that by emphasizing this here, you will be better able to step back and understand that when your program staff nudges you into participating more fully and appropriately in the local culture, as uncomfortable as that may be at first, they are supporting you in the best way possible. To the extent that you can recognize this and can express your appreciation to the staff, you will have a better educational experience. This is human nature. This doesn't mean you can't express concerns and offer suggestions, but please do these in a way that respects the collective wisdom of the staff and takes into account the educational goals of the program which attracted you in the first place. Seek to understand rather than to judge, both the host culture and your program staff. Give your program staff the gift of your enthusiasm and support and they will give you the gift of the best program and educational experience possible.

CULTURE LEARNING WORKSHOP

If you received this handbook, then you've already completed one out of two orientation requirements. Congratulations! The second orientation requirement is the following:



Complete the on-line Culture Learning Workshop (time requirement - approximately 3-5 hours) and email the completed short essay responses to studyabroad@pitzer.edu prior to departure for study abroad.

Instructions for the on-line version of the Culture Learning Workshop

You are expected to work through Module 1 – from Section 1.1 through Section 1.7 of the on-line workshop at <http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>. You will get the most out of this workshop if you complete each of the exercises and read the explanations for your answers. Reading the Cultural Encounter and Critical Incident sections that are sprinkled throughout will provide additional insights. While there may not be an example from the country where you will study, you should be able to extract the concepts needed to develop useful skills for understanding your host culture. Once you have completed the full Module, please respond thoughtfully to the essay questions below and send your responses to studyabroad@pitzer.edu.

1. Decide where the US and your host culture are most likely to be different in the value continuums (Individualist/Collectivist, Universalist/Particularist, High Context/Low Context or Monochronic/Polychronic) and in communication styles (linear/circular, direct/indirect, informational engagement/relational engagement etc.) Which set of differences do you anticipate having the most trouble adjusting to and what can you do to deal with this challenge?
2. According to the orientation materials what is the difference between a helpful generalization and making potentially harmful over-generalizations or stereotypes? How might this apply to your answer in Question 1?
3. Which of the other exercises did you find most useful and how will you apply what you have learned from this exercise on your semester abroad?
4. Describe the process of cultural adjustment as described in the workshop. Have you ever experienced culture shock? How did you work your way through this? What are your strategies for dealing with the inevitable culture shock when you are abroad?

CROSS-CULTURAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The following quiz serves as a Nepali culture-specific companion to the previous, culture-general section in this handbook on Cultural Immersion and Adaptation. It is designed to deal with expectations commonly held by students preparing to study in Nepal and on dilemmas and issues they often face once they arrive in the country. Both the quiz and the section on Cultural Immersion and Adaptation will help to prepare you for the challenging and exciting process of immersing yourself in Nepali life in a way that respects the values of the host culture and allows you to learn as much as possible.

Directions: Please mark each statement below as true (if it is generally true) or false (if it is generally false). Finish all of the statements here and then check your answers in the appendix.

1. ____ On the Pitzer in Nepal program, one of the most difficult physical adjustments for many students is getting used to the cold and the altitude.
2. ____ Most Nepalis are vegetarians due to their Hindu and Buddhist beliefs.
3. ____ While students planning to study abroad in Nepal often envision a more traditional, rural lifestyle, most host families now have televisions and watch them regularly.
4. ____ Since Nepali culture places such a very high value on hospitality for guests, turning down food offered to you by your host is almost always offensive.
5. ____ Women students often have a very hard time adjusting to gender roles in Nepal. For men, who are given preferential treatment in Nepali culture, it's a lot easier.
6. ____ Students who are tired of the restrictive structure of their home campus and its highly structured academic schedule may want to consider study abroad in Nepal for a more relaxed schedule and a whole semester of independent, autonomous learning.
7. ____ Since menstruation is considered ritually polluting in a high caste Hindu family, the best course of action for a female student living with such a family is to pretend that she is not having her period.
8. ____ The Nepal program setting is an ideal study abroad location for students who want to get away from air pollution, crime and other ill effects of modernization and study a people living in harmony with their environment.
9. ____ Modesty is highly valued for women in Nepali culture and women students therefore, should never wear short skirts, shorts or revealing blouses and tank tops. Men, on the other hand, have fewer cultural restrictions on dress, and are free to wear shorts and tank tops during warm weather.
10. ____ The easiest way for a student to learn if they are *not* acting in a culturally appropriate way is to ask a member of their host family.
11. ____ Most students find the level of spiritualism they encounter in the Himalayas a refreshing change from the materialism and commercialism of the west.
12. ____ A common way students inadvertently insult their host family is by locking the door to their room (or putting their valuables in a locked box) whenever they leave home.
13. ____ Nepalis perceive Americans as rich and this often colors the way they treat you. As a student however, most Nepalis will accept the fact that you do not have limitless amounts of money and interact with you accordingly.
14. ____ Despite the advantages for cultural immersion, trekking alone in many areas of the Himalayas is a high-risk activity.

15. _____ Most Nepalis are Hindus and therefore practice meditation and yoga daily, making homestays an ideal place for students to pursue these disciplines.
16. _____ Students are often disturbed and conflicted by the fact that Nepalis worship cows but kick and throw rocks at dogs; venerate rocks, trees and rivers as divine but litter indiscriminately around temples and use riverbanks as public toilets.
17. _____ US students are often surprised to find that their very strong egalitarian values are matched with similar values and behavior among the educated Nepalis. Despite caste differences for instance, which are still played out ritually, a high caste or senior language teacher on the program would never order a lower caste member of the program kitchen staff to run errands, wash clothes or do other menial tasks of a personal nature.
18. _____ When trekking, it is important for American students to carry their own pack in order not to contribute to the exploitation of Nepalis porters, and in order to save face.
19. _____ Bargaining by westerners is regarded as insulting by most Nepalis.
20. _____ It's a poor country so paying a little more than the going rate in wages to a porter, or a few more rupees for eggs or vegetables in the village is a nice gesture and should be encouraged.

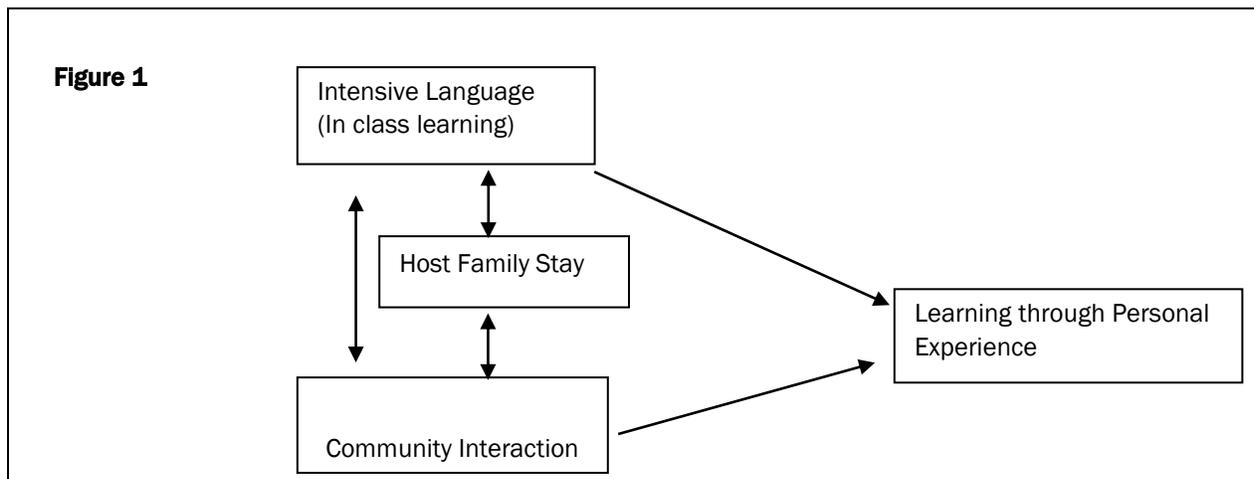
OUR EDUCATIONAL MODEL, PHILOSOPHY, AND PROGRAM STRUCTURE

In this section we review some of the basic ideas covered in previous sections as well as introduce a few new concepts all of which are essential for you to understand and accept before you make your final decision to participate on the program.

AN INTEGRATED LEARNING MODEL

Rather than thinking about the program as separate courses or classes (which is how it shows up on the transcript), we want you to begin to see the program as it really is: a connected whole where each part of the program is related to and dependent on every other part of the program, and where all these components work together to create a particular kind of interconnected learning experience.

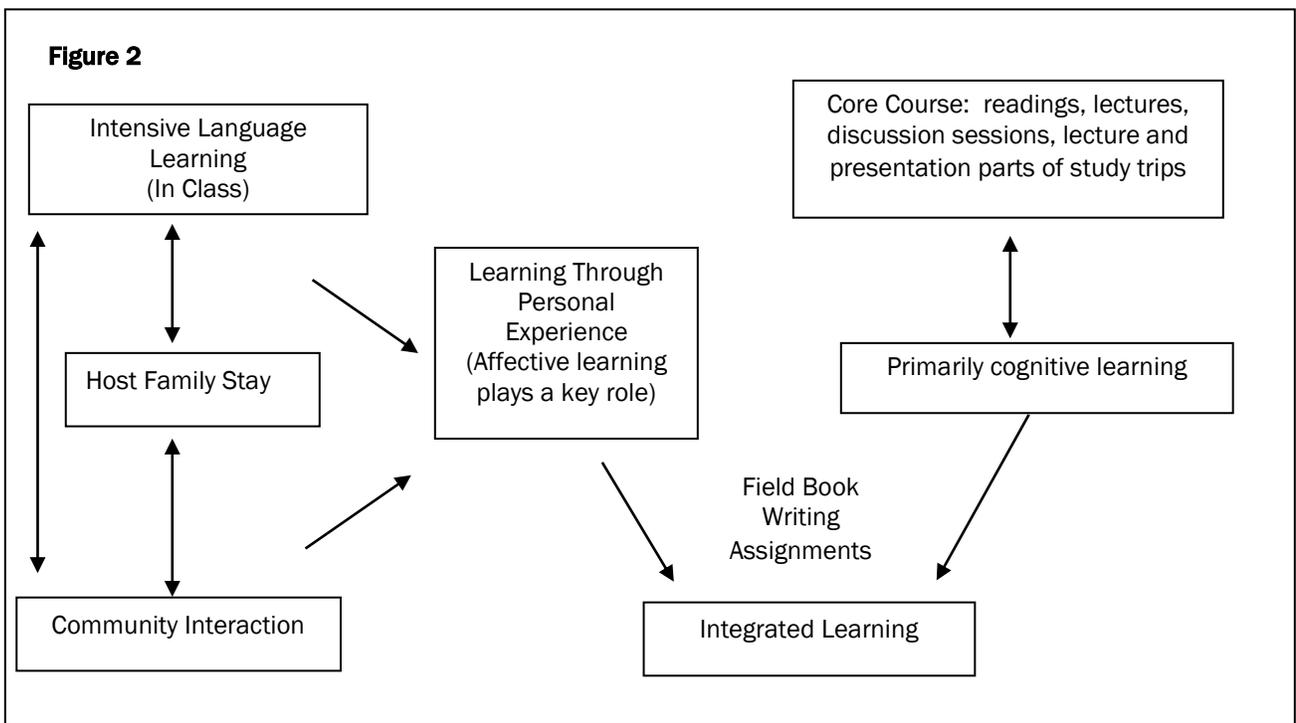
As you can see from Figure 1, intensive language instruction (in the classroom) allows you to participate fully in the life of your host family and make that part of your program into an important mode of learning. At the same time, full participation in the life of your host family allows you to develop a higher proficiency in the language than would be possible in any other living situation. As your language skills develop, your host family helps you to develop meaningful connections in the larger community. In turn, your interactions in the community enhance your language learning even more, while giving you an important context for better understanding your host family. Taken together, this part of your program (family stays, community interaction, out-of-class language learning) can be considered your *learning through personal experience*.



An important part of your learning through personal experience is affective learning, which relies on trust in personal experience and relationships. It acknowledges feelings as valuable tools in the learning process and is often subjective and very attached. Intuition and empathy play key roles in affective learning.

On the other side of the learning continuum is that part of the core course that consists of lectures and readings. This part of your learning is largely cognitive; that is, learning through objective, detached examination, where emotions are discouraged. Cognitive learning relies heavily on memorization, and analysis; it is the type of learning you typically do in a university classroom by taking and memorizing notes, library research, and literature review.

The heart of our educational model is the connection you make between your learning from personal experience in the culture, for which affective knowing plays a very important role, and your learning through core course lectures and readings, which is largely cognitive (Figure 2). In this type of connected learning, your own observations, conversations and experiences, as well as your feelings and intuitions are given equal importance to more traditional forms of classroom learning such as lectures and readings, and you are encouraged to combine the two in a process of constructing your own meaning. This can be a difficult exercise for students who have been conditioned to thinking that the only valid forms of knowing are contained in books, scholarly articles and the lecture notes, but for those who approach this with an open mind, it can also be a very empowering educational experience. You will be expected to engage in the process of integrated learning throughout the program and demonstrate this type of learning in core course writing assignments and discussion sessions. You should be excited about this type of learning if you choose to participate on this program.



An Example: Cognitive, Affective and Integrated Learning

Cognitive learning is reading about infant mortality rates in a particular country, learning some of the main economic and social causes, and hearing a lecture on the efforts of international aid organizations to provide better pre-natal health care.

Affective learning is the lump in your throat and the knot in your stomach as you sit quietly and listen, speechless, as your host mother tells you about how three of her five children died from illness between the ages of one and five. Her interpretation of why and how this happened may be quite different from what is said in the books.

Integrated learning is combining the two to arrive at your own personal understanding of infant mortality – its causes, effects and possible solutions. It is meaning you construct yourself that comes from an integration of both cognitive knowing and affective knowing. It is often learning that transforms behavior and that creates a passion for action or change. Connected learning gives a human face to statistics and abstract concepts. At the same time, it allows for a fuller and more accurate understanding of personal experience. It is balanced and whole. It is especially meaningful to you as it lies in the intersection of what you know to be true from personal experience and what you have learned in your readings and lectures.

Experiential education is not just experience. It is experience plus reflection. It is education that requires connected, integrated learning.

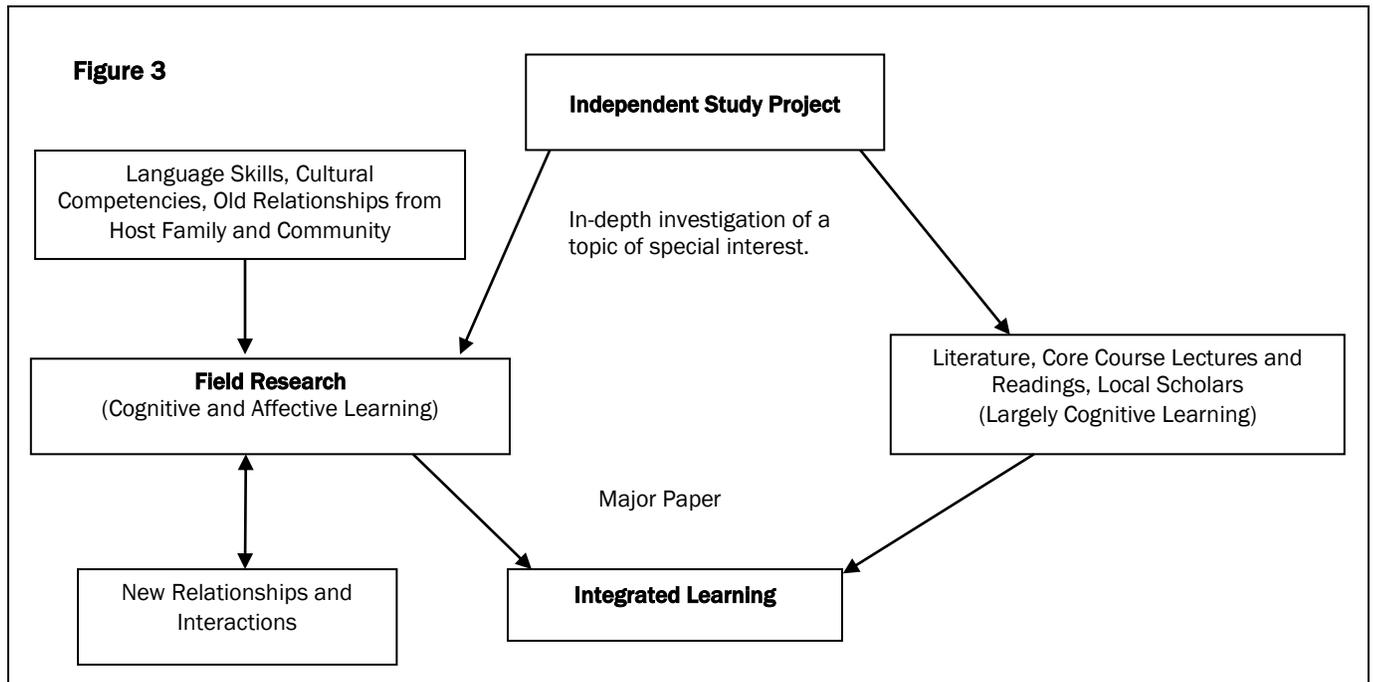
Integrated Learning and your Independent Study Project (ISP)

Please carefully review the section in this handbook on the independent study project. The ISP allows you to take one topic of special interest and pursue it in depth, usually during the last month of the program. This is the part of the program when you are called to function independently within the host culture, using your language skills and cross-cultural competencies to interact and conduct research in ways that are appropriate, successful and ethical.

The program will connect you with local experts, who, along with program staff and faculty, will help you craft a solid, feasible proposal, pick a good location, connect with local resources, and develop an appropriate methodology. As you can see in Figure 3, the ISP is another opportunity to engage in integrated learning. Reviewing the literature of your ISP topic, referring back to core course lecture notes and consulting with local scholars (largely cognitive learning) will play an important role in crafting a proposal and deciding on a location and methodology for your study. These sources will also provide important context for your final paper. The bulk of your ISP time however, will consist of field research. Here you will rely on your previous language skills and cultural competencies to interact directly with people

from the host culture who are involved in your topic. Learning here will be both affective (personal experience with people) and cognitive (surveys, questionnaires, etc.).

For your final paper, you will be expected to integrate the cognitive and affective learning you experience in your field research with learning from your interactions with local scholars, core course lectures, and the literature of your topic.



Intensive Language

The language component features small classes with intensive instruction for three to four hours a day, five days a week. During the first two weeks of the program there may be up to five hours of language class a day. You will learn grammar and vocabulary (just as you would in a class at your own college), but you will do this in a way that allows you to practice in the classroom the very features and communicative functions you will need outside the classroom in real life interactions.

Our language learning philosophy is simple: We learn the language not by studying about the language, but by using the language in the classroom, and outside the classroom, with program staff, with host family and community members, and especially with each other.

Students who commit to using the language with each other outside of class whenever possible, even when it would be easier to speak in English, consistently develop significantly higher levels of communicative competence than those who choose to speak only English with each other outside of class.

You will be expected to join with program staff and faculty in creating a host culture language speaking environment at the program office, outside the classroom, and during all program activities. Make this commitment, and the results will astonish you, we promise.

Host Family Stays

Students almost unanimously report that their stay with a host family was one of the highlights of their program and the center for much of their learning. Family stays allow you to learn much more language than you would in any other living situation. They allow you to put a human face to topics covered in your course lectures and readings. They provide a window into the culture as they include you in their daily lives and welcome you to participate in special ceremonies and events. They support you during your inevitable ups and downs as you adjust to the country and culture and help you to connect with the local community in ways that would otherwise be very difficult if not impossible to achieve.

As you can see, family stays are a key mode of learning employed by the program. As mentioned above in the section on integrated learning, all students are expected to explore issues and ideas raised in their more formal course work with their host family members and to incorporate this learning into discussion sessions and writing assignments.

INTENSITY AND STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

Pitzer programs are very intense, and you will find your life very busy and structured for much of the time you are on the program. A large amount of your time is taken up *in the classroom* by the language and core course components of the program. Outside of daily interactions with your host family and the surrounding community there is really little chance for independent learning until the Independent Study Project (ISP) component during the last three to four weeks of the program.

This structure and intensity is very important for you to understand and accept if you choose to participate on this program, especially if you are strongly interested in or focused on one particular aspect of the culture or country, such as religion or rural development, etc. These topics can be pursued in depth only during the ISP, which usually means the final three to four weeks of the program.

You have to be comfortable with this model. If you see the core course or language course as hindering your chance to head out on your own to pursue a special topic, you are in the wrong program. If you are excited about pursuing your special interest as your ISP for a shorter period of time but in the context of a solid background in the language and culture, and through the eyes of members of the host culture with whom you have formed relationships (e.g., members of your host family) then a Pitzer program is an appropriate choice for you.

Please keep in mind, therefore, that you won't be able to do everything and see everything in the country you might imagine seeing and doing. It is important for you to clarify your reasons for going, make sure they match the program structure and educational goals, and then set priorities and make good choices. Find what you are most passionate about and make that your ISP, but know that you will only be able to pursue this full-time during the last month of the program and that your other interests may have to wait for future visits to be pursued in depth. Remember, it may be possible to stay on after the program is over to pursue some of your interests. Think too, about applying for a fellowship to return after graduation.

Visitors and Independent Travel

The details of the final schedule for your program will be given to you during your on-site orientation. With this in mind, it is crucial that you **not** plan visitors or independent travel until you receive the schedule during orientation and check with your program director.

Visitors

As a rule of thumb, **having visitors during the regular program does not work**. You will be too engaged in program activities (and with homestays on weekends) to attend to a visitor properly without major conflicts arising. Participation in **all** program activities and classes is required, and guests cannot be included. Moreover, we expect you to maximize the time you spend using the language and engaging the host culture. Visitors interfere with this. The idea of playing tour guide during the program to a friend or family member may sound wonderful now, but it inevitably leads to frustration and resentment. The best time to have a visitor is right after the end of the program when your language and cultural knowledge are at their height, and you can devote full time to hosting.

Pitzer has a firm policy for all of its programs regarding visitors. Visitors cannot participate on study trips and on many other program activities. This has grown out of over thirty years of experience. Some of our key reasons for this policy include the following:

- Visitors may not understand, agree with or want to follow our expectations for cultural appropriate behavior and our commitment to abide by all local and national laws. A visitor who does not share these commitments can easily jeopardize our relationship with the host community and ability to operate the program in a particular area or country. We have no way of encouraging or enforcing this with a visitor who is not on the program for credit.
- We try on all of our programs to create an out-of-class language speaking environment in the host culture language. Visitors may not agree with this, or, as is usually the case, not have the language ability to join our commitment to this.
- Visitors may not agree with or want to follow our program guidelines for health and safety. This not only puts our students at higher risk (e.g. for gastro intestinal illness caused by eating certain foods with visitors that they wouldn't normally eat), but often undermines the program's credibility in the eyes of the students, especially when the visitor has spent considerable time in the country or region and insists they know what is best.

- A visitor will often throw off group dynamics. For some students it often takes a month or two before they are willing to open up and share with the group, and through that, contribute to our collaborative learning efforts. The breakthrough often happens on a study trip. A new addition to the group will often interfere with this process. Trip leaders may also be uncomfortable with an outsider in the group, and that could affect their interaction with the group.
- When a student has a friend or family member visit, they naturally want to be a good host and/or put in the time and effort necessary to maintain an important personal relationship. This often results in the student pulling away from group activities and other important educational goals of the program.
- Having a visitor is not fair to the trip leader.
 - A visitor who falls into any of the above concerns (and most do) requires extra time, effort and worry on the part of the group leader.
 - A visitor or who does not agree with the trip leader's decisions often ends up, sometime inadvertently, undermining the leader's credibility with the group.
 - If a trip leader is not comfortable with a visitor participating in certain group activities, they end up in a very awkward and difficult position: they either must ask the visitor not to participate, and risk angering the hosting student, or they allow the visitor to participate even though they have misgivings.
- If a visitor is given permission to join the group and then gets injured or sick (which is not unlikely if the visitor chooses not to follow the program's health or safety guidelines), Pitzer would be responsible.
- Finally, before they are allowed to participate on a program, Pitzer students sign several legally binding agreements, including health forms in which they reveal all medical conditions, a waiver, and a *Conditions of Participation* document concerning respect for staff, other students, the host culture, local and national laws, and the educational goals of the program. Visitors do not sign these documents. This creates liability issues for Pitzer, and compromises our ability to 1) minimize or head-off potential health problems and 2) hold all members in the group accountable for conducting themselves in ways that honor the educational goals of the program and our relationship with the host culture.

Independent Travel

Independent travel during the program may not be possible due to health, safety, and educational considerations. All travel within the host country must be sanctioned and/or supervised by the program staff. Independent travel outside of the host country is only possible after the end of the semester.

PROGRAM RULES, GUIDELINES AND RESTRICTIONS: THREE BASIC PRINCIPLES

During on-site orientation you will be given a comprehensive list of program guidelines, rules and recommendations. We will not go over these in detail here, but we would like to discuss the three principles on which all of these are based. You should agree with all three of these principles if you choose to participate in this program.

1. Health and Safety

Your health and safety is our top priority. Certain program rules and guidelines are given to you in order to keep you healthy and safe. Please take these seriously, even if they appear silly or an overreaction. They are the result of decades of experience and our work with thousands of students. Failure to follow certain safety and health guidelines could result in your dismissal from the program.

2. Educational Goals and Philosophy

By now you are quite aware of the important roles cultural immersion and cultural appropriateness play in our educational model. Certain program rules and restrictions will be based on this.

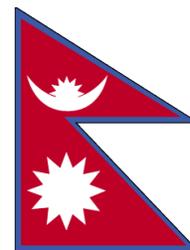
3. Our Relationship of Trust with the Host Community University and Government

Pitzer College does not have any inherent right to operate in the countries where we are based. We are allowed to do so by the host communities, the university and the government. In return, our hosts simply ask that we respect their culture and their laws. We have pledged to do so and we invite you to join us in this relationship of trust. Please join us in our efforts to learn about and respect all local and national laws, as well as the values and cultural norms of the communities where we live and study. This is a fundamental prerequisite for participation on the program.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

LOCATION

Nepal is in the midst of an exciting time of social and political change as the country transitions from what was, until recently, the world's only Hindu monarchy to a secular democracy with increased rights for women, ethnic groups and other minorities. A successful and peaceful election to a constitutional assembly was held in April 2008. As their first official act, the delegates to this assembly declared Nepal a democratic republic and asked the King to leave the palace. Parliament has spent the last three years drafting a new constitution and deciding such important issues as increased representation for people of the Terai and growing demands to create a federation of semi-autonomous states within Nepal. The new constitution is set to be finalized by May 28, 2011. Issues such as rural development, rural to urban migration, health care, education, sustainable tourism and many others remain paramount.



Host Institution

Pitzer in Nepal is affiliated with Tribhuvan University, Nepal's premier national institution for higher education, and its Office of International Relations.

COURSES AND CREDITS

	Course Credits	Semester Units
Core Course: Nepal Studies	1.0	4
Intensive Nepali Language	2.0	8
Independent Study Project	1.0	4
Semester Total	4.0	16

Grades for this program will be recorded on a Pitzer College transcript and included in the Pitzer GPA. Students are required to participate fully in all program components and are not allowed to withdraw from individual courses. Students must take all courses for a letter grade.

Students who wish to receive credit towards their major for a particular course should consult their academic adviser for guidelines. At Pitzer College the field group decides which courses may be counted towards a major or minor graduation requirement. The Pitzer registrar in conjunction with various field groups decides which courses may be counted towards general graduation requirements. Some schools, field groups, or departments may wish to see a syllabus, samples of coursework, texts, or other program materials to make a determination. Check before you go.

The Core Course: Nepal Studies

The course combines lectures, readings, discussions, and extensive fieldbook writing with the more experiential components of family stays, study trips, and field assignments. Lectures are given by professors from Tribhuvan University as well as scholars and specialists from government and private organizations. Through the course, you will become acquainted with some of the main historical, social, cultural, and political issues fundamental to Nepal's modern identity. Two extended family stays, one in the Kathmandu Valley and one in a mountain village, are also important parts of the course and allow you to give a human face to the ideas presented in readings and lectures. Assignments focus on socio-cultural studies, kinship and family relations, development, environmental issues, health, and religion, requiring you to use your Nepali language skills and integrate your personal experience in the culture with classroom learning. See also the *Fieldbook* section of this handbook.

Intensive Nepali Language

The key to realizing your educational goals in Nepal will be your ability to communicate in Nepali. Drawing on some of the best language teachers in the country and with a 1:3 teacher-student ratio, Pitzer in Nepal offers a highly effective language program. Classes take place in village homes, bazaars, and along mountain pathways as well as in small classrooms at your program house. A vital component of your learning will be the commitment you make, along with staff and fellow students, to creating a Nepali-speaking environment both in and out of class.

Independent Study Project

You will explore in-depth an aspect of Nepal through an independent study. Projects generally take place during the last month of the program, although students are encouraged to plan a project for which information can be gathered during the Kathmandu or rural homestay part of the program as well. Projects are guided by local scholars or specialists and program staff and require a significant analytical component in the form of a written report. The program strongly recommends you select a project that involves field research, oral interviews, ethnography, and other techniques that facilitate cultural immersion and use of your Nepali language over those involving library research. Topic selection may be limited due to available resources and local conditions. See also the *Independent Study Project* section of this handbook.

STUDY TRIPS

To deepen your understanding of topics covered in the core course, you will travel to various locations in Nepal. Destinations may change from semester to semester due to educational or safety reasons, but past excursions have included:

Half-day trips in the Kathmandu Valley

Explore important Hindu and Buddhist temples, NGO sites, palaces, markets, festivals, pilgrimage sites, ancient cities, and the studios of local craftsmen.

Teral Field Study Trip

Students get a chance to view big game in Chitwan National Park. This park on the India-Nepal border is home to elephants, one-horned rhino, and royal Bengal tigers. See firsthand how Nepal is attempting to integrate traditional subsistence farming activities in and around the park with sound resource management and ecological development.

Pokhara/Bandipur Field Study Trip

This section includes a chance to explore in and around Pokhara itself as well as the mid-hill village of Bandipur. Located on the ancient India-Tibet trade route between the major city centers of Kathmandu and Pokhara, the town of Bandipur offers students a good look in to the culture as well as the architectural designs that has made the Newars throughout the country famous. Pokhara, known for its stunning panoramic view of the Annapurna Himal, will provide an opportunity to visit a village of caste musicians as well as a firsthand look at the *Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP)*, an internationally acclaimed project that attempts to take a balanced approach to traditional subsistence farming activities, tourism management, conservation, village health, development, and education through involving local villagers in decision making and implementation.

Trek and Village Stay

During the third month of the program, students will trek to and live in a middle hill village of either Gurungs or Sherpa/Tamangs. Each student will have a homestay with a subsistence farming family. Language classes will continue during this time in the mornings with afternoons available for students to participate in village life and explore topics of interest.

FAMILY STAYS

The heart of the program is the family stay near Kathmandu and a middle hill village. The chance to become a member of these Nepali families and to develop a personal relationship with the individual family members is a privilege seldom experienced by most trekkers, diplomats or researchers. The families often speak little or no English, and live in brick or rock houses with mud floors, little furniture, and no indoor bathrooms or running water. There is little chance of privacy. Lifestyles are heavily informed by subsistence farming practices and by traditional Hindu beliefs. Students often consider the family stays to be the most meaningful dimension of the program.

PRE-DEPARTURE READING

Description and Objectives

The purpose of this reading list and related assignments is to allow you an opportunity to begin to grapple with the question of what it means to be Nepali, and what it will mean to you, personally and culturally, to enter into and participate in the world of a Nepali. To assist in this process, two of the suggested readings offer an introductory look at the processes of second language acquisition and cross-cultural adaptation. Other readings cover various aspects of Nepali geography, history, politics, culture, religion, literature, and economics, along with the process of modernization and development. A principle goal here is to equip yourself with enthusiasm, knowledge, questions, tools, and strategies that can help to prepare you for and enrich your experience in Nepal.

Readings

Obviously you can't read everything we recommend. For this reason, short descriptions are provided to allow you to choose those readings that you think would be most relevant to your own interests and educational goals for the program.

Bennett, Lynn. 1983. *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters*. New York: Columbia University Press. (The best book out there on Brahmin-Chetri culture and Nepalese village Hinduism, researched in villages that are very similar to the situation you will find with your host family and surrounding community in the Kathmandu Valley.)

Storti, Craig. 1989. *The Art of Crossing Cultures*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press. (A well-written and fun-to-read exploration of the personal challenges inherent in the cross-cultural experience. Lots of excerpts from the works of great authors.)

Coburn, Broughton. 1991. *Nepali Aama: Portrait of a Nepalese Hill Woman*. Chico, CA: Moon Publications Inc. (A delightful collection of quotes and quality photographs of an incredibly witty and wise Gurung woman who takes on an American Peace Corps worker as her adopted son.)

Fisher, James F. 1990. *Sherpas: Reflections on Change in Himalayan Nepal*. Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press. (An ethnography of contemporary Solu-Khumbu Sherpas showing how they engage with a variety of modernizing influences, especially education and tourism. Twenty years old now but still relevant to the lived experience of Sherpas you will meet during the program.)

Hutt, Michael. 1991. *Himalayan Voices: An Introduction to Modern Nepali Literature*. Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press. (An English language anthology of Nepali poems and short stories with insightful commentary. All of Nepal's important literary figures are represented.)

Brown, H. Douglas. 1991. *Breaking the Language Barrier*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press. (Basic principles of language acquisition presented in lay-terms for anyone wishing to learn a second language. The author is one of the best in the field.)

Scott, Barbara J. 1993. *The Violet Shyness of Their Eyes: Notes from Nepal*. Corvallis, OR: CALYX Books (A good example of the kind of reflection and writing a student might do in Nepal. Scott's account of her two years in Nepal as a teacher gives the reader a nice balance between focusing inward on "me" and outward on "Nepal" and illustrates how both perspectives can work together to provide a deeper more meaningful learning experience.)

Thapa, Manjushree. 2007. *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy*. Penguin Press. (available on Amazon). A personal account of recent political events in Nepal including the palace massacre and the Maoist insurrection.

Liechty, Mark. 2003. *Suitably Modern*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press (A fascinating account of the emergence of middle-class culture in the Kathmandu Valley over the last forty years and very relevant to what you will experience in your host families.)

Shakya, Sujeev. 2009. *Unleashing Nepal*. Penguin Books. (A very insightful look at Nepal's economy and the way it is and has been closely linked to Nepal's political history, covering the eventful period of the first peoples movement in 1990, the Maoist civil war, the royal coup, the second people's movement, the comprehensive peace agreement and the current constitutional assembly. Provides interesting perspectives on Nepal's poverty and failure to develop to its full potential with concrete suggestions for how the country might proceed.)

Most of these books can be found on-line or in university libraries, good book stores or ordered directly from the publisher. *Nepali Aama, Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters* and perhaps a few of the older books listed here may be out of print and hard to find. For that reason we have posted select chapters from some of these books and some additional articles on line at: <http://www.pitzer.edu/study-abroad/pitzer-students/acceptance/nepal-articles/>.

Please note that these readings and assignments are optional. You will not be tested on this material or expected to submit the assignments given below. However, to the extent that you can incorporate materials from these readings into your written work on the program you will undoubtedly have a richer learning experience and very likely receive higher marks for your work.

If you just don't know where to begin in terms of selecting from the above recommendations, here are our recommendations:

1. The **articles by Lynn Bennett and Linda Stone** (posted on line; a substitute for *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters* if you can't get the book) are particularly relevant to the experience you will have with your host families in Kathmandu and essential reading before arrival. Even though these articles are based on research conducted several decades ago in Nepal, much of the material they contain is quite relevant to what you will experience in your homestay community in Kathmandu. This material will provide you with a good foundation for Brahmin-Chettri culture and village Hinduism (including concepts of illness and curing and the symbolism of food in Hindu culture). This is the dominant tradition of much of the Himalayan region, and even though this tradition is being contested socially and politically (as is any cultural tradition anywhere), it continues to have a profound influence on life among all the ethnic groups (both Hindu and Buddhist) throughout the Himalayan region. You will find that many of the ideas and concepts (and even much of the detail), play out in a variety of ways in the families and villages you will experience on your program.
2. For something on Nepal's many ethnic groups, their migration history and the issues that surround Nepal's incredible ethnic pluralism in the context of (until recently) a dominant Hindu state, the article posted on-line by Pradhan, "**Ethnicity and Caste in a Pluralistic Society**" provides an excellent introduction.. This provides important context for understanding Nepal's current political situation and many of the issues facing the current constitutional assembly as they attempt to finish the new constitution.
3. The **article by Subba** (also on line) provides an excellent historical background and analysis of the issues facing Nepalis in India - specifically in the Darjeeling region- as they struggle to preserve their Nepali language and culture while simultaneously attempting to establish their own identity as Indian citizens, separate from Nepalis in Nepal. This is an especially important article for spring program students to read because, conditions permitting, the program may offer a study trip to Darjeeling during the spring 2012 semester.
4. If you are interested in reading something on Kathmandu's emerging middle class, the **work by Mark Liechty** (several chapters on line, but get the book if the topic excites you) is really interesting and considered excellent scholarship. His book includes chapters on consumerism, fashion, media, and youth culture and most of this material should be applicable to your host family and community in Balkot. The chapter entitled, *Modern Nepali History and Rise of the Middle Class* gives a fascinating look at the recent changes in Kathmandu that produced conditions conducive to the emergence of a middle class.
5. If you want to go deeper into Nepal's modern history and recent events from politics to development and the economy, I recommend **Unleashing Nepal by Sujeev Shakya**, recently published, and available at Amazon.
6. The two more general books listed in the book list, ***The Art of Crossing Cultures*** (<http://nicholasbrealey.com/boston/>) and ***Breaking the Language Barrier*** are applicable to any cross-cultural and language learning situation and remain highly recommended. *The Art of Crossing Cultures*, in particular, is a fun read and provides a valuable set of strategies and ideas for sensitively adapting to a new culture. *Breaking the Language Barrier* provides an excellent base of knowledge and lots of practical strategies that should help to make you a more successful language learner in Nepal.
7. Finally, in terms of better understanding our positionality as American students in Nepal, that is, the privilege we have based on such things as race, nationality, education, class, our passport, etc., and the effects this may have on our relationships with locals, I recommend the following articles posted on-line: Richard Slimbach's ***Mindful Traveler***, Peggy McIntosh's famous ***White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack***, and Jeff Greenwald's ***A Fistful of Rupees: Coping with begging on Third World Trails***.

In addition to the above, several internet sites provide access to the Nepal press. We recommend the following:

Nepali Times <http://nepalitimes.com/> is the most popular English language weekly news magazine.

Ekantipur <http://www.ekantipur.com> is a good, on-line English daily. This website also provides a link to the Kathmandu Post, the most widely read English language daily in Kathmandu.

Republica <http://e.myrepublica.com/> is another good English newspaper.

Himal Southasia <http://www.himalmag.com/> comes out monthly and provides insightful articles on South Asia. It often has articles covering the recent political changes in Nepal and is highly recommended.

Optional Assignments

These assignments are optional but they are offered as aids to help you begin to engage with many of the concepts and ideas covered in these readings that will be important to your learning on the program, and to equip you so you can have a richer learning experience once you arrive.

Reading Logs

A reading log is neither an outline used to prepare for an exam nor a response paper written in traditional paragraph prose. While part of it may be a list of key points or your intellectual response to an idea or argument, its main purpose is to record your immediate reactions (thoughts, questions and feelings) to the readings in a journal or log format. Your log could include:

- Questions you want to pursue in Nepal
- Things that excite you
- Fears or doubts about living in Nepal and immersing yourself into Nepali life
- Places you want to visit, events you'd like to participate in, people you'd like to meet
- Reflections
- One-Liners
- Key points that are important to you and your interests
- Quotes you may want to carry with you
- Ideas
- Independent Study Project Possibilities

We recommend that you complete a reading log for each book or article you read. A nice balance might be the following: 1) the Bennett/Stone articles, 2) *The Art of Crossing Cultures*, and 3) either Coburn's *Nepali Aama*, Fisher's *Sherpas: Reflections on Change in Himalayan Nepal*, Scott's *The Violet Shyness of Their Eyes* or Thapa's *Forget Kathmandu*. Whether you prefer longhand or computer, do your logs *at the same time* as you are doing your readings, not after, so that you can capture your reactions while they are fresh.

As a guide to help you find meaning in the material you choose to read, you may want to focus in on one or more of the following: 1) Those aspects of each book that are of particular interest to you. 2) Those aspects of each book that resonate with something from your past (a course, a trip abroad, a language learning or cross-cultural experience). 3) Those parts of each book that beckon you into the future. 4) Those parts of each book that evoke strong emotions within you (excitement, anger, confusion, dismay, delight, disbelief, a yearning etc.).

1. **Descriptive Essay:** During your program in Nepal, you will be experiencing life in a community that is predominantly Brahmin-Chettri as described by Bennett and Stone, and in a middle hill village of Gurungs (as described in Coburn), or Sherpa/Tamangs (see Fisher). Using seeds planted in your reading logs, write a descriptive essay or letter to a close family member or friend in which you describe in *rich detail* what you *expect* life to be like in one of these locations based on your readings. You should draw from the writings of one of the authors mentioned above, write in depth about several features of the places and people described by each, and show evidence in your writing that you have reflected on the readings enough to formulate and describe possible worries, concerns and excitements, and to pose questions. It will be valuable to go back to this essay towards the end of the program to see how much your actual experience matched up with your expectations based on the readings.
2. **Narrative Story:** *The Art of Crossing Cultures* uses a rich sampling of quotes from literature to describe and illustrate a number of possible pitfalls and triumphs inherent in attempting to adapt to another culture. It then goes on to describe strategies and a model for successful adjustment. Using this book as your guide, write a short story about an American college student attempting to immerse herself into Nepali (Brahmin – Chettri) culture as

described in your readings, especially by Bennett and Stone, and also by Scott. It's up to you to decide whether your sojourner is successful or not, but do include at least two "type-one" and two "type-two" incidents, each revolving around a different aspect of Brahmin - Chetri culture. Again, towards the end of the program, when you have actually experienced several of these types of critical incidents, it might be valuable to reflect on your adjustment experience in light of the principles outlined in Storti's book.

3. **Literature Essay:** Read through Michael Hutt's book on Nepali literature. Select one author that speaks to you in the short story section and another who speaks to you in the poetry section. Prepare an essay on the writings of your two authors. Include background information on each author, the particular genre of Nepali literature represented by the author's work, and your own personal reactions to one or more of the author's pieces. If possible, try to relate the themes of your chosen works to other readings from this list.
4. **Language Learning:** After reading Brown's book, do the self-assessments for preferred learning styles in the appendix. Using these as a basis, write an essay on your anticipated Nepali language learning experience. How would you describe your own learning style? Which of Brown's suggestions and insights ring true for you in terms of previous language learning experiences you may have had? What suggestions offered in the book do you think will be helpful to you? How can insights into your own preferred learning style help to explain successes and failures you've had with foreign languages in the past, and suggest possible strategies for effective language learning in Nepal?
5. **Focus Questions:** After reading through as many of the books on this reading list as possible (especially Fisher's account of contemporary Sherpa life, Scott's account of her two years in Nepal as a teacher and Shakya's account of recent historic processes, devise three to four questions that would lend themselves to interesting essays or independent study projects concerning modernization, tourism, and development, and the effects these changes may be having on traditional cultures. Pick the question that interests you the most to answer in a three to four page essay. Submit all of your questions along with the essay.

THE FIELDBOOK

An important component of the core course on Pitzer programs is the fieldbook. The fieldbook recognizes that writing is one of the deepest and most precise measures of experience and an activity that both generates and reflects learning. Highly demanding of your time and intellect, the fieldbook asks you to integrate the theoretical and experiential components of your program through a series of structured writing assignments. It helps you to clarify and articulate your feelings, thoughts, insights, and beliefs as they evolve over the program and provides a forum for discussion of those ideas with program staff and participants. The fieldbook format and content will vary slightly in each Pitzer program, so you will receive program-specific guidelines as part of your in-country orientation. Here are answers to frequently asked questions.

What's the difference between the fieldbook and a personal journal?

The fieldbook is not a personal journal. It is a series of structured writing assignments that are submitted throughout the semester for a grade. We encourage you to keep a separate journal of your personal experience (that is neither read nor graded by staff) in which you record your day-to-day experiences, conversations, observations, meaningful quotes, thoughts and feelings. You should draw from your personal journal along with notes from readings and lectures, to craft fieldbook assignments.

How can the fieldbook enhance rather than limit cultural immersion?

A concern of some students is that the fieldbook will interfere with time to participate in the culture. It is important to remember that experiential education is a process made up of two essential components: the experience and the process of learning associated with that experience. A good cultural immersion program takes this into account and provides a careful balance between time to immerse in the culture and time to pull back and reflect on what that immersion means. The fieldbook will require a significant amount of your out-of-class time because it will play a key role in your cultural immersion learning by requiring you to interact with members of the host culture in order to complete assignments. You will be asked to reflect upon and analyze your personal experience in the culture in light of core course readings, lectures and discussions.

How relevant will the assignments be to what I am experiencing in the country?

To a certain extent, the fieldbook is prescriptive in that it asks you to demonstrate what you have learned about specific topics we think are important. However, the fieldbook is also carefully structured to provide you with a variety of opportunities to write about aspects of your own experience in the culture that you find relevant and interesting. This is accomplished in two important ways. First, the sequence and timing of assignments are designed to be in synch with your language level and what you are experiencing during various parts of the program. Second, the fieldbook calls for several types of assignments, each of which allows you to draw from different aspects of your personal experience and express your learning in different ways.

Fieldbook Essays

The fieldbook often incorporates both analytical and descriptive writing within a single assignment. Many assignments consist of a focus (theme-driven) question that asks you to explore and analyze important local and national issues from a variety of perspectives. Assignments may offer several choices, or ask you to explore a specific topic. In all cases, the assignment asks you to do this in a way that examines the topic in light of lectures, reading material and your own, relevant interactions with members of the host culture. While dealing with your personal interactions and observations, it is often helpful to approach this descriptively as well as analytically; this involves describing in rich detail certain aspects of your experience and your observations in order to convey them with depth and clarity. While assignments often ask you to address specific topics, they usually offer some latitude on what particular aspects of your experience and observations you choose to include.

Design Your Own

The design your own section, as the name implies, allows you to choose a topic of personal interest that is related to the host culture and country. Assignments in this section allow you to explore your topic and document your learning in a variety of ways.

Shared Presentations

The shared presentations section asks you to explore a topic in-depth by interviewing member of the host community and then sharing with the whole group. Thus, you become the specialist within the group on the particular topic. As each topic chosen by different students will vary, the presentation will allow all students to benefit from the knowledge gained by each student.

How is the fieldbook graded?

Pitzer's cultural immersion learning model blends rigorous in-class studies with hands-on experience in the culture to allow you to arrive at a deeper understanding of issues and your own experience. The fieldbook serves as a key way for program staff to both facilitate and assess this kind of learning, and thus makes up a significant part of your grade for the core course. While each type of assignment will have slightly different grading criteria, in general, assessment will be based on certain key criteria that reflect the educational goals of the program:

- Evidence that you have used your language to participate in family life, explore the community, develop relationships and explore issues;
- Evidence that you have thoughtfully reflected on your experience in light of readings, lectures and discussions;
- Evidence that you have made careful observations, described them in rich detail, and distinguished them from interpretations;
- Evidence that you have explored important local and national issues from a variety of perspectives and when appropriate, examined your own assumptions about these issues.

Who will respond to and grade my fieldbook entries?

Fieldbook entries are assessed and graded by program staff who have been trained to facilitate and evaluate the kind of engaged, connected learning the fieldbook is designed to measure. Their wide knowledge of the country and culture, their understanding of the educational goals of the program, and their sense of the specific objectives of any particular assignment allow them to assess your fieldbook entries in formative ways that continue to promote reflection and heightened awareness of the topic throughout the semester. To this end, you are welcomed and encouraged to rewrite fieldbook entries in consultation with the program staff. Rewrites should address comments on the original entry and include additional exploration of the topic with staff, fellow students, faculty and community members as appropriate.

What can I expect to achieve through the fieldbook?

When done thoughtfully, the fieldbook will enhance your learning. It will provide you with a record of your experience as your perspective changes throughout the semester, and it will allow you to create your own connected knowledge as you combine lectures and readings with personal experience to arrive at a more meaningful learning than either alone could provide. Finally, it will allow the program staff to assess your learning in ways that take into account your personal experience in the culture (something more traditional forms of assessment cannot do) and in ways that will be accepted for credit by your home institution.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT

The Independent Study Project (ISP) allows you to take one topic of special interest and explore it in depth. It presents a unique opportunity to utilize and build upon your language skills and cross-cultural competencies as you form new relationships with members of the host culture related to your field of study and systematically explore your topic of interest. If you use the ISP period as an opportunity to enhance cultural immersion learning, you can expect to achieve some important outcomes: your language skills are likely to blossom as you tackle more challenging conversational topics with a wider range of people; your process of cultural adjustment will most likely accelerate as you function more fully and independently in the new culture; and your overall confidence will very likely increase dramatically as you use your language to forge new relationships and negotiate the many challenges of conducting field research in a new culture.

Types of Projects

The ISP may take one of several forms depending on your interests, available resources in the host culture, feasibility of the project, and the credit requirements of your home institution.

Research Project

Use field research techniques that facilitate cultural immersion and language learning (oral interviews, ethnographies, case histories) to investigate a question or issue of personal interest that brings you a deeper understanding of the host culture.

Internship

Work within a private, public or educational organization to gain insights into how a particular social issue is being addressed. Use your language to interact with both agency professionals and the clients served by the agency. Analyze the effectiveness of the organization as well as the issue it is addressing.

Apprenticeship/Internship in the Arts

Work with an artist, dance troupe, theatre group, etc., to both learn a new art form and better understand its role in contemporary culture.

Requirements

All projects, regardless of form and topic require the following:

1. A focused research question or topic that is viable and feasible given your progress in the language, your experience with field research, the time allotted and the available resources.
2. An appropriate methodology for exploring your topic.
3. A significant period of hands-on fieldwork that requires interaction with members of the host culture who are directly involved in your study topic.
4. A major paper reflecting on the experience.

Grading

Grading will take into account the process (e.g., proposal, methodology, relationship building, field work, internship performance, presentation of findings to program staff and students) as well as the final paper.

The Independent Study Project

ISP proposals will be developed and approved in consultation with program staff, faculty, and local scholars or specialists. The relationships you form with program staff and local experts who help you to develop your proposal and guide your project are crucial and should be considered an important part of the learning process for the course. Depending on the project, its location and the resources available, actual fieldwork may be closely guided by program staff and/or local experts, or conducted entirely independently. Guidance for writing your final paper will be provided by your project adviser or program staff as requested and necessary. Program staff must approve ISP topics and locations. Some locations and topics will not be approved because of safety, health or other concerns.

Library Research

The ISP is not library research. Exploring literature that is relevant to your topic will be an important step in formulating your proposal and in writing up your work in your final ISP paper, but the bulk of your ISP time should be spent using your language and cross-cultural skills to conduct actual field research.

Interaction with Local Experts

Members of the host culture who have studied your topic often serve as important resources in picking a topic, choosing a location, developing a proposal with appropriate methodology, and, for placing your own work in the context of a larger body of work when you write your final paper. However, interviewing experts who have studied your topic, even when they are members of the host culture, should not be your primary means of collecting data and should not take up the bulk of your ISP time. The majority of your fieldwork should consist of hands-on work with people who are directly involved in your topic of interest. For example, the host culture university professor or NGO director, who is an expert on the role of women in village development, may provide you with important guidance for your project, but should not be seen as a substitute for working directly with village women actually involved in development efforts.

The Use of Interpreters, Questionnaires or Surveys

The use of a bilingual informant to help you translate interviews or conversations you tape may be appropriate but you should design your project and plan your questions in ways that allow you to use and develop your own language skills. Project topics and methodology (questionnaires, surveys, etc.) should be designed to fit your language level whenever possible. Remember, the goal here is for you to learn about your area of interest in ways that allow you to interact directly with people involved in your topic. The relationships you form and the learning and growth you experience while doing this (which will be recorded in your final paper) will very likely become one of the most valuable and rewarding aspects of the program for you.

Ethical Guidelines for the ISP

Students participating in ISPs abroad are held to high standards of academic and professional conduct, including adhering to the Ethical Standards for the Engagement of Communities Abroad (see the Appendix).

Summary

1. Pick a topic you are passionate about and that is feasible.
2. Do something you can't do at your home institution.
3. Do something that enhances your language and culture learning.
4. Do something that promotes interaction with members of the host culture who are directly involved in your topic of interest.



Independent Study Project papers are due 30 days after the program departure date. ISP papers should be emailed to studyabroad@pitzer.edu in Word or .pdf format. Travel plans are not an acceptable reason for late submissions.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

The **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)** provide up-to-date health information on their websites at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm> and <http://www.who.int/ith>.

Immunizations

Nepal does not currently require any certificate of immunizations for entry, but other countries along your route may. For this reason, and for your own records, you should have an official record of all your immunizations from your doctor or health clinic. **Contact your doctor or local county health clinic** to set up a schedule for your shots. Some immunizations come in a series that may take weeks or even months to complete.



All of the immunizations recommended below afford partial or full protection against diseases that still occur frequently in Nepal. Without an up-to-date immunization, any of these diseases could have serious, potentially life threatening consequences. **Please consult your doctor. Unless there is a medical reason why you shouldn't receive any particular immunization, we urge you to follow the recommendations below.**

Typhoid

This vaccination, in either the oral or the injectable form is **highly recommended**; this is a serious and widespread disease in Nepal.

Polio

Highly recommended if you haven't had a booster in the last five years. Enhanced Inactivated Polio Vaccine (eIPV) is recommended for this dose. [The CDC recommends that this additional dose of eIPV be received only once during the adult years.]

Diphtheria-Tetanus

Good for 10 years; **highly recommended** if you haven't had one in the last five years.

Hepatitis A

Infectious Hepatitis (Type A) is a viral disease of the liver that is transmitted primarily by the fecal-oral route via water or contaminated food. Hepatitis A is rampant in Nepal and serious cases that can keep you in bed for up to a month are common among Nepalis and foreigners. The **Hepatitis A vaccine (Havrix)** is recommended for persons who plan to travel repeatedly to or reside for long periods in high risk areas. It is **highly recommended (in place of immune globulin) for all students on the Pitzer College in Nepal program**. The first dose provides adequate protection beginning four weeks after it is administered and lasting six to 12 months. Another dose is recommended six to 12 months after the first to provide long-term protection that will last for at least four years and maybe (as research results come in) much longer. A simultaneous dose of immune globulin is necessary *only* if you travel to a high risk area *less* than four weeks after your initial dose of the Hepatitis A vaccine, before it becomes completely effective. The best course of action is to get both doses of the Hepatitis A vaccine before you leave. If this is not possible, it makes sense to get your first dose exactly one month before you go abroad so as to assure adequate protection from the time you arrive until the end of your program, without having to take IG. For persons who are allergic to the Hepatitis vaccine or otherwise elect not to receive it, immune globulin (5cc's) is still a viable option. You should get 5cc's of immune globulin just a few days before you leave the US to assure maximum effectiveness and coverage for your entire trip (up to four months). There is some concern that taking immune globulin for Hepatitis A at the same time or too close to some of your other immunizations may reduce their effectiveness. For this reason, if you elect to get IG rather than the Hepatitis A vaccine, we suggest that you complete all of your other immunizations at least one month before the beginning of your program, and then take your immune globulin just a few days before departure.

Tuberculosis

A TB Skin Test is **highly recommended** before leaving home and again after returning from the program. A change in the skin test indicates exposure and will alert you to the need for observation by a physician.

Malaria

Malaria is a serious, potentially lethal disease that still occurs in the Terai (flatlands at the base of the Himalayas) and in other tropical lowland areas of throughout the year. It does not occur in Kathmandu, and other hill and mountain areas above 3,900 ft. in elevation, so it is **not** necessary to consider prophylaxis for most of the program. Clinics in Kathmandu that specialize in tropical medicine and work extensively with foreign visitors to Nepal no longer

recommend taking malaria prophylaxis for the area of Chitwan National Park where we visit during the fall semester. However, for spring students, malaria prophylaxis is still recommended since the program visits another area of the Terai, Lumbini, during that semester. For all students, although unlikely, exposure is possible during your independent study period should you choose to work or travel in the lowlands, so if that is a possibility for you, please plan accordingly. Since there is no vaccine for malaria, drug prophylaxis is **recommended. The program recommends spring students bring enough prophylaxis for a one week stay in a malaria area (e.g., 16 pills if you use Malarone - See below) and that both spring and fall students who plan to conduct their independent study project in the Terai, bring sufficient prophylaxis for an additional three to four weeks in a malarial area. You would need to bring more if you plan to travel in malarial areas of Nepal or South Asia before or after the program. Equally important, when you are in a mosquito area, liberal use of insect repellent, protective clothing (loose, long-sleeve shirts and full-length pants) and mosquito nets for sleeping are essential. The program provides you with mosquito nets.**

The CDC now considers the entire Indian subcontinent a “Chloroquine-Resistant Area” and recommends either Malarone, Lariam (Mefloquine), or Doxycycline as effective malarial prophylaxis for the region. Lariam and Malarone may not be available on-site.

The most frequently recommended of these drugs by US physicians is now **Malarone**. It is a combination of two drugs (atovaquone and proguanil), and considered to be the safest and most effective of the three possible prophylactic drugs for malaria. No pattern of significant side effects has been reported. The dosage for Malarone is 1 adult tablet (250 mg atovaquone/100 mg proguanil) once a day, beginning 1 or 2 days before travel to the malaria-risk area, continuing while there and for 7 days after leaving the malaria-risk area.

Lariam is less expensive than Malarone, but significant, sometimes serious side effects have been reported by previous students and other travelers. As such, Malarone is regarded by most travel clinics and tropical medicine docs as the drug of choice. If, in consultation with your health care provider, you do decide to do use Lariam, one 250 mg pill is taken orally, once a week, starting one week before entering an infected area, continued while in the area, and for four weeks after leaving the infected area. **Important Note: You should not take Ciprofloxin (commonly prescribed in Nepal for bacterial dysentery) while taking Lariam. Severe side-effects from this combination of drugs are possible.**

Doxycycline is another option – and the only option that may be easily available locally - but while taking it, one may become extremely photosensitive and prolonged sun-exposure must be avoided by the use of hats, protective clothing and sun block lotion. Women who take Doxycycline for prolonged periods of time also increase their risk of developing vaginal yeast infections and should discuss this possibility with their doctor. The dosage for Doxycycline is 100 mg every day, beginning the day before entering a malarial area, while there, and continuing for four weeks after leaving.

All of these drugs are potentially dangerous for people with certain medical conditions and should be taken only after consulting your doctor.

Most major Asian cities en route to Nepal (Bangkok, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the airports in Calcutta and Delhi) do *not* have a malaria problem.

Consult your doctor and consider the latest information from the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/travelers/index.html> along with your own travel and independent study plans to decide on a prophylactic treatment plan that is best for you.

Cholera

A shot is only **recommended** for those with compromised gastric conditions such as ulcers, but **optional** for others due to the very low chance of contacting this disease, and serious doubts about the effectiveness of the vaccination.

Rabies Prophylaxis

Dog bites during the course of the program have been rare and can usually be prevented with a little awareness and proper training. However, **rabies is widespread amongst the rodent, monkey and dog population in Kathmandu and the local health clinics that specialize in tropical medicine and work extensively with foreign visitors to Nepal are recommending students get the Rabies Prophylaxis before arrival.**

Meningitis

Meningococcal disease (bacterial meningitis) is a bacterial infection in the lining of the brain or spinal cord, which is transmitted through respiratory droplets when an infected person sneezes or coughs on you. Until very recently, there

was a year-round risk of this disease in Nepal and areas of the Indian Himalaya. Cases among foreigners were not uncommon, especially for those who interacted closely with the local population. Additionally, there are occasional outbreaks of this disease among college students in the US. Pitzer continues to **highly recommend** a Meningococcal vaccine for students on the program. Good for one year. (See the CDC web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html> for additional information.)

Japanese Encephalitis

This is **highly recommended** by travel clinics in Nepal. We **highly recommend** this vaccination especially for students on the fall program, given that a small number of Japanese Encephalitis cases have been reported during the monsoon season in the Kathmandu Valley. This is a mosquito-borne viral disease that occurs in lowland rice growing areas, and usually during or right after the monsoon season. The mosquitoes that transmit this disease usually bite in the late afternoon and early evening so the same precautions used to prevent malaria (insect repellents, protective clothing, and mosquito nets for sleeping) will be helpful in preventing Japanese Encephalitis. The risk is probably very small but there is an effective vaccine, JE-VAX, which is licensed and available in the US. The vaccine consists of three shots given over a one month period and **should be seriously considered** in consultation with your doctor and the latest information from the CDC in Atlanta. **A in Kathmandu at the CIWEC clinic in a single dose injection for \$42.**

Hepatitis B

This type of hepatitis is transmitted through body fluids such as blood and semen and is a much more serious form of the disease than type A (above). While there are compelling cultural, health and legal reasons for avoiding sexual contact or intravenous drug use in Nepal, the need for an emergency blood transfusion is possible for anyone and this vaccination is **highly recommended**. Three shots are necessary for full protection although partial immunity is acquired after the first two, which are administered one month apart. The third shot is given six months after the first shot. If you cannot complete the series before you leave, you may consider getting the first two shots before leaving and the third shot after your return to the US. Please remember that in both the fall and spring programs you will be in village areas during the third month of the program and, depending on the location of your independent study project, possibly during most of the fourth month as well, so your series of shots must be timed accordingly.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES FOR STAYING HEALTHY

What follows is the most thorough list of preventative measures we can possibly think of that will still allow you to identify with and participate in the lives of the people of Nepal. In fact, the majority of these health guidelines pertain to western style food in restaurants. As a general rule-of-thumb, and contrary to what most would think, Nepali food in Nepali homes is much safer than any type of food in restaurants; and Nepali lodges and tea stalls, where you can see the food being prepared, are much safer than nicer looking western restaurants where anything can happen, out-of-sight, in the kitchens. While some intestinal problems are inevitable, these suggestions, if followed conscientiously, should allow you to avoid any serious illness and to be enough in control of your environment that if you do get sick, you can recover quickly and completely.

Resistance

The concept of resistance to the common diseases in the Himalayan region including amoebic dysentery, typhoid, cholera, bacillary dysentery, giardia, worms, and hepatitis is still poorly understood. While you will certainly meet foreigners who have been in the area for years and *claim* to have built up resistance to most of these diseases, we have worked fairly extensively with sick Nepalis in Kathmandu and in the hills, and their most common complaint is gastro-intestinal. **The concept of the locals being immune to gastro-intestinal diseases is clearly a myth.**

Of course, malnutrition, which afflicts many Nepalis, weakens the body's defenses and makes one more susceptible to all of these diseases. We strongly believe then, that the best policy is to be as careful as possible while maintaining good health with a proper diet, enough sleep, and plenty of exercise. On a program such as ours, where we are trying to get as close as possible to the common person, we will still, no matter how cautious, be exposed to enough of these organisms to occasionally become sick. However, if we maintain a good healthy diet and take as many precautions as possible so that we won't continuously be infected, we will be giving our bodies the best chance possible to recover on their own and perhaps, over the months, begin to develop some resistance.

The important thing is to be in control of our own health. We don't want to throw all caution to the wind because this increases the chances of our bodies becoming so continuously bombarded with infectious organisms that our natural defenses break down and we become either seriously or continuously ill. **Being as cautious as possible does not preclude giving our body a chance to develop a degree of resistance, rather it increases the chances.**

General health precautions for students will be covered thoroughly during the on-site orientation immediately after arrival. To supplement the above guidelines, the *Health Information for Travelers to Nepal* from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is included in the back of this handbook.

Water and Food Precautions

Most diseases in the Himalayas that can give you trouble are carried in either water or food that has been contaminated by infected human or animal feces. Prevention is the name of the game and our number one priority.

Water

Purification methods in order of effectiveness:

1. **Filter and boil** - filtering removes particulate matter, such as clays that may upset your stomach, but the filters available in Nepal do not remove the organisms that cause disease. Boiling for 10 minutes kills all the disease causing bacteria viruses and parasites. It has been found more effective to filter first and then boil as filters are easily contaminated. It is actually best to filter, boil and then serve the water from the same container (i.e. large tea pot) in which it was boiled.
2. **Boil without filtering** - again, filtering alone with the filters available in Nepal does not purify water, boiling alone does.
3. **Treatment with iodine** - only when it's impossible to boil water. Iodine kills most organisms, but it's not clear how effective it is against viruses such as the virus that causes infectious hepatitis.
 - a) Liquid iodine (tincture or Lugols) 2 drops per 8 ounces (for 2% iodine) and wait 10 to 30 minutes.
 - b) Iodine Tablets - 2 tablets per quart; let dissolve and wait for 20 minutes.
Note: Add a Vitamin C tablet to neutralize the taste of the iodine.
4. **Chlorine and Halazone are not effective.**

When is Water Safe to Drink?

Only when it has been boiled or iodized as described above. The rule of thumb is to never drink water unless you have **seen** it boiled or iodized (this would include water from streams, unless you see it flowing off a glacier). Why? 1) Often, as you trek, you will come across clear, mountain streams falling thousands of feet down vertical cliffs. Certainly this is safe - but are you 100% sure? Usually, after climbing for a day, you will find that somewhere along its course that stream runs through a village, croplands, or animal pastures. Also, you never know whether or not yaks or sheep may be pastured during the summer at the source of your stream, even up to 16,500 feet. 2) **Boiling means different things to different people:** In some families it meant just heating it up without actually boiling, until we explained that for our students it had to be steaming and bubbling. As we said before, we just wouldn't risk our health and drink the water unless we have actually seen it boiling. This goes especially for hotels and restaurants - even when they **claim** it is boiled.

Water Containers

It is not uncommon for water to be boiled, cooled, and then poured into bottles or glasses or even filters that had just been washed with unboiled water. This sort of defeats the purpose. This is also why hotel water is often unsafe even when it is boiled. Also, when purifying water with iodine make sure the edges of your glass or lip of your canteen are either completely dry or exposed to the iodized water.

Unexpected Sources of Unsafe Water

Some of these may seem extreme to you but, again, our policy when it comes to health is to give it top priority and be 100% sure.

1. **Chyaang (Jaar in Nepali)** - This local beer is usually strained out from the fermenting grain with cold or warm, but unboiled, water and the grain, when spread out to ferment, is usually covered with flies to begin with. **Remember: Alcohol will not kill disease-causing organisms in a liquid state.** Alcohol only disinfects when it acts as a desiccating agent. (This is why if the nurse swabs your arm with alcohol and gives you a shot **before it dries**, it's not killing the germs.) So beware of Chyaang.

2. **Ice cubes** - Never unless made from purified water.
3. **Ice cream** - Too risky. Peace Corps tested ice cream in Kathmandu and found only the US Embassy's to be safe. Milk used to make ice cream has almost always been thinned with water and the scooper is rinsed in contaminated water between servings.
4. **Buttermilk** - This excellent drink is available in the high country from herders, but is thinned out with unboiled water in the process of making butter. Use iodine.
5. **Milk** - Again, all the milk you buy in Nepal, and all the milk you get in the village, has been thinned with water. Milk should always be heated to the boiling point anyway, as a preventative against TB, but since it has been **diluted with water**, it must be **boiled for 10 minutes** or **purified with iodine**. Milk in bottles or "Western" type hotels is probably **not** boiled.
6. **Brushing teeth** - Use purified water; you'll inevitably swallow some. Keep your toothbrush in a clean, closed container. Don't lay it down on sinks or basins.
7. **Bathing** - keep your mouth closed. Practice in the shower before you arrive on the program.
8. **Soft drinks** - Beware of the "home-bottled" ones sold from carts. One Indian reporter called these "bottled Cholera." Coca Cola, Star brands, Fanta, Limca and 7-Up are safe if served in the bottle. Never accept any of these drinks if they are brought to you already poured into a glass because it may have been rinsed in unboiled water.
9. **Locally distilled alcoholic beverages (Rakshi)** - The distilling process (not the alcohol) probably kills all the organisms, but make sure it is served undiluted and in a safe container. Add iodine just to be sure.
10. **Food in restaurants** - Make sure it is served on a dry plate. Sometimes plates are rinsed in fresh water and not thoroughly dried just before food is served on them. Solution: Eat only in restaurants where you can see the whole process from pot to **clean and dry plate** or ask the host to dry your plate thoroughly first.
11. **Sauces and relishes (chutney, achar)** - usually made from fresh water or uncooked fruits or vegetables - ask before eating, and avoid when in doubt.
12. **Chiya (milk tea)** - This is another drink that most western health experts consider safe, but this is not always the case. Many of the tea stalls just pour hot (**but not boiling**) Chiya into wet glasses that were just rinsed in a large pot or even in a puddle out back. Also, if the tea is boiled first and then sugar and milk poured into a glass or cup, you are taking a risk - the sugar was probably exposed to flies and the milk may not have been boiled. Finally, if rinsed in cold water or exposed to flies, as is often the case, the tea strainer itself can contaminate your carefully prepared tea. Only when the sugar, milk, and tea are all boiled **together** for 10 minutes (the traditional Nepali way) and then poured into a clean dry cup through a clean dry tea strainer is tea safe. This will be the case at the program house and with your families but usually not at tea stalls and restaurants. You'll probably want to carry your own metal cup and small metal tea strainer (supplied by the program) when trekking or visiting your local tea shop. This will allow you to enjoy the delightful social aspects of the many tea shops throughout Nepal without compromising your health. The second, but less preferable, alternative here is to use iodine - but it's no fun having to wait 10 minutes and then end up with cold tea!
13. **Water used for cleansing wounds** should be boiled and left to cool, or iodized first.

Food

As with water, the rule of thumb when dealing with food is to be **100% sure or don't eat it**. Although the change in food and spices alone will cause some minor distress to your stomach until you become adjusted, we are primarily concerned with fecal contamination. Food is so contaminated either by unpurified water, fecal matter in the soil, fecal matter on the hands or beneath the fingernails of the server or eater, or fecal matter from flies.

So, food that has been thoroughly fried, boiled or steamed is safe as long as it has not been contaminated by unclean hands, flies, or water on plates or serving spoons before it enters your mouth. This is easy to control in your families or in the smaller shops where you can see the food cooked and served. You can easily ask your host or shopkeeper to dry the freshly washed serving spoon or plate, (have them heat it over the fire, not just towel-dry it) and you can easily turn down food that has had flies on it. So, **don't eat it unless you have seen it cooked, prepared, and served to you**. A

Peace Corps doctor in Nepal told us that worm cysts and bacteria spores don't die when towel-dried; so plates, etc. should ideally be rinsed in boiling or iodized water or dried in direct sunlight for 15 minutes to half an hour. The many new intermediate-priced restaurants that cater to Westerners on low budgets are the highest risks, in our opinion. You don't see the food prepared, yet you can be sure they don't practice the same health standards as the real expensive restaurants, the four- and five-star hotels, or as your families, where you can see all. Check out the cooking areas of some of these restaurants, and you'll see what we mean.

When traveling, it is advisable to carry a cup, small plate, and 1 quart of purified water. Make sure you see the food cooked and use your own utensils when they are needed. Where possible, interact with the cook. Ask permission to observe the preparation of the meal. This will allow you to decide if it is safe to eat at all, and to have the cook serve the food directly you're your own plate when you feel it is necessary. Not only does this keep you healthy, it allows you to practice your Nepali and learn a few good recipes. While this would be ridiculous in America, it rarely causes a problem in Nepal, especially when eating in homes or village/roadside tea shops where the cooking is normally done right in front of you. **Again, if you can't see it cooked, prepared, and served to you, don't eat it.**

When eating with most Nepali families, in local shops, or at batties (inns), you will want to eat with your right hand. Make sure you keep your nails cut short and clean behind them daily. Wash and air-dry your hands thoroughly before eating.

Fruits and vegetables

If they can be peeled, they can be eaten raw, but make **sure there are no breaks or bruises in the skin**. All others must be cooked or soaked in strong iodized water (2-3 times the strength of drinking water) before eating. Peel it, cook it, or don't eat it. Don't eat salad. Don't eat raw fruits or vegetables unless you have seen them peeled with clean hands. The safest method is to wash items with iodized water, rinse in boiled water and **then** peel. This is not necessary with most thick-skinned fruits. If you must have raw salad, use washed and dried tomato and cucumber that you prepare yourself. It is not clear how effective iodine is for lettuce. It may not penetrate into all the crinkles, especially if they are blocked by dirt.

Sweets and pastries (jalebies, etc.)

Only safe if you are there when they are being cooked and then if handled by clean hands and not exposed to flies.

Eggs

Peel boiled eggs **yourself**. Never accept a hard-boiled egg that has already been peeled.

Yogurt

This is painful, especially since yogurt has such a reputation as a "health" food but most yogurt is not safe either because it was made in a contaminated container or because it was exposed to flies. Once the surface has been exposed to flies it's really not possible to "scrape" it off without contaminating the lower part. Safe yogurt is available, however, either with your families after you have taught them how to prepare it hygienically, or occasionally, at our program house.

Lasi

A popular drink made from yogurt and unboiled water. It is not safe.

Loaf bread

Risky even when wrapped. Usually exposed to flies before wrapped. Eat Nepali flat bread (roti) that you see cooked in your families' own kitchen.

Milk

Must be heated to boiling point if not pasteurized, and boiled for 10 minutes if it has come in contact with water.

Flattened rice (chiurra), parched corn or wheat and other packed and unpacked snacks or festival foods found in the bazaars

Risky if not freshly prepared in front of you.

Cakes and pies in restaurants

These have usually been exposed to flies even though they appear safe or are in a glass case. Eat only when you see them carried, still warm, directly from the kitchen.

Peanuts

These are very risky to eat right off the street. Safe if shelled and roasted before eating.

Achar (sauces and relishes)

Only the name brands from India are safe. All others should be avoided. With your families, eat only those acharas that have been cooked.

Cheese

From Swiss, German and Dutch - sponsored dairies are okay but you must cut off the outside layer before eating.

Churpi (dried Yak cheese)

Unsafe.

Ice cream

Unsafe, except for US Embassy, USAID or American Club, all of which are off-limits to us. Some Indian brands may be OK; but not if served with an ice cream scooper rinsed in unboiled water – check with program staff.

Noodle dishes

Noodles are rinsed in cold water **after** cooking. This includes spaghetti, chowmein, etc. Only eat these if not rinsed, or rinsed in boiled and cooled water, or refried thoroughly before cooking.

Roti (flat bread)

Fine when freshly prepared, unless tossed on the mud floor to cool! Be extremely careful of pancakes - make sure that the batter was made with boiled water or that they are cooked all the way through.

If your family has a cook or food handler, make sure he or she practices good health habits and understands the importance of clean hands and not coughing into the food. Go easy on heavily spiced and chilled food the first few weeks.

Other Good Health Habits

Hookworm

The soil in many areas is contaminated by hookworm. **Don't go barefoot**, even on the paved streets of Kathmandu where it would be easy to cut yourself and get infected or step in infected cow dung. This is especially important in Nepali homes that have mud floors – don't walk around barefoot immediately after the floor is rubbed down with cow dung.

Swimming

Don't swallow any water.

Coughing

Be careful of people with a cough - they may be carrying TB.

Insects, including flies, leeches, body lice, mites, bedbugs, ticks, and mosquitoes

Mosquito nets are available in Kathmandu, and are essential just before and during monsoons to protect against a variety of bugs. Tuck around edges of your bedding before sunset. You may want to treat mattress and bed board with an insecticide and to apply insect repellent to exposed surfaces of your body when needed. Covering mattresses and sleeping mats with a nylon trap big enough to wrap around the sides of the mattress is a great way to keep out fleas and bed bugs. You won't see these tiny, pesky critters when you examine the mattress or bedding material, because they hide in the folds and creases, but you will know they are there when they start biting in the middle of the night. Best to be overly cautious and take precautions before your sleep is interrupted! (See section below for detailed information on preventing mosquito bites.)

Leeches

Only during monsoons at middle elevations along the trails and in forested areas. Usually crawl up boots and gain entrance at your ankles but may enter through eyeholes. To remove: hold a match to them; use a cigarette or put salt or iodine to them.

Leech repellents

1. Local habit: roll of tobacco in socks.
2. Our own: a ring of rock salt in mosquito netting around ankles on boots - slows them down so you can walk twice as far before you stop and pull them off.
3. Soak clothing in a concentrated salt solution.
4. Dibutyl Phthalate (listed by Steve Bezruchka - [Trekking in Nepal](#)): effective for four hours if applied to skin and for two weeks if 30 ml. are sprayed onto the clothes.)

We haven't found leeches to be as bad as they are cracked up to be and hardly worth the trouble of a complex repellent. They only occur during the monsoon months of June through September and usually disappear after just a few hours of hot mountain sun, which warms the temperature and dries out the vegetation. The exception: off the trail after dark in the rain - BEWARE!

Animal bites

Dogs often threaten but can usually be frightened if you pretend to pick up a stone and assertively face them with hand drawn back. Be careful when walking through strange areas at night - especially in the high country near herder's huts as they often unchain their Tibetan mastiffs. (You ought to carry a stick.) If bitten in Kathmandu, capture or observe the dog alive for seven to ten days - if it's still healthy, it didn't have rabies. If you aren't able to observe the dog for 10 days (and you better be **100% sure** it's the same dog), you must get Rabies shots which are available in Kathmandu. In the hills: If the animal acted unusual and the attack was unprovoked, get yourself and the animal, if possible, to Kathmandu as quickly as possible. Rabies prophylaxis is available (see section on "Immunizations").

Throughout the Himalayas temple complexes are likely to be inhabited by troops of monkeys. For the most part they avoid humans, but may approach you if they see you have food. It is important not to carry or eat food in front of them. Avoid them when possible, be careful not to make direct eye contact, and never bear your teeth, even in smile, as they see this as a sign of aggression.

Feet

Make sure footwear is broken in if possible. Plenty of thick wool socks for hiking, moleskin for preventing blisters and foot powder to prevent fungus, will keep those feet in good walking shape.

Diarrhea

The onset is usually sudden and frequently starts at night. Occasionally there is a feeling of lassitude with dizziness and light-headedness. Stomach cramps or fainting may occur.

Treatment: Note number and nature of stools. Lie down and **rest** until symptoms improve. Begin taking clear fluids to prevent dehydration (the biggest problem with diarrhea). Purified water or weak tea (no milk) mixed with 1/2 teaspoon salt and two tablespoons sugar is recommended for 24 to 36 hours. Too much sugar, or other solid foods including milk and soups will irritate the intestinal linings and prolong the problem. Incidentally, 80% of cholera cases are healed in five days without antibiotics simply by replenishment of body fluids and complete bed rest. Some people take Kaopectate for mild diarrhea while others (Bezruchka) say it doesn't work. Remember that most diarrhea is self-limiting. If stomach cramps are severe or inconvenience is extreme (e.g., on a long bus ride) take a teaspoon of paregoric or Lomotil tablets. Do not take Lomotil lightly, it is a serious, potentially dangerous drug (can cause intestinal fecal impaction). Diarrhea is the body's way of naturally flushing out what is disturbing it. Lomotil interferes with this mechanism and only serves to stop you up. It is better to treat the parasite/dysentery/etc. and the accompanying symptoms and disorders (cramps, dehydration, etc.). **Only** take Lomotil in the case of not being able to reach a bathroom for a long period of time, such as on an all-day bus trip.

In the event of a student getting diarrhea, Nepal is stocked with a couple different kinds of electrolyte fluids. However, most of these are bland. As such, bringing a few powder packets of Gatorade would be a much more tasteful alternative. Even if the need never arises, the packets might come in handy during a trek. As it begins to let up, go back to solid foods gradually. First try vegetable or meat broths with salt and if that works, small amounts of bland solid food.

If it seems like dysentery (stool often contains blood and mucus, often accompanied by cramps, fever and/or nausea), and doesn't clear up after several days, begin treatment with drugs/antibiotics as recommended by your doctor. In these more severe cases, you should have a stool examination for ova or parasites. This should be done when returning to America even if you haven't been sick. It is important not to take antibiotics every time you have diarrhea. Allow your

body to heal itself, or control the symptoms as suggested above. Use antibiotics only when severe symptoms of dysentery occur. More importantly, maintain good health habits and prevent dysentery!

AIDS

A serious health concern for travelers to Nepal is AIDS. The primary mode of transmission of the AIDS virus in this part of the world is through sexual contact. Practicing safe sex will reduce your risk of contracting AIDS but not eliminate it. Abstinence is the only sure way to eliminate the risk of contracting HIV from sexual activity. For health, cultural and educational reasons, the program strongly recommends that students practice abstinence for the time they are on the program.

Zika Virus

The Zika Virus is spreading rapidly worldwide. There are no reported cases of locally acquired Zika virus in Nepal to date (October 11, 2016), but the Aedes mosquito, which transmits the virus, can be found across a wide swathe of South and South East Asia, including Nepal. According to the WHO, 13 countries in Southeast Asia (including Singapore and Thailand) have reported cases of Zika this year. The possibility for the virus spreading to Nepal is real and in fact, quite likely.

There is now conclusive scientific evidence that the virus can cause microcephaly in the fetus and other poor pregnancy outcomes, and that Zika is occasionally related to a rare nervous disorder in adults called Guillain – Barre syndrome, which can cause paralysis or death. The CDC has also confirmed that Zika can be spread through sexual contact and blood. Sexual transmission is of particular concern for men who have been in a Zika area who might spread the virus to their pregnant partner or to a partner who may be planning to get pregnant in the near future.

There is no conclusive scientific evidence on how long the virus stays in someone once they have been infected, and therefore, how long an infected woman might be at risk for fetal abnormalities if she is pregnant or wants to become pregnant, and how long an infected man would be able to infect a partner through sexual contact. The WHO and CDC recommendations to practice safer sex or abstinence for six months after possible exposure is, admittedly, based on limited evidence, but seems to be accepted by most of the medical and public health community. There is currently no evidence that there is risk beyond six months.

Given the possibility of Zika spreading to Nepal before or during the spring 2017 program, and the fact that it is present in some of the countries students may travel through en-route to the program, it is important for students to be aware of Zika and take precautions. There is currently no vaccine or medicine for Zika so the best way to avoid the disease is to avoid areas where Zika is being actively spread. If travel to a Zika area is unavoidable, or the disease does appear in Nepal, it is important to do everything possible to avoid mosquito bites (see *Prevention of Mosquito Bites* below) and to avoid pregnancy and practice safer sex or abstinence (see *CDC Zika and Sexual Transmission* link below) while in the area and for six months thereafter.

We are monitoring the situation closely and will keep you updated as new information comes in. We also encourage you to keep informed by monitoring the relevant CDC and WHO websites at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/> and <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/zika/en/> and other reliable sources of information:

Zika Virus Net – Updates on Zika from many sources including CDC, WHO, PAHO, and many others
<http://www.zikavirusnet.com/guidelines.html>

WHO Zika Fact Sheet – <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/zika/en/>

CDC Zika and Sexual Transmission – <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/transmission/sexual-transmission.html>

CDC scientific studies on sexual transmission and how long Zika may stay in system after infection –
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6539e1.htm?s_cid=mm6539e1_w

Prevention of Mosquito Bites

Besides malaria, there is risk of several other mosquito borne diseases in the lower areas of Nepal such as the Terai and the lower river valleys below 3000 feet in elevation. This is of particular concern during the warm months (April – June) and monsoon season (June - October). Japanese Encephalitis is especially prevalent in the western Terai but locally acquired cases have now been reported in the eastern Terai and the Kathmandu Valley. More and more cases of dengue are being reported in the Terai as well. As mentioned above, there have been no locally acquired cases of Zika reported yet, but this virus has reached parts of SE Asia and could easily spread to Nepal. All Pitzer students are

strongly encouraged to take the following precautions for preventing mosquito bites whenever they are in areas where mosquito borne disease is possible, especially on the Terai trip at any time of year, and in Kathmandu and Pokhara between April and October.

The best way to reduce mosquitoes is to eliminate the places where the mosquito lays her eggs, like artificial containers that hold water in and around the home. Outdoors, clean water containers like pet and animal watering containers, flower planter dishes or cover water storage barrels. Look for standing water indoors such as in vases with fresh flowers and clean at least once a week. Students may want to work with their host family or lodge owner (when traveling) to eliminate these types of places that attract mosquitos.

The adult mosquitoes like to bite inside as well as around homes, during the day and at night when the lights are on. To protect yourself, use repellent on your skin while indoors or out. When possible, wear long sleeves and pants for additional protection. Also, make sure window and door screens are secure and without holes. If available, use air-conditioning.

If someone in your house is ill with one of the mosquito borne diseases, take extra precautions to prevent mosquitoes from biting the patient and going on to bite others in the household. Sleep under a mosquito bed net, eliminate mosquitoes you find indoors and wear repellent!

Preventing bites can be difficult, but it is important as you can get sick after just one bite. Follow these steps to reduce the chances that you will be bitten by mosquitoes during your trip.

- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use EPA-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE, also called para-menthane-diol [PMD]), or IR3535. Always use as directed.
 - Pregnant and breastfeeding women can use all EPA-registered insect repellents, including DEET, according to the product label.
 - Most repellents, including DEET, can be used on children older than 2 months. (OLE should not be used on children younger than 3 years.)
 - See: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/opprpref/insect/> for a list of repellent products approved by the EPA
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). You can buy pre-treated clothing and gear or treat them yourself.
- Stay in places with air conditioning and window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if air conditioned or screened rooms are not available or if sleeping outdoors.
- Mosquito netting can be used to cover babies younger than 2 months old in carriers, strollers, or cribs to protect them from mosquito bites.



Have complete physical and dental examinations before you go.

TRAVELING WITH MEDICATION

If you have a health condition that requires medication you will need to plan ahead for traveling. Usually it is necessary to take adequate supplies of medications and copies of prescriptions with you. Shipping may be unreliable and some medications may not be available even with a local physician's prescription. **Although many over-the-counter medicines may be carried internationally, some cannot. Medications prescribed in the US may be unlicensed or controlled substances not only in your destination country but in countries along your route.** Some medications have restrictions on the amount that can be carried through customs. For details of US regulations, consult the following web

site: <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/know-before-you-go/prohibited-and-restricted-items>. You should also check with the consulate of your host country about any restrictions or special procedures required for transporting prescriptions into the country. Be sure to find out before you go. The following websites provide information to assist you in your research.

US Department of State - Your Health Abroad

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/health.html>

OSAC US Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security - Traveling with Medication

<https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=17386>

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2014/chapter-2-the-pre-travel-consultation/travel-health-kits>

Transportation Security Administration - TSA Cares Help Line

<http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/travelers-disabilities-and-medical-conditions>

Travelers may call TSA Cares toll free 866.289.9673 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Weekends and Holidays 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time.

For more info

For a more thorough discussion of medical problems in the region and their treatment see:

Stephen Bezruchka.M.D., [A Guide to Trekking in Nepal](#)

Sahayogi Prakashan, [Kathmandu, Nepal](#)

James A. Wilkerson, Md., [Medicine for Mountaineering](#). The Mountaineers, Seattle, WA (contains a good chapter on diagnosis and treatment of intestinal disorders)

For additional health information refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel> and the World Health Organization website at <http://www.who.int/ith>.

Health Summary

Here are the key points to remember for staying healthy in Nepal:

1. We each have a responsibility to ourselves and to the group as a whole to try our best to stay healthy.

Be 100% sure of water (even when they say it's boiled) and all drinks including tea or iodize them - even in expensive restaurants. Being 100% sure means seeing it boiled yourself. **Unless you are 100% sure, assume all tap and well water to be contaminated, as well as most bottled water. Program staff will advise you as to which brands of bottled water are safe.**
2. Besides your drinking water, avoid other sources of contaminated water including: ice cubes, fruit or yogurt drinks mixed with water, any other food products or drinks that are mixed with water.
3. Avoid wet plates, cups, glasses and utensils. Make sure your food and drink is served in clean and dry plates, cups, etc. Remember, it's often the cup in which the tea or other drink is served (or the wet plate in which the food was served) that will cause you problems. In the case of tea or other drinks, if in doubt, play it safe and use iodine; or, better yet, refuse it - even in expensive restaurants.
4. Use boiled or bottled water for brushing teeth and try not to swallow water when you shower.
5. When ordering a drink at a restaurant or bar, ask that the original bottle be brought to your table and opened in front of you. Then, you can pour it into a clean, dry glass, or (in the case of soft drinks or beers) drink straight from the bottle if necessary. This minimizes the chance that your drink might be poured into a glass that has just been

rinsed in tap water. This also minimizes the chance that your drink can be tampered with (Ruffies, Micky Finns, etc.)

6. Avoid mixed alcoholic drinks (often have juices, water, ice, raw herbs or other unsafe items mixed in) in favor of beer, wine and soft drinks.
7. Avoid fruit drinks unless you are sure they come in a bottle or container from a reputable company, or have been made with well cleaned fruit and haven't had water or ice mixed in.
8. Keep away from raw vegetables, fruits that you can't peel yourself and peanuts.
9. Avoid restaurants in Nepal as much as possible in favor of eating with families.
10. Avoid "street food." Nepal culture is not a street food culture.
11. Avoid salads period . . . like the plague. . . even in expensive restaurants or Westerners' homes.
12. Don't eat food that could have possibly been exposed to flies before you come upon the scene, e.g., most breads and sweets, even if they are wrapped, have been exposed to flies. In other words, eat only food that has been cooked while you wait.
13. Avoid at all costs those "hepatitis traps" . . . inexpensive restaurants, hotels, bars, tea shops, etc., etc., that cater to the wandering "drugged out type," "*Hey, I'm into the East, man*" travelers. There is a big difference between this type of inexpensive place and the inexpensive places that locals frequent. Very important.
14. Don't get into the trap of being paranoid of offending your host at the expense of your health. If you're not 100% sure – politely refuse it (or in the case of drinks, iodize it), the people really worth having as friends won't get offended.
15. Have a complete physical examination before you go. Be aware of and prevent possible problems. **Let the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs and your program sponsor know if you are on any medications, have any allergies, or any other medical conditions that could possibly require accommodation while you are abroad.** Plan to take adequate supplies of medications and copies of medical prescriptions with you. See the section *Traveling with Medication*.
16. Get your teeth taken care of and put into good shape before you leave. There are dentists in Kathmandu in case of emergencies, but quality and sterile procedures vary greatly.
17. Eat well over the summer or winter break, exercise (hiking, if possible) and come on the program rested and fit so your body can fight off disease.
18. These are not meant as a substitute for carrying with you, understanding and following the more detailed health rules at the beginning of this section of the handbook. But, if you do anything, at least commit these to memory and carry them out. After a few days it will all become second nature, and you won't feel like you're "hung-up" about health. In fact, following just these rules will, we guarantee it, multiply exponentially your chances of staying healthy in Asia.

Well, we hope we haven't scared you off. We've given you our own cautious guidelines but we really don't think they will diminish your experience. Indeed, they will certainly add to it if you stay healthy. Be especially careful to follow these rules if you are in Nepal before or after the program. You will have to work at staying healthy but it is worth it. You can also see that the healthiest place to eat will probably be with your families. We will give each family certain guidelines and a thorough health orientation but it will be up to you to handle those awkward, yet certainly delightful, first few days when your ideas of health and your family's ideas of hospitality may clash head on.

INSURANCE

HEALTH INSURANCE

Each student is responsible for obtaining a policy that will provide comprehensive health coverage both in the US and abroad for the duration of their program. Students may need to return to the US unexpectedly. All students must also have emergency medical and accident coverage for the duration of their program.

Regardless of what type of insurance you have, you will almost always have to pay cash upfront at clinics and hospitals abroad, collect the receipts for all expenses and submit them to your insurance company for reimbursement.

The insurance policy available to you through your school may provide adequate coverage abroad, but it is your responsibility to call the company to discuss the specifics of your study abroad program to ensure that you will indeed be covered. When speaking to any insurance company, be sure to ask the following questions:

- Will the plan cover hospitalization for accidents and illnesses while I'm abroad for a period of 3-6 months or more?
- Will the plan cover doctor visits and medication prescribed abroad?
- Is there a deductible? If yes, how much?
- Is there a dollar limit to the amount of coverage provided?
- What are the procedures for filing a claim for medical expenses abroad? Do I need to pay for expenses up front and then submit receipts to the insurance company for reimbursement? Make sure that you get full information from your policy about how to arrange for routine treatment, medical emergency procedures, and what is required to pay for or be reimbursed for a claim. Many overseas health providers will not process American insurance claims and will expect payment at the time of treatment so students should have access to a minimum of \$400 (either by credit card or ATM held in reserve for emergencies) in the event that medical treatment is required abroad. Be sure to obtain a receipt to submit with your insurance claim for reimbursement upon your return to the US.
- What if I don't have enough money to pay cash up front?
- When does the plan begin and end?
- What do I use as proof of international medical coverage if I need to use the insurance or if the host government requires documentation?
- If I am not a US citizen, will I be covered by your plan?

Pitzer Students

Pitzer College requires proof of insurance be provided to the College EACH year that you are an enrolled student. Pitzer students must either be enrolled in the Claremont Colleges' student insurance policy, which provides both domestic and international coverage or supply proof of another policy that provides comparable coverage. Proof of insurance through another policy must be submitted to the Student Affairs Office at Pitzer College prior to making your tuition and fee payment. Providing insurance information to the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs does NOT meet the annual notification requirement. If proof of insurance is not provided to Student Affairs, the student's account may be charged with the current annual Student Health Insurance Premium. Visit the Pitzer College website or contact the Pitzer College Office of Student Affairs for questions about the Pitzer College health insurance.

Non-Pitzer Students

Non-Pitzer students should check the policy at their home institution regarding medical and accident insurance while abroad.

Students who are not US Citizens

Many, if not most study abroad insurance policies do not provide coverage to students who are not US citizens. International students may need to obtain insurance from similar companies in their home countries.

TRAVEL INSURANCE PROVIDED BY PITZER COLLEGE



Students studying abroad through Pitzer will receive an **International Student Identity Card (ISIC)**, which, in addition to providing a form of identification and proof of your student status, supplies a range of emergency medical, legal and financial services. The insurance coverage is in effect whether or not the card is in your possession.

Each student is responsible for obtaining a policy that will provide comprehensive health coverage both in the US and abroad for the duration of their program. The ISIC is travel insurance NOT comprehensive medical insurance and will NOT be accepted in lieu of payment at medical facilities. This plan should be viewed as a supplement to your own medical health plan, not a replacement. ISIC does not provide comprehensive medical coverage for pre-existing or chronic medical conditions requiring ongoing care.

Travel Insurance Coverage

- Trip Interruption – Return Air Only \$1,500
- Trip Delay Minimum 12 Hours Delay \$200 per Day, Maximum of \$500
- Emergency Accident and Emergency Sickness Medical Expense \$100,000, No Deductible
- Emergency Dental Only \$500
- Emergency Medical Evacuation \$500,000
- Repatriation of Remains \$50,000
- Emergency Non-Medical Evacuation Due to Catastrophe \$50,000
- Security or Political Evacuation \$50,000
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment Principal Sum \$25,000
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment – Common Carrier (Air Only) Principal Sum \$100,000
- Baggage Delay Minimum 12 Hours Delay \$200 per Day, Maximum of \$200
- Baggage and Personal Effects Including Lost Passport or Visa Replacement Expense per Item: \$250, per category (e.g. electronics) \$500 for a total maximum of \$2000

Coverage is underwritten by American Modern Home Insurance Company under **plan number AMT254032014**. Your Policy will govern the final interpretation of any provision or claim. A copy of your policy will be emailed to you when your card is ready for pick up. You may also request a copy from the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs.

Emergency travel assistance services are provided by April Travel Protection. If you need assistance, you can call toll free 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at one of these phone numbers:

In the United States and Canada:
855.743.6739

Worldwide Customer Call Collect:
305.455.1571

Email for Claims:
claims@apriltravelprotection.com

Email for Travel Assistance and Concierge Services:
assistus@apriltravelprotection.com

SMS Text Short Code for all Services: 51303

Skype for All Services: april_us

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Pitzer College brings more than thirty years of experience managing international programs to our effort to insure student safety. Pitzer programs benefit from professional field staff, long-term relationships with the communities that host our programs, and living arrangements with host families that look after our students as if they were their own children.

Our program directors are dedicated to the care and education of our students. Their labors extend beyond the operation of our programs to on-going professional training in international education. That kind of commitment, rare in external studies programs, has allowed our staff to develop extensive expertise that can be critical in an emergency. On average our program directors have just over eight years' experience in their positions, which affords the benefit of having encountered a wide variety of different health and safety situations from geological events and political disturbances to car accidents and serious student illnesses. They work together with our staff in Claremont to resolve current emergencies and anticipate future needs.

Over the years Pitzer has developed an extensive network of personal and professional relationships that we can call upon in an emergency. Our program directors, in close consultation with our staff in Claremont, work together with both US and host country organizations to collect and evaluate information we can use to respond quickly and effectively to emerging health and safety situations. Among our key contacts are the families that take our students into their homes, feed them, teach them, and make them a part of their lives. Pitzer programs are an integral part of the communities that host our programs and the families that host our students are an active and involved component of our education programs and safety networks. The host fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers of Pitzer students are as committed to the wellbeing of our students as our field staff. Host families provide students with a low profile safe harbor during sensitive political events, careful immediate attention during a period of illness, and the practical and emotional support of a true home away from home.

OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

Pitzer takes the following steps to make sure that participants in our programs are safe:

1. Pitzer regularly monitors US State Department announcements and travel warnings.
2. Pitzer works with staff at its foreign locations to develop site-specific security measures and emergency plans.
3. Pitzer provides information on health and safety for participants prior to the program and a more extensive orientation on site. This includes country-specific information on safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions.
4. Pitzer communicates applicable conditions of participation and codes of conduct to participants and alerts them to the severe consequences of noncompliance.
5. Pitzer provides all students approved to participate in external study with the ISIC card, which, in addition to other non-safety related benefits, provides emergency medical evacuation insurance.
6. Pitzer tailors its safety programs to the conditions of countries where the College operates our own programs.
7. Pitzer continuously evaluates the safety of our programs. The College regularly consults with the US Embassy and host country government and community agencies about security concerns. Pitzer will relocate or adjust programs to avoid unsafe locations or conditions.
8. Pitzer maintains communication with parents, study abroad advisers and others who need to be informed in the event of serious health problems, injury or other related health and safety circumstances.
9. Students are instructed to avoid potential targets of anti-American activity such as US and British government offices, Peace Corps offices, US AID and US affiliated organizations as well as private restaurants, hotels, clubs, and internet cafes that are known as American hangouts.
10. Each student lives with a local homestay family who help us to advise students on local safety conditions and monitor his or her whereabouts. If a student does not return home on schedule, for any reason, the program

director is notified. Families also inform the program director, when appropriate, about the state of the emotional and physical health of each student.

11. Students are asked to register with the US embassy or the embassy of their home country, before departure through the STEP program. Program staff maintains regular contact with the US embassy regarding safety concerns.
12. Students are advised how to proceed if an emergency develops when they are away from the program staff (e.g., with their rural experience families, during their internship, on independent travel, etc.)

LIMITATIONS

There are aspects of your experience abroad that are beyond our control. Please consider the following:

1. Pitzer cannot eliminate all risk from the external study environment. All foreign travel, including domestic travel within the US, entails risk.
2. Pitzer cannot monitor or control a student's daily personal decisions, choices and activities.
3. Pitzer cannot prevent students from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities.
4. Pitzer cannot assure that US standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide for a legal representative.
5. Pitzer cannot assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by the program.
6. Pitzer cannot assume responsibility for events or activities that are not part of the program.
7. Pitzer cannot assume responsibility for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose required or other pertinent information.
8. Pitzer cannot assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO KEEP SAFE - GENERAL GUIDELINES

You can have a major impact on your own health and safety through the decisions you make before and during your external study experience. The most important assurance of your safety is the consistent application of informed judgment in your day-to-day choices and behaviors. Program staff will provide excellent guidance and accurate information.

You should:

1. Consider your health and other personal experiences when accepting a place in the program.
2. Make available to Pitzer College accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary for planning a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
3. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for your personal preparation for the program and participate fully in all orientation.
4. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
5. Inform parents, guardians, families, and others who may need to know about your participation in the program. Provide them with emergency contact information and keep them informed.
6. Comply with the Conditions of Participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program.

7. Obey host-country laws.
8. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions.
9. Express any health or safety concerns to the program staff.
10. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and wellbeing of others. Encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
11. Accept responsibility for your own decisions and actions.
12. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
13. Keep program staff informed of your whereabouts and wellbeing.
14. You should always keep in mind that no matter how immersed you are in a local community you are still a foreigner. Your chances of being a victim of criminal activity may be greater than those for the average local person. Remember not to carry around a lot of cash, airplane tickets, or your passport, unless local laws require it. Do not carry anything else that you cannot afford to lose. Refrain from visiting establishments where Americans are widely known to hang out, abstain from protest groups, and avoid drawing unnecessary attention by dressing outrageously or conspicuously.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

- Reduce risk of robbery or assault by integrating into the local culture as much as possible: spend significant time with your host family; dress, behave and interact in ways that respect local cultural values and do not call attention to being American or a tourist.
- Do not carry valuables (passport, credit cards, laptops, large sums of money, etc.) with you when you walk around town. If you must carry valuables around with you for certain purposes, be discrete, travel with a group of friends, wear a money belt, take a taxi, etc.
- When you exchange at an ATM, use discretion. Do not, for instance, exchange money and walk away into a mall or street. That will make you a likely target. Try to go with friends and leave in a taxi.
- Do not traveling alone, especially after dark, in isolated areas of the city, or when leaving clubs or bars.
- Do not hitch hike.
- If it's getting late at night, and the streets are getting deserted, take a taxi home, even if you are with friends. If taking a taxi is a financial burden, collect the receipt and Pitzer will reimburse you.
- If you are involved in a robbery, do not risk injury by trying to resist or fight off the perpetrator.
- Carry a list of emergency phone numbers with you at all times so that you can contact program staff at the office or at home in case of an emergency.
- Avoid areas of the country or your host community not considered safe. Your host family will provide valuable advice in this regard. Program staff will also provide guidelines on this.
- Avoid large crowds, demonstrations or political rallies. These gatherings can easily turn violent.
- If you do go to a club or bar, do so with a group of fellow students or friends from the host community. Keep an eye on each other. Never, ever accept a ride home with a stranger or someone you just met that evening, and never allow one of your friends to leave with a stranger.

- When ordering drinks, ask for the bottle to be brought to your table. Do not leave drinks unattended. These simple steps will minimize the chance that your drink can be tampered with (Ruffies, Micky Finns, etc.)
- Refrain from impairing your judgment, and risking assault, robbery or arrest, with the use of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Stay in regular contact with program staff when you travel. You must receive permission from the program coordinator for independent (overnight) travel away from your host family. When traveling on an overnight trip or even outside the local area on a long day trip, provide your itinerary and contact information for your destination. Let your host families know of any plans for overnight travel and make a courtesy phone call to your host family once you safely arrive at your destination.
- If you go to the beach, be aware of dangerous currents and riptides. Follow water safety guidelines – refrain from going into heavy surf unless you are an extremely experienced ocean swimmer or surfer. Always enter the water with a buddy and only swim or surf on beaches that have a life guard on duty.
- The program director will provide additional safety guidelines for you during the on-site orientation. Understand and faithfully follow the program guidelines for health and safety, including guidelines for extreme sports and prohibited activities.

EXTREME SPORTS AND OTHER PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

During the program (which includes all days between the program arrival date and the departure date, including weekends and breaks) students are NOT allowed to drive automobiles, ride motorcycles, fly aircraft or participate in extreme sports. Extreme sports include, but are not limited to, white water rafting, jet skiing, scuba diving, parachuting, hang gliding, parasailing, bungee jumping, rock climbing, and technical mountaineering. No trekking over high altitude passes such as Thorong La or Tashi Laptsi. No hitch hiking or night buses. Additional details will be provided during your on-site orientation. Students who choose to participate in such activities during the program are subject to dismissal (see conditions of participation). Students who choose to participate in such activities before or after the program should be aware the International Student Identity Card and some private insurers do not cover injuries sustained in a number of the activities listed above.

EATING DISORDERS AND OTHER ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS

We strongly urge students who have or suspect they may be challenged with anorexia, bulimia, bingeing or other forms of eating disorders or addictive behaviors to indicate this condition on the Declaration of Disability or Special Needs form. It is important for the staff of the programs abroad to be aware of the condition and to assist students with managing it so that they can take full advantage of the learning opportunities of the program.

Though it is the goal of the College to make reasonable accommodation for students with special needs abroad, it is difficult or, at times, impossible, for the College to provide support for the management and treatment of eating disorders in other countries. Disorder-related counseling is often not available or not available in English. Students with eating disorders often run a significantly greater risk of health problems while abroad if the disorder is not acknowledged or under treatment. Therefore, the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs asks the directors of Pitzer programs and strongly requests our contacts at exchange and non-Pitzer program sites to notify Pitzer College if they have evidence that a student has an eating disorder. The directors, in turn, ask host families or other staff members of the program to do the same. We ask the staff to discuss the situation with the student and ask that the student see a medical doctor to determine if they are maintaining their health. The program may also ask the student to undertake counseling or other steps of treatment, if available on site. If the College believes that the student is not taking responsibility for her or his health by refusing medical evaluation or treatment, it reserves the right to withdraw the student from the program for medical reasons.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, ASSAULT AND RAPE

Note: The information below is directed towards all students.

You should be aware of your increased vulnerability as a foreigner in an unfamiliar location and culture. Gender relations and expectations will be covered in your on-site orientation. You may also want to discuss this with your roommate, host mom or siblings, language teacher, other students, your professors, etc. Some key questions you should answer within your first few days are:

- What are gender relations like? How are women and men expected to interact in the family? As friends? When they go out together at night (if culturally appropriate)? In a bar? On public transportation? In the classroom? In the workplace?
- What can students do to prevent the risk of sexual harassment or assault?
This would include knowing about dangerous locations, traveling in groups after dark if advisable, and culturally appropriate ways of dressing and behaving that may minimize risk.
- If I am feeling unsafe, what should I do? Who can I ask for help?
If a female student feels threatened and there are other, host culture women present, she should seek their assistance.
- If I am sexually harassed, assaulted, or raped, what are my resources? What is the name and address of an OB-GYN? What are community organizations in this city that address issues of sexual violence? How can they help me?
- What are the laws surrounding these issues?
- How and to whom would I report such events?
We urge you to confide in the program director and avail yourself of the support and resources she or he can provide, including medical, legal, or counseling services you may need. If you are uncomfortable reporting such an event to the program director, you should be aware of other resources that you can turn to; such as, fellow students, local sexual assault hotlines, counseling centers, physicians, etc.

If a sexual assault occurs Pitzer would like to be able to support you and may have important resources to offer. Please consider contacting us.

See the Appendix in the back of this handbook for more information on sexual harassment and prevention.

IN CASE OF PROBLEMS IN THE HOST FAMILY ON PITZER DIRECT RUN PROGRAMS

Although extremely rare on Pitzer direct-run programs, problems of sexual harassment or abuse, racist comments or behavior, homophobia, theft and related issues in the host family or home stay community are possible. Because of the nature of the host family experience, the close relationships students develop with family members, the special efforts students make to behave in culturally appropriate ways, and the potential for cross-cultural or language misunderstandings, this is a particularly delicate yet important area of concern. We have developed the following guidelines to help minimize the chances of this type of situation occurring and to help us best support you when concerns or questions regarding your host family arise.

1. Host families are carefully selected with an eye toward minimizing these types of problems, and providing students with a safe and nurturing environment. Families are provided with training and orientation around these issues and the type of relationship Pitzer expects between host family members and students. Host families will be given specific guidelines on the types of behavior (especially touching and cross-gender interactions, and homophobic or racist behavior or comments) that will be considered inappropriate.
2. Students should express any concerns or preferences they may have regarding host families to the study abroad office before departure for their program so that the in-country director can select host families with individual student needs and concerns in mind. Examples of things you might want to share: allergies, desire for a LGBTQ friendly family, health concerns with smoking or certain foods, desire for a family that welcomes students of color, etc.
3. During your on-site orientation, you will be given explicit guidelines on what types of host family behavior are appropriate and what behavior is cause for concern and should be reported to your director. You will also be briefed on common behaviors you may see in your family situation which, while not inappropriate in the host culture, may lead to potential misunderstandings.
4. As you know, Pitzer programs expect a strong commitment to cultural immersion and cultural appropriateness but this does not require you to endure behavior or comments that make you feel unsafe or that you believe puts your safety, health or emotional wellbeing in jeopardy.

Romantic or sexual behavior between a student and a host family member is never appropriate; you have the right to politely ask a host family member to stop any physical contact or behavior that is questionable or makes you feel uncomfortable. Similarly, racist or homophobic actions or comments that make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe are never appropriate. You have the right to notify family members that this type of behavior or language is painful or uncomfortable to you, and that you would like them to stop. In these types of situations, we strongly encourage you to immediately seek, support, clarification and guidance from your program director. In some cases, there may be a cultural or linguistic misunderstanding that can be easily worked out, or adjusted to, but in other cases, the behavior may in fact be clearly inappropriate and something your program director needs to address immediately. Early on in your program, you will not necessarily know the difference, thus the importance of communicating immediately with your program director when anything of this nature comes up, especially when you are confused or unsure about something.

5. Coming forward with questions or concerns about your host family behavior will never affect your grades.
6. All Pitzer Study Abroad program directors are required to consult with Claremont if a student expresses concern that there may be inappropriate behavior going on in their host family, or if the directors suspect this based on their own observations. This will allow us to share resources and better respond to these types of incidents. Information regarding these situations will be regarded as confidential and treated with the utmost discretion.
7. While students tend to want to call parents in such situation, your program director will be receptive to any concerns you have, and is the best person to consult if you have any problems or concerns of this nature. Please know that you are welcome to call Pitzer staff in Claremont (mobile and work numbers are provided in the handbook) or your own study abroad director in situations where you might feel uncomfortable contacting the program director directly. In addition, we have asked our directors to provide information on other local resources (counseling services, sexual assault hotlines, women's centers, etc.) that you may want to consult.

We encourage students to approach issues and concerns of this type with an open mind. While we want you to come forward immediately if you have a concern or question regarding your host family, we also ask you to reserve judgment until you have a chance to carefully consider, with the help of your program director, the many cross-cultural or language misunderstandings that might be at play. Similarly, Pitzer staff has been instructed to approach such incidents with an open mind. While a student's concern may be due to a cross-cultural or linguistic misunderstanding that can easily be explained and cleared up; it may just as easily represent a serious situation that requires immediate intervention.

Living with a host family requires perseverance and effort as in any relationship. It is not always easy. We do not want you to give up on your host family simply because adjusting to the new culture, language and living situation is challenging. On the other hand, we want you to feel safe, welcomed, and part of the family, so that warm relationships can develop and language and culture learning can be maximized. Open communication with your program director in which you share challenges and concerns early on, as well as triumphs and high points will assure that this happens for you.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY AT YOUR PROGRAM SITE

Contact the program staff as soon as possible. You will be given a list of emergency contact numbers during your on-site orientation. If you do not receive this information, ask for it. There is also emergency contact information inside the back cover of this handbook. While you are certainly free to contact your parents and families in any emergency, and indeed you should, please inform the program staff **first** since they can address your concerns immediately. Calling home only delays the process for intervention and may put undue stress on families who feel as though they are unable to help their sons or daughters abroad.

Pitzer provides the ISIC, which includes insurance to cover emergency evacuations. In the event of a political crisis or a natural disaster that would necessitate evacuation, the program staff will work closely with the US Embassy and other embassies (if you are not a US citizen) to facilitate your return home.

Provide your contact information abroad to your family and friends. Your family should also be advised to contact the Pitzer College staff members listed in the *Contact Information* section of this handbook.

True emergencies are actually quite rare. While losing luggage, tickets or even a passport is inconvenient and upsetting, it is not an emergency. Emergencies are situations in which there is an immediate threat to a student's health or safety.

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY AT HOME

Contact the Claremont office first. A list of emergency contact numbers has been provided in the section on *Communications* in this booklet. The Claremont office can usually contact students and staff quickly, even when they are away from the program base on field trips. In the case of a death in the family or of a close friend, we can often arrange for a private, supportive environment in which students can speak directly with loved ones. Program staff can offer considerable and sometimes vital support if they are involved early on in the process of sharing difficult news.

US DEPARTMENT OF STATE TRAVEL SAFETY INFORMATION

Students Abroad

<http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html> contains information on travel documents, health, emergencies, embassies, voting, and security conditions all in one place. Students and parents may find this website very useful when preparing for a study abroad program.

SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

<https://step.state.gov/step/> STEP is a free service provided by the US Government to US citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest US embassy or consulate.

The physical address to use to register with STEP is listed inside the back cover of this handbook.



Students who are US citizens are required to register with the US State Department before leaving the US. Students who are citizens of other countries should check with their consulates for recommendations.

PREPARE TO GO

Any outstanding study abroad, financial, and academic issues must be resolved before the due dates listed in your **Acceptance Letter** for you to maintain your eligibility to study abroad.

It is your responsibility to contact your office of study abroad, student affairs, financial aid, housing, registrar's office and other departments to complete any pre-departure tasks and to find out what preparations you will need to make for a smooth return to campus after your time away. It is also your responsibility to stay in contact with your home institution while you are away so you receive important information and updates. Students are expected to check their email on a regular basis. Pitzer students will be contacted via their official Pitzer College email accounts.

The end of the semester is always a busy time with papers, exams and special events. Plan ahead and act early so you have ample time to respond to any surprises that may arise. The following list is a guide only.

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST



- Complete, sign and return your **acceptance documents** to the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs.
- Email a scanned image or send a photocopy of your **passport** to the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs. Make copies to take with you.
- Arrange your **flight** through the designated travel agent.
- Apply for your **visa**, if required.
- Consult with your current **medical insurance** provider to ensure that your coverage is valid abroad and in the US for the duration of your program. If not, purchase additional coverage.
- Compile a list of names, phone numbers, postal and email addresses of faculty and staff on campus who you may need to **contact** while abroad.
- Provide a **forwarding address** to your school mail room. Include start and stop dates. Pitzer students will have a new mail box number upon their return to campus.
- Update and clean out your **email account**. Change your password, unsubscribe to student lists, and set up folders for non-urgent email that will clutter your inbox and obscure important messages.
- Meet with your **financial aid** officer, if applicable, to make sure you have signed loan forms and promissory notes, to discuss how your aid will transfer to your study abroad program, and to learn about procedures for renewing your aid for the semester you return to campus.
- Meet with your **academic adviser** if you have questions about your academic plan and study abroad.
- Learn how you will **register for classes from abroad** for the semester you will return to campus. (Pitzer students: if you will be a junior while abroad you must **declare your major** before you go or you will NOT be able to register for classes from abroad.)
- Submit **housing** forms and designate a proxy for room draw for the semester after study abroad, if applicable.
- Visit your doctor or public health clinic for your **physical** and **immunizations**. Visit your **dentist** before you study abroad.
- Register** with the **US Department of State** Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://step.state.gov/step/> before you depart the US. Review **travel warnings**, if applicable.
- Complete your **pre-departure reading** and coursework, if applicable.
- Discuss **emergency contact procedures** with your family and friends.
- Authorize trustworthy individual(s) in the US to access and make changes to your **bank accounts and credit cards** in the event your cards are lost or stolen. Notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel plans. Depending upon your circumstances you may wish to set up a **power of attorney**.

- Shop and **pack** lightly. Leave room for items you will acquire when abroad.

PASSPORTS

Anyone traveling between countries needs a passport. Check the expiration date. If you do not have a passport valid for six months after your planned return from study abroad, expedite the application or renewal process. Processing a new passport application or renewal may take several weeks.



How to Apply for a US Passport

For information on how to apply for or renew a US passport go to the US Department of State's website at <http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html> or call 877.487.2778.

If Your US Passport is Lost or Stolen

If your passport is lost or stolen while you are abroad, report the loss immediately to local police authorities and the nearest US embassy or consulate. In addition, you should report your passport lost or stolen by visiting the US Department of State's website for details: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports/lost-stolen.html>.

For assistance in replacing your passport, call the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) emergency number. See the *Insurance* section of this handbook for details. A copy will expedite the replacement process. It is wise to email a copy of your passport to yourself and keep a photocopy of your passport in your luggage or with your on-site program representatives.

VISAS

Visa and immigration requirements often obligate you to have a round trip ticket for entrance into the country. Some destinations require that you have several blank pages remaining in your passport. If your passport does not have blank pages remaining, please arrange to get additional pages added to your current passport or renew for a new passport with plenty of blank pages.



If your itinerary includes layovers or stops in other countries en route you may need a visa for those countries. Please check with your travel agent and the relevant embassy for information.

If you are traveling with a US passport you will get your visa for Nepal upon arrival at the airport in Kathmandu.

If you plan to travel to other countries after the end of the program obtain your additional visa(s) before departing the US. Although it may be possible to get visas after your arrival in the host country, the process of obtaining a visa in the host country, if even possible, may involve visits to an embassy at inopportune times or relinquishing your passport, which is not advised.

If You Are Not a US Citizen

If you are not a US citizen and you do not have a US passport, please notify the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs as soon as possible. Depending on the country in which you have citizenship, you may need to apply for a visa prior to departure.

If you do not have a passport from your home country, or if it is expired, please start the process of acquiring or renewing your documents immediately. In some countries, this process can take months, so it is imperative that you start working on it as soon as possible.

Depending upon your immigration status, there may be special signatures or other procedures required to ensure that re-entry to the US will be permitted after your study abroad program. Speak with your international student adviser. Check before you go!

TRANSPORTATION

PROGRAM DATES



The Pitzer in Nepal program runs from Tuesday, January 30 (arrival date) to Saturday, June 9, 2018 (departure date). Students should arrive before 3 p.m. on the arrival date. Pitzer requires you to participate in the entire program. Late arrivals or early departures are unacceptable. Loss of credit or lowering of grades may result if you arrive late or depart early.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

To arrive at your program site on the arrival date, you may need to begin traveling as many as three days earlier depending upon your location. Your flight will most likely go through Hong Kong or Bangkok, to Kathmandu.

In order to receive your ticket, you are required to submit the Pitzer acceptance paperwork and complete orientation requirements by the dates listed in your acceptance letter. If you complete these requirements less than two weeks prior to your departure, you will be responsible for any charges incurred to expedite your ticket.

Allow ample time to work with our travel agent to arrange your flight. When you contact the travel agent, identify yourself as a student on the Pitzer in Nepal program.

Pitzer's Designated Travel Agent

Apinder Sindhu
Papillion Travels
Phone 626.215.0913

Mr. Sindhu has been providing flight services to Pitzer College students for several years and is very knowledgeable about the airlines that service the Kathmandu region. He is an independent agent and it may be necessary leave a message with a call back number.

Airfare Policy

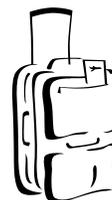


Program participants are REQUIRED to work directly with the travel agent designated by Pitzer College to finalize their tickets by the date indicated in their acceptance letters. (If you are a student from Bard College or Sarah Lawrence College, please contact your study abroad office for the policy that applies to you as it is different.) Tickets not purchased through the Pitzer designated travel agent will NOT be reimbursed or credited to student accounts. Frequent flier miles may NOT be used to book flights.

The maximum airfare Pitzer College will pay is based upon the cost of a round trip ticket from the closest major international airport to the student's permanent address city in the US to the designated international airport near the program site for the exact dates of the program. For international students, the maximum airfare is based upon the cost of a round trip ticket from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). The travel agent will bill Pitzer for the approved ticket. Students will pay the travel agent directly for the additional costs of an itinerary that is more expensive than the approved flight. No refund or credit is given if the ticket costs less than the maximum.

The following items may increase the cost of a ticket. Students will only be charged for actual overages.

- Finalizing travel arrangements after the due date listed in the student's acceptance letter
- Travel dates that vary from the dates of the program, including going early or staying after the program ends
- Special requests for routing or stopovers through specific cities or countries
- Open return tickets - these are discouraged and may not be possible due to visa requirements
- Extra luggage charges - airlines may change luggage restrictions without notice.
- Changing the ticket after it is issued. These costs include change fees and any increase in airfare.
- Replacing lost tickets





If for any reason, you are not able to use an airline ticket, the **airline must be notified prior to the departure of the first flight** that you will be changing the ticket. **Unused tickets including E-tickets become worthless once the plane departs.** You are responsible for the replacement cost of an unused ticket.

Travel Delays

Unforeseen circumstances (weather, missed flights, equipment problems, etc.) may result in unforeseen expenses due to the delay. Students should travel with emergency funds in the event of unavoidable delays in transit. Pitzer College is not responsible for these expenses. Your International Student Identity Card (ISIC) has some coverage for costs incurred due to travel delays. Should you have expenses related to such delays, be sure to keep your receipts in order to make a claim.

Arriving Early or Staying Past the End of the Program

Students who choose to arrive in-country before the beginning date of the program must contact the program staff well in advance of the beginning of the program to arrange a time and place to meet on the arrival date. Pitzer can take no responsibility for early arrivals. Students must make their own arrangements for ground transportation, room and board.

If you think you may want to stay on past the end of the program, please advise Pitzer's travel agent before you make the final confirmation of your ticket. Otherwise, you will be booked for departure from the program site on the program departure date, and any additional costs due to changes made after your ticket is issued will be your responsibility. Pitzer can assume no responsibility for students who stay on past the departure date.

Flight Changes

If you choose to change the date of your return once you are in the host country, this can be a frustrating, complicated, and costly procedure. Check with the airline and the travel agent to research the regulations, required tickets, and fees associated with changing your flight. Pitzer and the travel agent will not be responsible for expenses incurred for changing your return dates and/or itinerary after you make your initial confirmation with the travel agent.

E-Tickets and Paper Tickets

Please verify with our designated travel agent whether your ticket is an E-ticket or a paper ticket. If your ticket is an E-ticket, please confirm with the travel agent and the airlines what you need to present for airport check-ins. Many international carriers and destinations treat E-tickets differently from the way they are treated in the US. If your ticket is a paper ticket please treat it like cash. If you lose your paper ticket or make a change in your itinerary and cannot present your original paper ticket at the airport check-in counter, you will most likely be charged full-price for a new ticket. This extra expense will be your responsibility.

Arrival

Purchase a Visa

If you are traveling with a US passport you will get your visa for Nepal upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. You will need approximately \$40 US in cash and one passport sized photo. You will be given a one-month tourist visa – please let the visa officer know that you want ONE MONTH – and then the program will facilitate you receiving a non-tourist student visa through Tribhuvan University for the rest of the program. The visa usually allows for a couple of extra months in Nepal after the end of the program. Provide proof of payment to the program director to be reimbursed for the visa fee.

Baggage Claim

When picking up your luggage at baggage claim and while exiting the airport, we highly recommend you **do not give money to anyone**. People may offer to help you with your bags; please keep in mind that these are porters, not program staff, and if you allow them to assist you notify a Pitzer staff member so that they can pay the tip.

In the unlikely event that your baggage is lost en route, you will most likely first realize this in Kathmandu. File a claim with the airline before you depart the airport. Program staff will follow up by contacting the airlines office in Kathmandu. Keep your baggage tags. Usually lost baggage is recovered in two to three days.

Customs

Proceed to customs after collecting your bags.

Where to Meet the Program Staff

The program staff will meet you immediately outside the airport doors. In the unlikely event that there is a high security alert at the airport when you arrive, people may not be allowed up to the airport doors, and you may have to walk down the road approximately one quarter mile to the 'Ring Road' before you encounter the crowd of people and meet the program staff. Staff will escort you to the program house which is a half hour taxi ride from the airport.

If your plans should change in transit, please call or email the staff in Nepal or, if you cannot get through, contact the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs in Claremont. Contact numbers are inside the back cover of this Handbook.

MONEY MATTERS

HOW MUCH TO BRING AND HOW TO BRING IT

Most students do not have to spend a great deal of money in Nepal, but we **strongly recommend you bring at least US \$1100 for personal and emergency expenses** should the need arise. Such expenses will most likely include:

Emergency medical reserve plus personal medicines for trek	\$200
Personal spending money (Minimum recommended)	\$450
Optional Trek during program break (many students opt to do this)	\$450
TOTAL	US \$1100



You may want to bring more than \$1100 depending to a large extent on whether you bring everything from home or plan to buy clothing, trekking equipment, etc. on site, your interests, and any gifts or souvenirs you may plan on purchasing. The following may serve as a rough guide:

A good meal in a nice restaurant in Kathmandu	\$5 to \$15 US
Movies	\$2 to \$6
Taxis	Usually no more than \$2 to \$6 anywhere in Kathmandu
Domestic Flights in Nepal	\$100 to \$150 one way
Nepal/Darjeeling tea (kg) depending on quality:	\$5 to \$50 depending on quality
Clothes	Inexpensive (see <i>What to Bring</i>)
5ft x 3ft Hand Woven Wool Carpet	\$80 to \$150 depending on quality

Pitzer will cover your room and board for the entire program. This means room and two meals (the Nepali custom) a day with your Nepali family while we're in Kathmandu. You will also get lunches and tea at the program house and a lunch allowance for those days when you are not at the program house.

During the last month of the program, students doing their Independent Study Projects usually live with host families. However, for certain projects it may make sense to live in a guesthouse closer to your area of work and research. If you choose to do this, Pitzer can only provide you the amount it would normally pay your Nepali family plus the lunch allowance. You would have to supplement this with roughly \$7.00 to \$10.00 of your own money per day to survive in a guesthouse. If you plan to do your project away from Kathmandu, in a more rural area, our room and board allowance will be quite adequate. However, if you plan to do your independent study project in popular trekking or tourist areas (e.g., Mt. Everest region, Annapurna region) you should be prepared to spend \$200 - \$300 extra of your own money.

We recommend bringing \$400 - \$500 in cash (for times when you need dollars, such as for your visa at the airport in Kathmandu, or times when you need to exchange money for local currency where you cannot do so.), and an ATM card with \$400 - \$500 in your account (see below).

ATMs



ATMs are mainly limited to bigger cities so we recommend you NOT rely on them for all your funds. Kathmandu has several ATMs that work some of the time.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are not widely used in Nepal, especially in rural areas, but may be accepted at the bigger hotels and travel agencies. In some parts of the world, credit cards are usually chip and pin which is different than the chip and signature cards in the US. There are locations such that may only accept chip and pin cards. If you bring a credit card, be sure to leave your card number and the 'Lost or Stolen' phone number at home. In the unlikely event that your credit card is lost or stolen while abroad, this information will help your parents or friends cancel your card quickly. Please note: only a person previously authorized to make changes on your account will be able to cancel a lost or stolen card. You should also notify your credit card company that you will be traveling and may make expenditures on your card in your

destination country and other countries en route. Otherwise, when the first few foreign charges show up, your credit card company may put a freeze on your card.

How to Receive Funds from Home

The best way to receive extra funds home is for someone to deposit money into your ATM account (if you are having success with your ATM card).

WHAT YOUR PAYMENT FOR STUDY ABROAD WILL COVER

Payment of the comprehensive semester program fee to Pitzer College plus the \$550 travel will cover your program tuition, housing, meals, visas, travel insurance and airfare for the length of the international program and the overall cost of providing and supporting study abroad at Pitzer College.

What happens to the comprehensive fee I pay for the Pitzer study abroad program?

Students are charged the full Pitzer College comprehensive fee for participation in any of Pitzer's study abroad programs. This does not, however, mean that the full comprehensive fee is sent to the host country for the use of the Pitzer study abroad program. As with all college programs and departments, each year the Treasurer's Office at Pitzer develops a budget for Study Abroad as a whole and for the individual programs abroad. The costs in the budget are determined in collaboration with in-country staff, the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs and the Office of Academic Affairs at Pitzer College. Money to cover in-country costs, such as accommodation, school fees or tuition, ISP allowances, study trips, instructional and staff salaries, materials, insurance, office rental, etc. is sent to the host country for each semester. The College expects the local director to manage the program within the budget the College has provided. Generally, no changes are made to the budget once a program is in session except in case of emergency. Recommendations for budget changes are taken into consideration for the formulation of the budget for the next fiscal year. The portion of the comprehensive fee that doesn't go to the host country is used to support the cost of promoting and administering the study abroad programs as a whole. It is also used to support the overall infrastructure of the college (from information technology, public relations, financial services, and insurance, to on-line library resources, etc.) that is available for study abroad students before, during, and after their time abroad.

Housing

Housing covered by Pitzer College means accommodations that are typical for that particular program or country during the period that school or the program is in session. Please note that housing expense during breaks between semesters and housing expense before or after the program are the responsibility of the student and are not covered in the fees paid to Pitzer.

Meals

The comprehensive program fee paid to Pitzer College covers all meals for the duration of the program. This usually means some combination of meals with host families (whenever possible), meals provided directly by the program, and a meal allowance given to students (if applicable), which together provide students with a diet and eating schedule that is typical for the host culture. Students will not be reimbursed for missed meals that are provided by the program or their host families. Meals during any break periods between semesters or before or after the program are the responsibility of the student and are not covered by the comprehensive program fee paid to Pitzer.

Travel Contribution

All Pitzer students pay the same \$550 travel contribution for airfare and travel insurance for an international semester study abroad program. This charge will be placed on your student account for the semester you are abroad. For Pitzer students, Pitzer designates a travel agent for the student to book a round-trip airline ticket. (Refer to the *Transportation* section of this handbook for information on flight Arrangements and the airfare policy. See also the section on *Insurance*.)

Visiting students from other colleges and universities pay the airfare as directed by their home school. Some students may be required to pay our designated travel agent directly for their airfare. If you are a visiting student, please check with your study abroad adviser at your home school or with Jamie Francis at Pitzer for specific information.

Additional Expenses

The items below are **NOT COVERED** in the semester comprehensive fees plus travel contribution or the summer study abroad fee and should be considered in your budget planning.

- Passport
- Photos required for applications and visas
- Cost of required immunizations
- Cost of the medical exam required prior to participation
- Comprehensive medical insurance coverage is required. (Fees for additional insurance, if required by the program or the host country, may be covered by Pitzer College. Ask the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs.)
- Additional costs incurred for airfare that costs more than the standard round-trip ticket (see Airfare Policy) or if arriving before or extending after the program dates, changing a ticket, or if participating on a domestic program
- Cost of housing and meals before or after the program or during school breaks (e.g. breaks between terms or semesters, spring break)
- Refundable deposits
- Expenses for items or services that are not typically provided on the program but to which students may be accustomed (e.g. email or internet access, access to computer labs, athletic facilities, etc.)
- Expenses for items or services that are not provided for in fees paid to Pitzer (e.g. personal entertainment, toiletries, independent travel during school breaks, field trips that are not a required part of a course, mobile phone charges, laundry charges, etc.)
- Clothing (e.g. winter jackets, boots, rain gear, formal attire, etc.) needed for climate conditions, cultural reasons or activities at the program site
- Course fees, lab fees and supplies
- Textbooks
- Expenses resulting from a difference in the cost of living. Expenses in your study abroad location may be the same, higher or lower than in Claremont.

Exchange Rates

Exchange rates can change daily. Keep the exchange rate in mind when budgeting. The exchange rates can vary between now and your program departure. A handy website for tracking these rates is www.oanda.com.

BILLING

Pitzer College Students

Pitzer College students will be billed by the Student Accounts office for Pitzer College's comprehensive semester fee plus the \$550 travel contribution in the same manner as all other semesters.

Student Accounts

Charges for your semester abroad will be available via CASHNet. **Students who will be abroad are strongly encouraged to provide authorization to parents or other parties to view and/or make payments on their account.** For further assistance or to report problems with the CASHNet site, please contact the Office of Student Accounts at 909.621.8191.

Financial Aid

Pitzer financial aid can be applied toward the fees of any approved program. Please consult the financial aid office for specific details on how your financial aid, including the travel contribution, will be handled.

Withdrawal Fee

If a student withdraws after accepting a place on the program, Pitzer will bill the student's account for a withdrawal fee of \$350 plus any non-recoverable expenses paid on the student's behalf. Please refer to the *Conditions of Participation* for full information on when or if a refund is due to the student. Note that there may be other withdrawal charges assessed by the exchange sponsor and these fees are the responsibility of the student.

Visiting Students on Pitzer Programs

The handling of financial matters will vary depending on your home college or university. Some schools require that you pay fees directly to Pitzer College. Other schools have made special arrangements with Pitzer and require that students pay the home institution and the home institution then pays Pitzer on your behalf. Pitzer College does not offer financial aid for visiting students. Please contact our Office of Study Abroad and International Programs and/or your home institution's study abroad office for details.

Transcripts for all students will be withheld until Pitzer College is paid in full. This includes the comprehensive program fee and any outstanding balances due to charges incurred on behalf of the program such as: library fines, charges for damages to homestay or school property, non-reimbursed medical expenses, etc.



COMMUNICATIONS

PHONE, EMAIL AND MAIL

Contact Information in Claremont

**Pitzer College
Office of Study Abroad
and International Programs**

Phone 909.621.8104
Email studyabroad@pitzer.edu

Mailing address
West Hall, Suite Q100
1050 North Mills Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711

Office hours
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
except holidays



Ways to Make Contact While Abroad

In order to call the United States from Nepal, you generally need to visit a private communications business where you will be able to access email or call home. There are many internet based phone services in Kathmandu and other urban areas that allow for very inexpensive calling to the US **Email, international phone service and fax facilities are not available through the program office.**

The best ways for family and friend to reach you in Nepal is by mail or email.

Emergency Phone Numbers for Students in Nepal - see inside back cover

In an emergency, students in Nepal should call the emergency numbers listed inside the back cover of this handbook. Students are advised to contact the program director as soon as possible. He or she is best able to render prompt assistance and advice in the event of an emergency. Calling home to speak with a family member first, though it may be instinctive or comforting, is not going to get you the immediate local help you need. For privacy reasons emergency numbers will only appear in the student hardcopy of this Handbook.

In Case of an Emergency at Home - Family and Friends

In case of emergency, parents or friends should contact the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs at the numbers listed above. The Study Abroad staff in Claremont can usually contact students and staff quickly, even when they are away from the program base on field trips. If they call the office number and we are closed they will be directed to Campus Safety at 909.621.8170. Campus Safety has additional contact information on file. Please have them continue down the list until they are able to speak directly with a member of our staff.

Mobile phones

You are free to bring your own mobile phone and purchase a local SIM card once in country. Pitzer expects all students to use mobile phones in ways that are appropriate and responsible. In particular, mobile phones should be turned off (including texting) during classes, program discussion sessions and study trips when interacting with program staff, faculty or guest speakers. In addition, students need to learn and practice appropriate mobile phone use in their homestays. For some families it may be considered rude, for instance, to make or receive calls or text messages during a family meal or while engaged in conversation after dinner.



Mailing and Shipping to Nepal

Family and friends may send your mail to the following address:

**Pitzer College in Nepal
Your name
G.P.O. Box 1846
Kathmandu, NEPAL**



Usually, mail takes between seven and 14 days to arrive. Occasionally, mail can be misplaced or lost by the postal service in Nepal, just as it can be lost by the postal service in the US. Registered mail is not recommended because it

will be held at the post office for seven days and then returned. Since we are often away on trips and treks, registered mail would probably not reach you.

Packages may be sent to you via DHL to the G.P.O. address listed above as long as the phone number listed inside the back cover of this handbook is included. When the DHL package arrives at the DHL office, word will be sent to for someone to pick up the package. US Express Mail and FedEx may also be shipping options.

In lieu of sending a package (e.g. care package, birthday gift), we recommend families and loved ones simply deposit something extra in your ATM account and send you a note with best wishes to enjoy a nice dinner out on the town with your friends or host family.

STUDENT COMMUNICATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Read your Email

Before, during, and after your study abroad experience someone from the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs or another Pitzer College office may contact you with information about orientation, health, safety, academic, finances, or other matters. Faculty may need to contact you about academic issues, invitations to do a senior thesis, etc. **For Pitzer students, the official means of contacting you will be your Pitzer College email account.** For non-Pitzer students we will use the email you provided in your application.

Due to the large number of messages on student-talk, Pitzer-talk, and other email lists, we advise students going abroad to unsubscribe to email lists while off campus. If you have a limited amount of time to check email or are paying for connection time at an internet café while abroad you don't want to miss important College information buried in your inbox. Investigate methods for labeling and filtering your messages before you go.



Students are responsible for managing their email accounts and reading their official school email on a regular basis before, during, and after studying abroad.

For Pitzer students: the Pitzer password automatically expires every six months - 180 days from when you last reset your current password. Change your password before you leave to assure continuous access. If your password does expire, log on to www.pitzer.edu/pitpass or contact the Pitzer Helpdesk at help@pitzer.edu.

Keep your Student Contact and Emergency Information Current

We may also try to reach you via your mobile phone, home phone, personal email, or other means. In the event of an emergency, we may need to contact you or your parents or guardians via the information in the Pitzer College database or in your Study Abroad file. It is important that you notify the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs AND the Office of the Registrar at registrar@pitzer.edu (to update the College database) of any changes to your personal information.

When you leave campus for a semester your Pitzer College student mail box is assigned to another student. You will have a different box number upon your return to Claremont. Before you leave campus provide forwarding information to the Pitzer College Mail Center. A forwarding address in the US is strongly recommended. Contact Kathleen Kile, Mail Center Supervisor, at Kathleen_kile@pitzer.edu for more information.



WHAT TO BRING

ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS AND ITEMS



- Your **passport** valid for **at least six months past the end of the program** and two photocopies carried separately from your passport in other suitcases or wallets. Leave an additional copy at home with your parent or guardian.
- Your **airline ticket**
- Credit and ATM cards**
- One passport size photo (required).** Students going to Nepal must present at least one passport-sized photo to receive their entrance visa at the airport in Kathmandu. **Twelve (12) passport size photos (optional).** These are also available in Kathmandu. These are in addition to those requested by the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs.
- An official **immunization record** from your doctor or health clinic and a photocopy.
- International Student Identity Card (ISIC).**
- Your **medical insurance information.**
- Important **contact information** for your home institution.
- This **handbook** and any other pre-departure reading materials.

Clothing, Medicine and Miscellaneous

What you bring is really an individual matter. It depends upon what you may want to buy on site, how much luggage you want to carry (the lighter the better), and what you plan to do for your ISP. It is now a fact that **most things you might need are available on site** (contrary to what they might think, please assure your parents that there will be no need send you monthly shipments of toilet paper). However, keep in mind that quality does vary and prices of imported items may be quite high. **There will be little time for shopping during the first few weeks of the program, so do make sure to bring enough clothes and supplies to last through that time.** The following items are suggested:

Clothing

Please bring clothing that will allow you to dress in a way that is neat, clean, and culturally acceptable to your Nepali hosts. Appearance is important in Nepali culture. In addition, given the current situation in the world, it is also a good idea to avoid words or designs on clothing that call attention to you as an American. In general we suggest darker colors, as they are easier to care for in a culture where you will wash all your clothes by hand.

- Men** - Slacks (easily made locally, but of less quality than US brands), jeans (2 pair), shorts (for trekking only), T-shirts, and/or quick-dry athletic shirts. Faded, torn, or patched clothes are questionable with traditional Nepalis. Bringing several slightly nicer button-down or Oxford-style shirts might be helpful, especially for nicer occasions or excursions into town. Bring a good supply of underwear, as large sizes are hard to find. Suit and tie are not necessary unless you plan to hobnob with the diplomatic crowd (if the occasion does arise, custom tailored suits can be made within a week at a fraction of the cost in the US), but do have at least one set of nice clothes for special (more formal) occasions.
- Women** - A very limited selection of comfortable tops, looser-fitting pants and long (the longer the better) ankle length skirts or dresses will be sufficient.

We recommend

- **Shirts:** 3-4 t-shirts (this might include several nicer “blouses,” but are not required). and 2 long-sleeve shirts.
- **Pants:** 2-3 pairs of jeans or slacks. Looser-fitting, comfortable, and somewhat more conservative styles are ideal, but there should be no need to buy anything new as long as you are culturally sensitive in your selection (use your common sense: please see “A few other things...” below).

- **Underwear:** May not be easily found in Nepal. Bring enough to last you between washings (8-12 pair). **Do** bring bras.
- **Work clothes and clothes to sleep in:** We recommend a pair of pajama pants (as opposed to shorts) for when you get up in the night (most homes will have bathrooms outside the main house). Having 1-2 T-shirts and a pair of sweats or other pants as that you don't mind getting dirty while working in the fields might be a good idea. These also work well for trekking/ study trips.
- **Local clothing** (saris, Punjabi dresses, Tibetan dresses and lungis) is inexpensive, easily made to order, and well received by Nepalis. If you are aiming to pack light en route, this can be a nice option.
- **One nicer outfit:** For more formal occasions this is a good idea. You can bring this from home if you think you will need it en route, or you can simply plan on buying a Punjabi dress or a sari, both of which are fine for more formal occasions.

A few other things to keep in mind:

- **Nice looking jeans and t-shirts** are acceptable and becoming quite common with young women in urban areas. However, *please do not bring shorts, short skirts, cut-offs, tight or see-through dresses or pants, or low-cut or revealing blouses. They are culturally inappropriate.* Spaghetti strap tank tops and tights/ spandex clothing are not acceptable.
- Women in many parts of Nepal, including your host families, like to use **make-up** when they go out in public. You may want to bring a limited amount of make-up to use yourself and/or as gifts for your host sister(s) or mother.

As a general guideline, a Pitzer alum suggested that students "bring conservative, everyday clothes that you like and will feel good in but won't mind getting a little dirty."

- **Warm Clothing** - It can get quite cold in Kathmandu beginning in late-November through February so something warm would be a good idea. A couple of wool sweaters/shirts or a warm polar fleece and a wind breaker or parka will suffice, and should be enough on our treks. The only time you may need warmer clothes if you plan to do any high altitude trekking. All of these things may not be available in Nepal and there will be little time to shop early on in the program, so you should bring enough warm clothes to last the first two weeks.
- **Rain gear** - It does rain heavily beginning in late-April through mid-October. A good raincoat may be good on certain occasions, but, in general, one will find a raincoat too warm in the hot and muggy weather of the monsoon. Umbrellas can be bought cheaply and should last the length of the program. American umbrellas, though more expensive, tend to be of better quality and may make a good gift to your family when you leave.



An alumna suggested quick-dry clothing to avoid molding.

Footwear

- **Socks** - Bring plenty of socks from home. We've found wool socks or synthetic blend socks (Ultimax for example) to be best in terms of wear and in going longest without having to be washed (something you will appreciate while you are here!).
- **Shoes and boots** - It will be hard to find a comfortable fit on site (especially if you have large feet, size 9 ½ or larger), so bring everything you need from home. At the program house and for walking to and from your home stay, tennis shoes, Teva/ Chacko-type sandals or comfortable walking shoes are great. You should also have a pair of flip-flops for bathing and around the home. It is easy to find a variety of these locally; again, if you have large feet, bring some from home. Women: A nicer pair of sandals/ shoes to wear with a sari or Punjabi outfit may be a good idea. These are available locally, but size and quality vary.
- **Trekking** - Comfort is the important thing here. Light hiking boots that fit well, or even tennis shoes with good arch and ankle support, will suffice unless you plan to carry your own pack, in which case you might want boots with more support. For blister prevention make sure that you can wear your trekking shoes comfortably with two pairs of socks. Running shoes are comfortable for walking but do not provide much ankle support.

Miscellaneous Items

- **One towel and washcloth/face towel** - good quality towels are hard to come by locally. Bring one from home. Quick-dry/light weight towels that can be found at outdoor stores like REI are a good idea. **Men**, make sure that the towel is big enough to wrap easily around your waist.

- Sun cap or visor** - widely available at site.
- Headlamp/small flashlight** - with extra bulb and batteries. Both are fine but headlamps are probably easier to use around trekking campsites/ when you need to get up in the middle of the night.
- Batteries** - lower quality brands are available in Nepal but you may want to bring longer lasting batteries from home.
- Toiletries** - local brands are available. Western brands are expensive when available.
- One Combination lock** - you will need one for your room. We recommend combination locks because there is no key to lose and because they make good gifts to your family when you leave.
- Two Nalgene plastic water bottles** - We recommend Nalgene because they will not melt or change shape in boiling water. These are hard to find on site and should be brought from home. And for short trips into the city or around the village you might appreciate a smaller ½ liter bottle in addition to your two 1-liter bottles.
- Small day pack or shoulder bag** for carrying water, notebook, camera, first-aid kit, etc.- Both are available locally, but back packs tend to be of lesser quality than those available in the US. Shoulder bags (jholaa), on the other hand, are inexpensive and often of high quality. Keep in mind you will want something that is comfortable.
- Extra prescription glasses and/or contact lenses** - Don't forget. You should definitely bring an extra pair with you. Yet, extra glasses can be made relatively cheap in Nepal.
- High quality notebooks** - The program provides spiral notebooks for your Field Book assignments. Cheaper varieties are also available in Nepal. However, you will want to bring one or more durable notebooks for your personal journal.
- Wristwatch** - available locally, but often of inferior quality.
- Battery powered alarm clock** - bring from home
- Re sealable plastic bags** - handy for carrying small items. Local brands are available but are of lesser quality.
- Money belt or pouch** for carrying passports, airline ticket, etc.
- Photos of home or you and your family** - these provide an excellent icebreaker with your host family as well as being a good way to share about your life in the United States.
- Dust Masks** - these provide protection from the dusty conditions in Kathmandu.
- Sleeping pad** - ThermaRest, ensolite, etc.- A necessity, especially when it is cold. Available in Kathmandu. Many students find a sleeping pad to be useful during the program not just the trek.
- Sleeping Bag** - You will want a sleeping bag for your homestay during the colder months of November, December, January and February, or if you plan to trek during your break, and for the village homestay during the third month of your program. We recommend a bag that protects to 20° F or better. Down is easier to pack and carry, but harder to care for, particularly when it is wet. A washable liner will help keep your sleeping bag clean and can serve as a top sheet when it is too warm to sleep inside your bag. A waterproof bivy sack would be handy for trekking during monsoons but not necessary during the program. Students in Kathmandu can find all these items in Kathmandu, but it is probably best to bring your own from home if you already have one. There is something to be said for having your own sleeping bag.

Trekking Items

Besides some of the items already mentioned, you may want to bring the following additional items if you choose to take a trek. **Pay attention to comments on their availability on site. Most trekking items will be easily available in Kathmandu.**

- Backpack** - A soft or internal frame backpack (depending on your preference) will be the easiest and most comfortable on the trail for both carrying your own pack and for having pack carried by porters. Since porters will be available to carry loads, you only have to carry as much (or as little) as you care to, meaning you do not need to invest in an expensive or large pack if you do not envision carrying it for any more than short stints. Ideally, you should be comfortable enough that you can carry it yourself fairly easily; you may need to carry your pack a short distance (e.g. to/ from your homestay to the program house prior to treks or study trips). (See the section in this handbook entitled *Not Necessarily Nirvana: True False Questionnaire on Student Experiences in Nepal* for some additional thoughts on using porters.)
- Waterproof pack cover** - not always easy to find a good fit locally.
- Winter hat** - wool hats are available in Nepal.
- Nylon or plastic poncho or tarp** - Past students who have had problems with fleas or bed bugs in their homestays, and while trekking, or on their ISP locations have found nylon tarps to be extremely useful. These are essential to cover your bed to keep fleas or bed bugs off you and out of your sleeping bag. We recommend bringing a good nylon tarp about 10 feet long by 6 feet wide for best protection of sleeping areas (available in Kathmandu but may be of lesser quality).
- Bandana**- available in Nepal but may bleed when washed. Bringing one from home might be a good idea.
- Pocket knife**- available locally, but must be aware of low quality knock-offs. Please remember **not to take as a carry on item on your flight**. This may make a good gift for your host family.
- Sunglasses**

Optional Items

- Binoculars** - Birding is fantastic in the region. Bring binoculars if you wish. Good binoculars are available in Kathmandu.

Baggage

- We recommend 1 **hard shell suitcase** that can be locked as your main piece of luggage. This will give you a secure space to keep valuables during the program as well as provide better protection for fragile items en route.
- A **mid-sized back pack** can serve as a second piece of luggage for the flight over and will be very useful for travels and trekking around the region during the program. This can be packed in a duffle bag or in your suitcase for the flight if you want to protect loose straps from airport conveyor belts.



Check the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) website for current regulations about prohibited and permitted items for carry-on luggage and checked baggage.

<http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/prohibited-items>

Personal medical kit

There will be a fairly complete medical kit at the program house and on longer study trips. Additionally, there will be access to good physicians, clinics, and hospitals while in Kathmandu. However, for those times when you need something immediately or are far from medical care (such as on trek or during your ISP) you will be expected to carry your own personal medical kit, which the program will help you put together after arriving. Pay attention to comments on availability of items.

Nearly all medicines are available in Nepal, over the counter, without a prescription, at a fraction of the cost than in the US. This includes a wide variety of anti-biotics (ciproflaxin, amoxicillin, erythromycine, etc.), pain killers (ibuprofen, Tylenol, aspirin, etc.), antacids, eye-drops, antidiarrheal, etc. If you prefer items of a certain brand, you should bring all you need from home.

Bring these items from home

- Bring **prescription medicines** in their original containers and copies of your prescriptions. You may also wish to bring a physician's note explaining the need for the medication. We recommend bringing enough for the entire semester. Shipping may be unreliable. Some medications may not be available even with a local physician's prescription. It may be hard to find an exact match for a US prescription medication in Nepal. Be aware that some medicines are controlled substances and may be illegal in some countries. Refer to the section on Traveling with Medication.
- Extra prescription glasses and contact lenses**
- Mole skin (or foam)** - four sheets, 8" x 8"
- Insect repellent**-available in Nepal, but we recommend bringing it from the US, especially if you have sensitive skin and/or react to harsher repellants (Deet, etc.) (See section on Malaria).
- Sun block**- also available in Nepal, but there is a limited selection. Again, if you have sensitive skin or prefer a certain brand, bring from home.
- Iodine tablets and water purification**- The program will always provide boiled water, in Nepal and on trips and trek. For when there is no access to boiled water the program provides liquid iodine and droppers, which should take care of all your needs. However, if you wish to buy additional iodine tablets, they are not available locally and should be bought in the US before coming. NOTE: there are now many water filtration devices available for campers. There is very little need for such filters, especially given their cost. However, if you do chose to bring one, make sure that they filter out **bacteria and viruses**. Filters that only filter out small particles will not give you the protection you need.
- Sterile non-stick/telfa pads**- various sizes up to 4" x 5" - many (available in Kathmandu)
- Hand sanitizer**- available in some stores in Nepal, but bringing an extra bottle may be handy for those times when you don't have access to soap and water.
- Dramamine or other motion sickness medications** – may be valuable for bus trips.
- Gatorade powder**- some rehydration powder is available here, but doesn't taste nearly as good. Invaluable for trekking and/or if you get sick.



An alumna suggested bringing a large bottle of Dr. Bronner's (biodegradeable, multipurpose castile soap found in most health food/ outdoor supply stores). It's easy to carry and not harmful to the environment.

Items available on site

- Vitamins**- multi, C, E, Iron, etc.
- Sterile gauze pads**
- Roll gauze**
- 3" elastic bandage**
- Scissors**
- Tweezers**
- Thermometer**
- Toilet paper**
- Plastic bottle and eye dropper** –provided by the program in Nepal
- Nail clippers**
- Lip balm**
- Anti-fungus powder**
- Antibacterial soap**

- **Pepto-Bismol tablets**
- **Halog cream**- an anti-inflammatory, antipuritic that is good for insect bites
- **Bacitracin ointment** -This is an excellent topical antibacterial ointment for skin infections and boils, as well as for cuts and abrasions.
- **Medications for infections and dysentery.**
- **Mosquito Nets**—Provided by the program as necessary.

Menstruation Information for Women

Women from previous programs suggest the following: 1) Bring everything you need from home. 2) Tampons without applicators (OB, Pursettes) are preferred because they are easier to use and dispose of in a society where privacy and disposal of waste are problems for Westerners. Should you need them, however, pads are available on site.

One alternative to tampons and disposable pads is using flannel cloth reusable pads. Although this eliminates the problem of disposal, a lack of privacy and the need of discretion can make washing and drying them difficult, and or uncomfortable. Another program alumna suggests using the “keeper cup” instead of tampons. The Keeper Cup is a small internally worn, reusable, menstrual cup, made from natural gum rubber (latex). <http://www.keeper.com/> or www.Divacup.com.

Laptops: To Bring or Not to Bring?



Bringing a laptop on the program is optional. While a few of the Kathmandu host families now have computers and even internet access at home, bringing a computer would be culturally out-of-place or awkward in other homestay families, and could prove to be a source of worry for host parents who will certainly be concerned about it being lost, stolen or damaged (knowing there is a \$2,000 piece of equipment in the house will be a tremendous source of concern). Moreover, anything more than occasional use of a computer would take time away from interacting with your family in Nepali. Please know that all writing assignments are accepted in long hand. Your ISP paper is not due until one month after the end of the program allowing time for typing after returning home or in a commercial computer center if you chose to stay after the program and write your paper in Nepal. Having said this, if you feel you must bring a computer to help with your writing or to download photos, you could bring an inexpensive laptop or notebook and store it at the program house when not in use. **Please note that internet access at the program house will not be available so handheld electronic devices are not recommended.**

GIFTS

It's always nice to bring several small gifts from home for your Nepali family members. However, please remember that giving too generously may make it difficult for future, perhaps less affluent, students who may live with your family. Pictures of yourself, your own family and your home are very much appreciated. Picture books of your state or country would also be a good idea. Shampoo, needle and thread (all especially valued in the hills and easily available locally), T-shirts, combination locks, cloth pot holders, puzzles, nylon cord (again prized in the hills), and playing cards are examples of what one might give. An effective strategy is to bring one gift of a food item (nuts, chocolates) for your entire family and then wait until you are settled in to purchase inexpensive gifts locally (cloth, notebooks, food supplies, etc.) or have a package with items sent from home, according to the interests and needs of family members.



Alumni suggested Nalgene water bottles, Frisbees, and CDs of popular American music, Tupperware, cassette player/ cassettes, Swiss army knives, headlamps, and small (travel-size) lotions/cosmetic items as gifts.

PREPARE TO RETURN HOME

Saying Goodbye

The bonds you form with people you meet when abroad go both ways. In most cases it would be impolite to just disappear. Customs vary from culture to culture, and how you say goodbye can be just as important as the proper greeting when you first met.

- Plan ahead if you have exams to take or papers and projects due at the end of the program. Give yourself a couple days to say goodbye, pack and visit your favorite places one last time.
- Find out what is expected of you before your last week in the host country. If you are expected to give parting gifts you may wish to purchase them during the semester as you explore and have more time to choose.
- Do not make promises lightly. If you invite someone to visit you at home, be prepared to be a gracious host. Be aware that customs restrictions, fees or shipping costs may make sending certain items from home impractical. If you promise to mail an item once you return, make every effort to do so. Keep in touch; send a note.

What to Bring Home

- Souvenir is the French word for memory. If you want to bring home small items for yourself or your family and friends you may want to purchase them during the semester rather than in a rush at the end of the program. Check customs restrictions and duties before you buy: <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/>.
- If you cannot take something with you, take a photo. Include photos of your homestay or dorm room, your classrooms, local shops, people you meet (with their permission), local plants, animals, cultural items, monuments, foods, study trips, etc. Do you have a photograph for the cover of the next Pre-departure Orientation Handbook or the study abroad website?
- Collect names, addresses, email, phone numbers, host family information, etc. so that you can keep in touch with people you met while abroad. In addition, study abroad students undergoing background checks and security clearances years later have been asked to provide their home stay addresses. The Office of Study Abroad and International Programs does not have this information for prior years.
- Make notes on any research you may wish to continue or use for your thesis or a grant or fellowship application such as the Fulbright. Collect source data and the contact information for people and organizations.
- To get credit towards your major or another graduation requirement for work done abroad, be sure to bring home any syllabi, assignments, course catalogs or other information for faculty to make a determination.

Culture Learning Workshop - Preparing to Return Home and After you are Home

Your experiences abroad are now part of you and it is not unusual to experience reverse culture shock after your return home. Working through Module 2 - Welcome Back! Now What? of the on-line culture learning workshop a few weeks before the end of your program will help you prepare to say goodbye and better understand reverse culture shock. Modules include 2.1 - Preparing to Come Home; 2.2 - If you are Preparing to Return Home Soon; 2.3 - Back Home: Neither Here nor There; 2.4 - What Did You Learn Abroad? and 2.5 - Say No to Shoeboxing The on-line culture learning workshop may be found at <http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>. No written responses are required.

REGISTRATION FOR NEXT SEMESTER'S COURSES

Pre-registration at Pitzer College will occur on campus in late April for fall, and in late November for spring. If you do not attend Pitzer, please consult with your study abroad office to determine how pre-registration will be handled on your campus. For all students, planning ahead will do much to alleviate the anxiety you often experience about pre-registration. Before you leave campus, it is advisable to:

- Declare your major with the proper forms in the Registrar's office. If you are a Pitzer student who will be a junior while you are abroad you must submit your major declaration form to the Registrar's Office before you leave. If you do not, you will not be able to register for the next semester.
- Talk to your adviser to have a clear idea of the type of courses that you will need to take upon your return.
- Take contact information for anyone you may need to consult with regarding courses and general requirements.
- Ask a friend who is staying on campus to collect the necessary forms and signatures on your behalf for any courses that require special permission.
- Provide a signed document stating that your friend is acting as your proxy (most professors probably wouldn't require something this formal, but it couldn't hurt).

For Pitzer Students Only: Registration from Abroad

For instructions and course schedules visit the Registration Information and Resources website page at <https://www.pitzer.edu/registrar/registration-information-resources/> **Email your registration to regabroad@pitzer.edu PRIOR to your assigned registration day and time. Remember to account for different time zones.**

In your email, please include the following:

Subject line - please put your name. Example: "Your Name - Fall 2016 Registration"

Name

Student ID Number

Adviser

Major

Course ID Number

Section Number

Course Title

Instructor

Day and Time

Please be assured that you will be registered with your class if we receive your registration request prior to your registration time. Your registration will appear on your student portal the day after your registration date. Due to the high level of student registrations from abroad, please allow 3 to 5 business days after your class registration date to receive an email confirmation of classes. If a class you have requested is full or has been cancelled, you will be notified. Email permission from an instructor to register in a full course will be accepted only from the instructor's Claremont Colleges email account.

Information for fall courses should be available around mid-April and around mid-November for spring courses, about two weeks before pre-registration. If you have junior class standing and have not yet declared a major, or if you owe money to the College, you will not be allowed to register for courses until you have taken care of these matters.

APPENDIX A: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND PREVENTION

THE • CENTER • FOR • GLOBAL • EDUCATION



SAFETI Clearinghouse



SAFETI On-Line Newsletter

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Sexual Harassment And Prevention In College Students Studying Abroad

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Introduction

It has been my experience over the years as a Consultant to the US Peace Corps that the issue of sexual harassment for women can become a major stress factor that can greatly affect the entire overseas experience.

The information included in these pages comes directly from the work I have done with hundreds of inspiring and courageous Peace Corps Volunteer females as well as my own personal experience as a 22 year old Peace Corps Volunteer in Brasil many years ago. I have listened to and experienced the struggles, fears, frustrations, dilemmas, as well as joys of being a female in a developing culture. I have learned a great deal from the experience and from the incredible women with whom I have had the privilege of counseling. My life and my clinical work have been immeasurably enriched by the experiences we have shared together.

Cultural Sensitivity

We all want to be culturally sensitive, to get along, to be respectful, to fit in, to not offend. In training, cultural sensitivity is emphasized and highly valued. It can be the doorway through which a college student studying abroad gains entry to and acceptance with the community abroad.

It is very important that the cultural sensitivity training provided never requires that you submit to behaviors that invade your personal boundaries and that feel unsafe or even uncomfortable to you. If it feels inappropriate or makes you uneasy, get yourself out of the situation. Never sacrifice yourself or your sense of safety for the sake of cultural sensitivity.

Personal Boundaries

Personal boundaries are the personal space around us, physically and emotionally, that serves to preserve our physical and emotional integrity. When someone gets "too close", an alarm sounds inside. We need to listen for, respect, and respond to that alarm. We also need to respect the personal boundaries of each other. These areas can be very confusing for students for several reasons:

Reason One: The issue of personal boundaries tends to be confusing for people. Some of us were raised in families with broad rigid boundaries, lots of secrets, locked doors, distance from people, and perhaps even distance from our own emotions. Others of us were raised in families with loose boundaries, or inconsistent boundaries where people did not consistently allow personal respect or require privacy, where frequently no one knocked on bedroom doors before entering, where people shared common space and little personal space was available. And some of us (a very few) were raised with more of a balance of closeness, respect, and honoring of privacy and personal space.

Reason Two: Social conditioning in college has influenced boundary understandings by increasing tolerance for loose, fluid boundaries. Many college students have been acclimated to a very loose boundaried college culture. Students may "crash" in each other's dorm or apartment...males and females may share sleeping space for convenience without sexual expectations. They may have become accustomed to, and therefore have a high tolerance for loose personal boundaries.

Reason Three: We "assume" everyone has the same understanding about personal boundaries as we do. Now enter another country and find the whole issue of boundaries and personal space is highly influenced by cultural norms and very different from what you are accustomed to. And the amount of personal space has a certain meaning in one culture and a different meaning in another culture. Like learning a foreign language, customs and personal boundaries in a new culture are not to be "assumed" to be known, but must be learned for your safety.

The Ultimate Boundary – Your Body

In some cultures, allowing a man to enter your house is symbolic of letting him enter your body. Many men have told women that they "assumed" she wanted sex just because she allowed entry into her house. Staying outside on the porch is a safer way to receive male guests. Where is the best place to entertain men in a safe way without misunderstandings where you live in the US? Where will the best place be to entertain men in a safe way without misunderstandings where you live/study abroad?

Concept of Male Friendship – A Boundary Misunderstanding

American women are accustomed to the concept of male friendship. It has a meaning that may not translate in the new culture. Being seen with a man, talking with a man, going out with a man may have a different "meaning" in the culture than a female student may intend. What does it mean in the culture you are in? Is that your intention? If no, change your behaviors to send the message you intend.

Strokes – Finding Deeper Meaning in Communication

Strokes are the measure of the exchange of communication between people. When interacting with others, we are constantly exchanging numbers of strokes. When we are communicating with peers, we tend to exchange a comparable number of strokes, a balanced exchange. In communication with those in authority however, the exchange may tend to not be balanced. The employee, for example, may tend to deliver more strokes than they receive from the boss. With friends, coworkers, spouse, children, authority figures, parents, strangers, strokes are delivered in varying amounts of balance or imbalance. Notice how this plays out in your life. Normally we are not aware of this measure of exchange as it operates at an unconscious level.

So it is, that when someone is being approached by a stranger or unwelcome individual, the amount of strokes should be kept to a minimum. In Latin culture, for instance, a man may sit next to a female student on a bus and begin an uninvited conversation with "Oh, baby. I love you." There is a tendency on some women's part to give a lecture on love to that individual ("How can you love me? You don't know me.", etc.)—providing a lot of strokes. Remember it's the number of strokes that are important, not the quality or content (negative or positive). This woman is then surprised to discover that the man continues and even escalates the harassment rather than moving away.

It is more effective to:

- Ignore the harassment/pretend ignorance
- Feign confusion/lack of understanding
- Move away/remove yourself from the situation

Confrontations of any type serve to encourage harassers who want attention, even negative attention will do. It's important to know about the power of strokes. When people come at you with strokes that you don't want, don't give away any strokes in return. Don't offer explanations. Get up and move, say no, but do not equalize the number of strokes exchanged as it may only escalate into getting you into more trouble.

Notice how strokes play out in your life. Notice the relationships where strokes are not equal—where someone is giving you far more strokes than you are giving out, and notice how it feels inside. Does it make you uncomfortable? This is true in all kinds of relationships, and can be used to help identify predators.

Harassment behavior and language varies from one culture to another. How do men harass women in the culture in which you are visiting? How do national women in that culture deal with it? Notice their effectiveness and use their response as a model.

Assertiveness

Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
Passive <ul style="list-style-type: none">· "Too Nice"· Suck it up· Hold it in· Denial· Subtle manipulation· Guilt· Powerless· Latent Hostility· Weak Boundaries - not setting personal limits	Assertive <ul style="list-style-type: none">· "Firm"· Deliver messages clearly· "I" statements· "Broken record" technique (say "No, thank you" and then keep saying it over and over)· Good boundaries	Aggressive <ul style="list-style-type: none">· "Mean"· Blow it out· Explode· Expressed Hostility· Overt Manipulation· Threats/Ultimatums· Guilt· Powerless/Out of control· Rigid boundaries

Actions

Actions speak louder than words. Make sure your body language is congruent with your words. If you say no with a smile on your face or in a weak, unconvincing voice, the words lose their force and power. Say no firmly and swiftly and follow that up with removing yourself from the situation and getting assistance if needed to back you up.

Persistent People

Use the broken record technique when faced with a situation when someone will not take no for an answer. Do not be coerced into backing down from your position by the persistence of the person insisting. Just because they did not accept your "no" does not mean you now need to come up with another reason or excuse. Keep saying the same answer over and over again, without developing a new reason or excuse each time the other person doesn't accept it. You don't have to be creative. Stick to your answer and just don't budge.

Example:

"Would you like to go to the movies with me?"

"No, thank you. I can't go."

"Oh, come on. It's just a movie."

"No, thank you. I can't go."

"I'll get you home early. I'll be a perfect gentleman."

"No, thank you. I can't go."

"Oh, you're too good for me, is that it?"

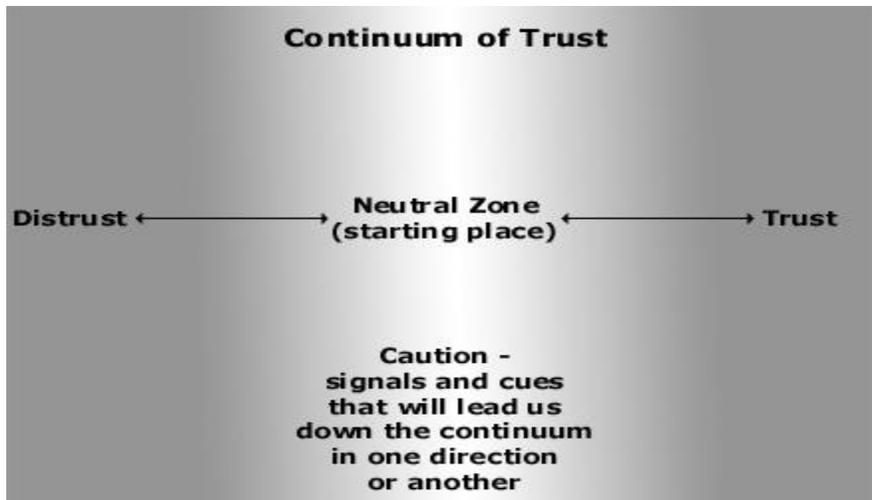
"No, thank you. I can't go."

"Oh, you can't go?"

"No, thank you. I can't go."

"Oh."

Trust



Trust needs to be earned. Many people have the mistaken notion that people should be trusted until proven otherwise. Actually, it is prudent to stay in a neutral position about a person, neither trusting nor distrusting them at first. Gather information from this person that will help you determine the trustworthiness of the person. In a new culture, watch for clues and cues from people who know the person and figure out how trusted they are by the community.

Harassment Burn Out

Harassing behavior is annoying at best and threatening and dangerous at worst. All students should seek assistance if harassment towards them becomes out of control and /or causes increased anxiety and anger. Many students reach a point, after which time they can no longer tolerate the catcalls on the street with the same humor they had when they arrived in country. For some, the irritation escalates to anger and retaliation. Some students have acted out toward men on the street (yelling at them, insulting them, throwing things, hitting them) out of exasperation. This aggressive behavior is dangerous. It is a warning sign that needs to be addressed for your protection. It is very understandable that the harassment has "gotten to you," but exhibiting aggressive behavior back can put you at risk. This "burn out" is a signal that it's time to take a break. Get out of town. Take a vacation. Go talk to your teachers, staff, and/or counselor. Do some stress relieving exercises that work for you. Talk to someone. Do something different!

Predators/Prey

In the wild, when an animal is either separated from the herd, is weak, young, injured, or otherwise vulnerable, it is likely that a predator will spot the animal, consider it prey and attack.

It is essential to your safety that you never allow yourself to be vulnerable to attack, that you avoid behaviors that can make you prey. You may have the right to walk down the beach at 2:00 in the morning, but if you do, you are making yourself prey to a waiting predator.

You may want to go to a bar or a party and have some fun, let off some steam, kick back and have a good time but if you drink alcohol or use any mood altering substance, you are now potential prey. It's as if you said to the strangers/acquaintances around you, "I'm going to relinquish control of myself/my body now. I put myself in your hands." Being at the effect of substances of any kind sets us up to be vulnerable to the attack of a predator.

It's not fair. Of course, it's not. But it's true—and staying in control of yourself can save your life. Being awake and aware allows you to pick up on warning signs that alert you that something is wrong. In the book, *The Gift of Fear*, Gavin deBecker describes the "gut feeling", the intuitive sense, that something is not right—that some danger may be present—as the gift of fear. Fear alerts us if we are awake and aware and respectful of the feelings we get. We must not override our sense of fear by saying to ourselves, "I don't know what I'm worried about, I'm sure nothing's wrong here", instead of paying attention to that little voice in our gut that says, "I don't know what's going on here, but something's up". It is really, really important to pay attention to our intuition, that little sense of knowing that something is amiss here, and not to dismiss it or deny it.

In his book, deBecker describes seven (7) ways that predators manipulate people to become prey. Learn all of these strategies so that you will not fall prey to them yourself. The tactics are:

- Forced teaming: intentional and directed manipulation to establish premature trust, example: "we're in this together"—a form of false rapport
- Charm and niceness: manipulative, deceptive, for self-gain
- Too many details: a tactic used when people are lying
- Typecasting: a slight insult designed to manipulate a woman to feel compelled to prove its inaccuracy
- Loan sharking: unsolicited giving designed to create a feeling of indebtedness
- The unsolicited promise: false promises
- Discounting the word "no": when someone refuses to accept "no" for an answer

More about these tactics can be learned from reading the book, *The Gift of Fear*. It is a highly recommended resource for anyone wanting to be more savvy about ways to protect themselves.

Potential Predator Behavior—Progressive Intrusive Invasion of Boundaries

If in a situation there is someone giving you more attention that you want, or is finding excuses to touch you, this can be potentially dangerous to your safety. For example, a guy comes up to a woman and gently brushes his shoulder up against her, flipping her hair off her shoulder, grazing her hand. She's thinking, "This is creeping me out, but I'm sure I'm overreacting, I'm sure he doesn't mean anything." This is where danger begins. He is thinking, "How much will she tolerate and allow? How long can I get away with this without her calling me on it? How far can I go?"

Touch:

- Uninvited, seemingly "unintentional" touching (brushing up against a woman's leg or arm, touching her hair)

Escalated touch:

- If not acknowledged and objected to, the touch will escalate (hand on thigh, hand on arm, sitting very close)

Forced sense of indebtedness:

- Creating a sense of indebtedness (buying an unsolicited drink or meal for example) and then expecting her attention in return (a dance, to walk her home, to spend time with her)

Conclusion

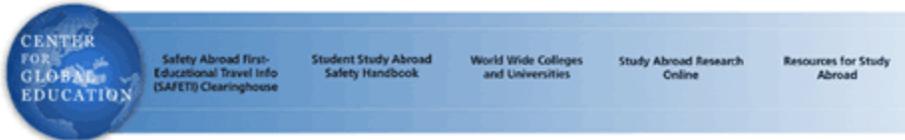
While some men are harassed, women experience the majority of sexual harassment and sexual assault. If you are a female student, this reality undoubtedly frustrates and angers you to have to be so very aware of your safety. If you are a male student, it likely dismays and angers you that women are ever treated disrespectfully.

There are steps to take to minimize risk in while traveling abroad and maximize fun and a rich cultural experience. It is important for women to:

- Integrate into their community
- Make friends with the women of the village
- Learn from the women about self-protection and practice what you learn
- Dress according to local customs
- Interact with men according to the local customs
- Behave according to the local customs
- Stay in control; staying sober and alert keeps your senses in place to protect you
- Have a buddy system: having at least one other person with you that you trust can help you in regular circumstances as well as in problematic situations (what if someone spikes your drink). It is generally a good idea to travel in groups
- Pay attention and respond to any inner signal (intuition) that "something isn't right" and remove yourself from the situation

Do not try to behave like you would in the States. You are here to experience a different way of life, one that allows you to assimilate into your village, to "join" the community, to have a full, rich cultural experience. Enjoy it. You are not giving up yourself—you, indeed, are expanding on your choices as a female. This article has been created as an invitation to you to be awake and aware and to acknowledge the realities of potential safety issues around you. To live your life as if this isn't so is to deny yourself adequate protection. Treat yourself well.

Nancy Newport is a psychotherapist in private practice in Fairfax, Virginia. She has been a counseling consultant to the Peace Corps since 1992 and has a specialty in treating trauma, especially sexual and physical assault. Ms. Newport conducts the Peace Corps Medical Officer Training on sexual harassment and assault treatment. She is certified in Clinical Hypnotherapy, NLP and EMDR and uses these modalities extensively in her trauma work. Ms. Newport is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Brasil). Her website is: <http://www.nancynewport.com>.



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APPENDIX B: PITZER COLLEGE STUDY ABROAD OVERVIEW OF ETHICAL PRACTICES OF RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY

1. Informed Consent

RESEARCH

When conducting an interview or using a conversation for research data collection, you must have informed consent from the individual. This means you must inform the individual of your research intentions and who might possibly view your data before interviewing that individual. You must accept any refusal or declination to be interviewed.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Please consult with your program director regarding cultural and legal issues involved in photographing of members of the host culture. Please ask each individual you intend to photograph before taking any pictures. Be specific about the intended use of the photo. If appropriate, given the norms of the culture in which you are conducting research, get a signed release form. Please do not take pictures for public use unless given permission by the individual in the photograph and the director of your program.

Photographing children – Again, consult with your program director. In many countries, you may not do this without the approval of the parents/legal guardian. In general it is best to take photos only when the parents are present and give their approval. Again, if appropriate, use an authorization form in their first language and never assume they know what it says.

2. Compensation

Before offering compensation for participation in a research project to any individual, discuss your plans with the faculty supervisor of your project and the director of your program. Never loan money to anyone in the organization in which you are working or any individual involved in your project.

3. Questions

Be critical of the types of questions you include in everyday conversation, surveys, and/or interviews. Avoid questions that may frighten or intimidate the people you are interviewing. Be respectful of their privacy and ask only questions that have a clear purpose. Always explain your intentions. Assure confidentiality. For example, if working with a mostly undocumented population, you must always be aware of issues of privacy and law. Whenever possible, review and refine your research questions with your program director and faculty adviser before beginning your field research.

4. Confidentiality

If you are discussing sensitive topics that make the individual uneasy, always assure confidentiality and always keep your promise. Never use real names or any other information that can lead to an individual's identity in your data, field book, research notes or final paper. Keep a private key to the names for your own private use, but do not release those names. Always ask the individual if you can use his/her real name before doing so. In some cases you may want to use a pseudonym for your research location (village, community, organization) to add another level of confidentiality. Discuss this with your program director and faculty adviser.

5. Culture and Reality

Always be aware of the specific reality of your particular site. This reality may be different from what you would expect, what you are accustomed to, or what you commonly understand. Or it may be very similar to what you would expect. Whatever the situation, there are some general guidelines to follow in order to retain professionalism in a community environment. For example, dress code can become an issue in many environments. It is important to dress in a manner that affirms you as a student with an academic and community-based purpose. Otherwise, you may attract attention that may be perceived negatively or be misunderstood.

Also, age and gender play roles in forming relationships. For example, if you are working with older participants, they may expect you to demonstrate clear respect for them because of their long and often complex histories, yet they may feel they have to be deferential to you because you are college-educated and therefore have a high social/economic

position. These relationships of power and respect are sometimes difficult to manage, but you should always be sensitive to another individual's life experiences. Everyone is a teacher, and everyone is a student. Keep lines of communication open. Assume good will.

6. Safety

If there is any question about safety (e.g. the neighbourhood where your internship or research site is located), try to go to your site with a partner – especially at night. Consider going with a fellow student, a member of your host family, or a trusted member of the organization where you are working. Always have the organization supervisor or a staff member present at your site when you are there. Never go to your site alone when confronting a conflict or problem. Ask your program director to accompany you under such a circumstance.

7. Phone numbers

Never give out your phone number or the address or phone number of your host family. You can use the number of your program office if you absolutely must give contact information.

8. Sexuality and Gender Considerations

Cultural norms in this area vary greatly. In general, the guidelines you receive for culturally appropriate behaviour in the community and with your host families should apply for your internship or research. Check with your program director on any special considerations you need to be aware of in your particular situation. While cultural norms may vary, certain behaviours are not acceptable. Sexual harassment will not be permitted in any form (although the understanding/definition of sexual harassment will vary from culture to culture, and you need to be sensitive to this). This means that within the context of your host culture, you should refrain from any type of behaviour that gives the appearance of sexual harassment. By the same token, we will not permit any type of sexual harassment to be perpetrated on you. At the first sign of a problem please contact your program director so that you can work together to resolve the situation.

Keep in mind that any romantic or sexual relationships you form with people involved in your research or internship (clients, participants, supervisors, interviewees, etc.) may be unethical and/or culturally inappropriate, could negatively affect your ability to conduct your project, and might have negative consequences for the person you are involved with. Please consult with your program director for clarification in this regard if this is likely to become an issue.

9. Working with Children

Consult with your program director regarding cultural, ethical and legal concerns you need to understand when working with children. In general, if you witness any type of physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, emotional maltreatment of a child you should report to your program director. You are not permitted to transport children.

10. First Aid

You should learn and follow your organization's procedures for medical emergencies and the administration of first aid. You should wear protective gloves when coming in contact with blood or any type of wound. Take special care around needles or other medical instruments if you are working in a health care situation. It is always best, whenever possible, to allow a school nurse, local health professional, or member of your organization to handle medical and first aid situations.

11. Punctuality and Follow-through

It is important to remember that some of those with whom you may be working (e.g. children, adolescents, abused girls and women) may have abandonment issues. You may trigger negative emotions if you are late or fail to show up when you are scheduled. It is imperative that you prove to them that they can count on you for doing as you promise. In addition, you are a role model, and they will see no reason to follow through with their promises if you do not follow through with yours.

Note: This document was adapted from a document produced by the Pitzer College Community Engagement Center (formerly California Center for Cultural and Social Issues). These guidelines may be modified to fit the cultural and legal realities of your particular program site.

Pitzer College: Study Abroad
Declaration to Adhere to Ethical Practices of Research and Engagement in Community

Read the document. Place your name, date and signature at the bottom.

1. I will always obtain consent from the participants for any interview/questionnaire/research/evaluation I conduct with them. I will inform them of the purpose of the task. I will respect their decision and not treat them unfairly if they decline to participate.
2. When I ask questions of the participants – whether for research or everyday conversation – I will refrain from asking any questions which might be construed as intimidating or frightening. I will always explain my intentions and assure confidentiality.
3. I will always obtain consent for photographing, audio taping, or videotaping the individuals. If appropriate, I will get a signed release form - even if the collection of this information is for my personal use. When photographing, audio taping, interviewing, or videotaping children/minors, I will always go to the parents or legal guardian for consent.
4. If these individuals are clients of or participants in a particular organization with which I am working, I will always get permission from the director of the organization before I take any action related to my research.
5. If I keep field notes or other written records of my interactions, I will refrain from using real names. I may choose to create a key to the names, which I will keep confidential.
6. I will arrive at the organization or research site at the time I am scheduled. If there is preparatory work to be done for the meeting, I will complete that work before the meeting or arrive early enough before the meeting to make necessary preparations.
7. I will dress in a manner appropriate for the program, organization, or community with which I am working. In addition, I will be sensitive with regard to dress and attitude to not in any way demonstrate disrespect to its members, clients, or collaborators of that organization.
8. I will always use respectful language at my site and in my research interactions.
9. I will follow all safety guidelines given to me by the program director and organization supervisor, including precautions related to travel to and from my site.
10. I will ask for and follow safety, first aid, and other emergency procedures from my site.
11. If it is necessary to give a contact number to others in relation to this project, I will provide the number or email of the program office. I will not give out my personal contact information or that of my host family.
12. If I feel I am the recipient of any form of harassment in the organization with which I am working or I am confused about any behaviour or language that is directed at me, I will consult with the program director and organization supervisor immediately.
13. If I witness any type of abuse or harassment, or behaviour that I am not sure about, I will consult with my program director immediately in order to better understand the situation, and if necessary, resolve or report a problem.

I have read, understood, and agree to follow these ethical practices of research and engaging in the community.

Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Note: This document has been adapted from the original produced by the Pitzer College Community Engagement Center (formerly the Center for California Cultural and Social Issues).

APPENDIX C: ANSWERS TO CROSS-CULTURAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The following statements are based on expectations commonly held by US students planning to study in Nepal and on dilemmas and issues students often face once they arrive in the country.

Directions: Please mark each statement below as true (if it is generally true) or false (if it is generally false).

- 1. FALSE - On the Pitzer in Nepal program, one of the most difficult physical adjustments for many students is getting used to the cold and the altitude.**

On the contrary, most of the areas where the majority of students spend the bulk of their time range from warm temperate to sub-tropical depending on the month. Students living with families are more often faced with the challenge of adjusting to the heat (April through September), the rain (May through September) and sleeping under mosquito nets (March through October) than with cold and altitude, which is only experienced on treks high into the Himalayas and for a few months during the winter (November through February).

- 2. FALSE - Most Nepalis are vegetarians due to their Hindu and Buddhist beliefs.**

The vast majority of Hindus and Buddhists in Nepal do *not* abstain from eating meat because of religious beliefs. In fact, most relish the chance to eat meat. However, this is an infrequent treat (thus the myth of religious abstinence) because meat of all types (whether you buy it in the bazaar or purchase a live animal) is very expensive by local standards. During the fall Dasain festival however, Hindus throughout Nepal eat a steady diet of (depending on their caste and income) goat, chicken, sheep or buffalo from animals sacrificed to the goddess Durga. Another surprising fact concerning meat: while killing a cow is still illegal according to Nepali law, several of the ethnic groups including Sherpa, Tamang and Tibetan do enjoy eating beef, as do many tourists in hotels and restaurants where steak and hamburger (beef not buff) are common items on the menu, even, in some cases, when the proprietor is a devout Hindu.

- 3. TRUE - While students planning to study abroad in Nepal often envision a more traditional, rural lifestyle, most host families now have televisions and watch them regularly.**

Television has come to Kathmandu, and other areas of the Himalayas that have electricity. Programming ranges from indigenous Nepali productions to Hindi programs from India along with Hindu religious epics and yes, even a few American serials. Most middle class families even in village areas, now own a television. Families who do not have one of their own regularly visit their neighbors who do. This is part of life now days in the region and students need to be prepared to participate in and learn from this newest addition to Nepali culture rather than resist it.

- 4. FALSE - Since Nepali culture places such a very high value on hospitality for guests, turning down food offered to you by your host is almost always offensive.**

While hospitality is highly valued, Nepalis politely refuse offers of food all the time and so too can American students. This is a crucial point for students to understand because there will be times when politely refusing food or drink will be intimately related to staying healthy. Of course, this requires deep knowledge of the culture, sensitivity to context, and the language and culture skills to do this in an appropriate way (all beginning language classes should teach this). In particular, students need to know that most Nepalis will offer you something several times and insist you partake before accepting no for an answer. In many cases, even if one intends to partake, proper etiquette dictates hesitating and/or refusing the first couple of offers before finally accepting.

- 5. FALSE - Women students often have a very hard time adjusting to gender roles in Nepal. For men, who are given preferential treatment in Nepali culture, it's a lot easier.**

Actually, although it is never easy, many (but not all) women often have a good sense of what to expect regarding gender roles and come prepared for the challenge of respecting and learning from a very different set of cultural values and behaviors. Many men, on the other hand, tend to react strongly to this part of the culture when they see how it is played out with their host mother and sisters even though it doesn't affect them as directly as it does women students.

- 6. FALSE - Students who are tired of the restrictive structure of their home campus and its highly structured academic schedule may want to consider study abroad in Nepal for a more relaxed schedule and a whole semester of independent, autonomous learning.**

This is a common misconception of many students who choose a cultural immersion program. Because these types of programs are often more community based and not always associated with a university, many students believe the schedule and structure will allow for more free time and independence. This may be true during the independent study period of the program but not the case during the first two to three months when intensive language study, family stays and other course work often present a more demanding and restrictive schedule than what many students are used to on their home campus.

7. FALSE - Since menstruation is considered ritually polluting in a high caste Hindu family, the best course of action for a female student living with such a family is to pretend that she is not having her period.

Menstruation is considered ritually polluting in many Nepali Hindu families and the best way for a female student to learn about this aspect of the culture (and something of what it means to be a Hindu woman) is to inform her host sister and host mother as soon as her period arrives and participate fully in any restrictions the family may wish to impose on her. To not do so, will cause the family untold anguish (after the first month goes by) as they speculate on whether a female guest might inadvertently be polluting the kitchen, water containers, worship area or adult males in the family, or even be pregnant, an equally scandalous situation. Female language teachers and staff members are excellent resources for helping American women deal with this in an appropriate and educational manner (as long as they do not over-generalize from how things work in their own families or in the office). It should be covered thoroughly during on-site orientation before students are placed with families. Male students need to be oriented to this as well in regard to interactions with their host mothers and sisters during these times.

8. FALSE - The Nepal program setting is an ideal study abroad location for students who want to get away from air pollution, crime and other ill effects of modernization and study a people living in harmony with their environment.

This is still true for most of the Himalayas, but not so much for Kathmandu, where air pollution, roadside trash in the bazaars, sewage and water pollution are major problems. Petty crime exists in locations and harassment is a problem in Kathmandu. None the less, Nepalis from all walks of life in Nepal have not lost their sense of hospitality and warmth for which they are so well known, ancient traditions abound and one doesn't have to search far to find that there are still areas that retain their rural, agrarian charm, sections of cities and towns that are still medieval in character, and people who still have a strong and healthy relationship with the land.

9. FALSE - Modesty is highly valued for women in Nepali culture and women students Therefore, they should never wear short skirts, shorts or revealing blouses and tank tops. Men, on the other hand, have fewer cultural restrictions on dress, and are free to wear shorts and tank tops during warm weather.

True for women, false for men. While shorts may be appropriate attire for a man around the house, or for parts of a trek, men should not wear shorts to class (their Nepali counter-parts would never wear shorts to a college class) or on public outings into town. Modesty for men is also highly valued and care must be attended to when bathing at public fountains or water taps. In short, men need to learn what is appropriate dress and behavior just as much as women do.

10. FALSE - The easiest way for a student to learn if they are not acting in a culturally appropriate way is to ask a member of their host family.

The last people to tell you directly that you are acting or dressing in a way that is embarrassing, culturally inappropriate or offensive may be your family, even if you ask them directly. They would not want to hurt your feelings. They very likely will indicate their awkwardness in other ways, but it takes a while in the culture to be able to pick up these less-direct, more subtle clues about your behavior. In the meantime, the best bet is to regard family members your own age and gender as role models for dress and behavior. Do as they do, not as they say.

11. FALSE - Most students find the level of spiritualism they encounter in the Himalayas a refreshing change from the materialism and commercialism of the west.

Students expect to find a society and culture much less materialistic than here in America and are often shocked to find many Nepalis (even members of their host families) to be much more materialistic. While religious ritual does pervade many if not most aspects of Nepali life, students often encounter a preoccupation with acquiring things (especially things students have brought along) that shocks them. Nepalis have much less than our students, for sure, but want things more. This is understandable, but a major disconnect from the spiritualistic emphasis students often expect to find.

12. FALSE - A common way students inadvertently insult their host family is by locking the door to their room (or putting their valuables in a locked box) whenever they leave home.

Not so. Quite to the contrary, most families insist that students lock their room when they leave. Many villagers, especially children, come and go throughout the house and families are concerned something might end up missing. In fact, most family members will have their own box in which they lock valuables and money. To illustrate the importance Nepalis put on this, host-family mothers often recited the following proverb: "Tighten the strings well on your tailee (money pouch); never have to doubt your friend."

13. FALSE - Nepalis perceive Americans as rich and this often colors the way they treat you. As a student however, most Nepalis will accept the fact that you do not have limitless amounts of money and interact with you accordingly.

Nepalis do perceive Americans as rich and there isn't much we can say or do that will change this belief. The fact that we are in Nepal (most Nepalis can barely afford a trip to Kathmandu, let alone the States) is proof enough as far as they are concerned. The amount of "junk" we bring along with us in our backpacks only adds to this belief. In fact, most students, even those on financial aid who might have thought they were "poor" before coming to Nepal, come to realize that the Nepali perspective here is pretty accurate: in the overall scheme of things, we are indeed, pretty affluent.

14. TRUE - Despite the advantages for cultural immersion, trekking alone in many areas of the Himalayas is a high-risk activity.

Unfortunately, things have changed from twenty years ago. Poverty for many in the middle-hills has increased. Trekkers with their expensive cameras, tennis shoes and down sleeping bags have also increased (probably ten-fold) but the benefits trickle down to few locals. The temptation to acquire some of these goods the easy way is very tempting and theft along most trekking routes has been on the rise. More alarming is the fact that every year one or two trekkers simply disappear, sometimes even along popular routes. Students who have only been in Nepal for three or four months will not have the "street smarts" to recognize and avoid potential trouble (such as areas where men gather to drink at night). Every student should still have the amazing experience of trekking alone (without other Americans) if they want, but this should be done only when and where the program can assure it is safe and only in the company of one or two reliable Nepali companions (program staff or faculty, a host family member, or a trustworthy guide or porter selected by the program).

15. FALSE - Most Nepalis are Hindus and therefore practice meditation and yoga daily, making homestays an ideal place for students to pursue these disciplines.

While students will come across the occasional elderly Brahmin or Hindu ascetic who regularly practices these activities, few Nepalis actually meditate and even fewer practice yoga. Rather, the village Hinduism that most students will experience in the context of their host families will consist of worship and devotion ceremonies and prayers, a great concern with avoiding ritual pollution, fasting and purification rituals, all intertwined with many aspects of daily life. For many Nepalis these rituals, devotions and fasts, frame a very spiritual side to their lives, but yoga and meditation are more likely to be found in the tourist areas of Kathmandu (and popular eastern religious centers in Colorado and California) than in village Nepal.

16. TRUE - Students are often disturbed and conflicted by the fact that Nepalis worship cows but kick and throw rocks at dogs; venerate rocks, trees and rivers as divine but litter indiscriminately around temples and use riverbanks as public toilets.

This is an unexpected and difficult fact for students to adjust to and also something that is very hard to explain. Part of this has to do with the lack of public facilities in popular, public areas, but much more with deep cultural notions of purity, cleanliness and aesthetics, which are very different from our own. It is not clear whether Nepalis consider their behavior toward dogs as cruel, but it is far from the notions of non-violence and respect for all life that most of our students attribute to Hindus.

17. FALSE - US students are often surprised to find that their very strong egalitarian values are matched with similar values and behavior among the educated Nepalis. Despite caste differences for instance, which are still played out ritually, a high caste or senior language teacher on the program would never order a lower caste member of the program kitchen staff to run errands, wash clothes or do other menial tasks of a personal nature.

Quite to the contrary, senior language and administrative staff often order other, lower-level staff on the program to run errands, bring food, or even wash clothes. Once students realize this is happening, and especially if they have taken a liking to some of the staff who are performing these tasks, they have a very hard time accepting the behavior. It conflicts dramatically with our own cultural notions of equality and fairness.

18. FALSE - When trekking, it is important for American students to carry their own pack in order not to contribute to the exploitation of Nepalis porters, and in order to save face.

Many students struggle with this issue. While some exploitation of porters certainly takes place (this is usually by other Nepalis – especially Nepali trek leaders), most porters depend on this income to supplement their subsistence farming which may only provide enough food for five or six months of the year. If students take care to give a fair load and pay the going rate, most Nepalis would consider the hiring of a porter as a much-needed source of income, not as exploitation. And (from the Nepali perspective again) if someone with as much money as an American is foolish enough to carry his or her own pack, and in doing so, deny an important source of income for locals, you can be sure there will be a loss of face rather than a gain of prestige.

19. FALSE - Bargaining by westerners is regarded as insulting by most Nepalis.

Actually, students who have developed the language and cultural competency to bargain in a culturally appropriately fashion, gain instant respect and have lots of fun in the process. The only Nepalis who might possibly claim they were insulted by this would be young English-speaking fringe Nepalis in the tourist areas of Kathmandu or Pokhara (usually the ones selling hashish and urging students to change money on the black market).

20. FALSE - It's a poor country so paying a little more than the going rate in wages to a porter, or a few more rupees for eggs or vegetables in village Nepal is a nice gesture and should be encouraged.

Not so. This is another case where an apparent good turn can do more harm than good. Nepal is a poor country with many very delicately balanced micro –economies as one goes from one area to another. If just a few westerners fail to find out the local rate and pay more, this can easily raise the price for everyone, including other Nepalis who cannot afford the increase. As one villager put it, "Why should I sell a neighbor a chicken for 200 rupees when those trekkers over there (or the ones coming tomorrow) will pay 400?" Many a village economy has been thrown for a loop by careless trekkers who decide how much to pay based more on prices in their own country rather than on local norms.



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