IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Cultural Immersion While Abroad (click on the link)
The study abroad programs at Pitzer College provide ample opportunities for cultural immersion. They require adaptation. Wherever you go, we hope you will engage the local lifestyle, language, and culture as fully as possible, and begin to understand your hosts. Most programs provide experienced cross-cultural guidance as well as structured activities that facilitate interaction. Pitzer asks that you make the commitment to take those opportunities and follow that guidance when you participate in a study abroad program. Notice the word commitment. Immersion does not 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 College Program Model (click on the link)
Pitzer’s Study Abroad programs ask students to engage in the local lifestyle, language, and culture as fully as possible. Our programs provide ample opportunities for cultural immersion and integrated learning. 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 intercultural learning experience. Your program may consist of a combination of language learning, family stays, study trips, community interaction, the core class, and independent learning.

PROGRAM LOCATION

Map data ©2017 Google
Nepal from Space
Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia. It has a diverse geography including fertile plains, forested hills, and some of the world’s tallest mountains. Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, and multi-cultural state, with Nepali as the official language. Nepal is amid 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. Kathmandu is the nation’s capital and the largest city. A successful 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. The republic is 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. Issues such as rural development, rural to urban migration, infrastructure, health care, education, sustainable tourism, and many others remain paramount.

Students spend a large portion of the program in the Kathmandu Valley. In 2015, Kathmandu Valley was hit by the April 2015 Nepal earthquake. The earthquake caused thousands of deaths and the destruction of infrastructure across the Kathmandu Valley. Currently, Nepal’s post-earthquake reconstruction has made great strides. As part of the program students can explore some of the most important cultural and religious sites of the Kathmandu Valley. You will also be able to explore other parts of the country through the study trips.

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Pitzer in Nepal fall 2023 program will run from August 10 (arrival) – December 15 (departure).

**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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course Credits</th>
<th>Semester Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Course: Nepal Studies</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Nepali Language</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Study Project</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Semester Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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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 decide. Check before you go.

ACADEMICS

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. 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.

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 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.

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.

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.

Terai Field Study Trip
Students get a chance to view the big game in Chitwan National Park and learn about the indigenous cultures of the region. This park on the India-Nepal border is home to elephants, one-horned rhinos, 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. Students also participate in cultural dinners and discuss government interference as it relates to land rights and fishing laws.

Pokhara/Tangting Field Study Trip
This section includes a chance to explore in and around Pokhara itself as well as the mid-hill village of Tangting. Pokhara, known for its stunning panoramic view of the Annapurna Himal, and the view from Tangting is even more spectacular. This trip 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.

Simigaun
During the third month of the program, students will travel to and live in a Sherpa/Tamang village at the base of the Rolwaling Himal. 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. Pitzer has a long-standing relationship with the village and has fostered deep and meaningful relationships with local families. This study trip is one of the highlights of the program for many students.

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. Homes will have your basic needs but will be more rustic than homes in the U.S as Nepal is still a developing country. There is little chance of privacy. Lifestyles are heavily informed by subsistence farming practices and by traditional Hindu beliefs. Students typically participate in regular family life including celebrating holidays, participating in religious practices, and attending weddings and family events. Students often consider family stays to be the most meaningful dimension of the program.
Not Necessarily Nirvana: A True/False Quiz on Expectations

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 smart phones and use 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 is 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 is 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.
**Intensive Nepali Language**

The key to realizing your educational goals in Nepal will be your ability to communicate in Nepali. 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.

The aim of this course is to provide you with a basic working knowledge of the Nepali language and to promote communication and interaction with the people of Nepal. Instruction emphasizes oral proficiency as well as practice in reading and writing the Nepali script. All instructors are native Nepali speakers skilled in proficiency-based, communicative, interactive teaching methods. Sentence structure, grammar and vocabulary are progressively introduced each day within situational contexts and with limited English explanation, encouraging you to understand and use Nepali in natural contexts. Language instructors accompany students on trips and treks, providing both structured and informal field instruction. As a part of your language training, instructors emphasize the cultural context of daily lessons and incorporate cultural information into the language curriculum. Throughout the semester, classes are held 3-5 hours per day, 5-6 days per week, for a total of approximately 200 in-class hours. Class size is small, with a student-teacher ratio of 3:1.

**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.

ISP proposals will be developed and approved in consultation with program staff, faculty, and local scholars or specialists. 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.

**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.

**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.

**Summary**

1. Pick a topic you are passionate about and that is feasible.
2. Do something you cannot 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.

**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. 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. 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.

- **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.)


- **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.)


- **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.)


- **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/](http://www.pitzer.edu/study-abroad/pitzer-students/acceptance/nepal-articles/).

If you just do not 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 cannot 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* 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/](http://nepalitimes.com/) is the most popular English language weekly news magazine.

**Ekantipur** [http://www.ekantipur.com](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.


**Himal Southasia** [http://www.himalmag.com/](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 would like to participate in, people you would 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 – Chetri) culture as described in your readings, especially by Bennett and Stone, and also by Scott. It is 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 have 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.

**PREPARE TO GO**

Any outstanding study abroad, financial, and academic issues must be resolved before the due dates listed in the study abroad application portal 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.

**Passports**

Anyone on the program will need a passport. Check the expiration date before leaving for your program. 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. Once arriving in Nepal you can choose to leave your passport with the program staff who will keep it in a safe at the program house for safekeeping.

**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 [https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.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: [https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html). 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**

If you are traveling with a US passport you will get your visa for Nepal upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. We are in the process of renewing our agreement with Tribhuvan University and it could take some time, so we would like each of you to get a **90-day tourist visa** when you arrive at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. You will need US $125 in cash to pay for the visa. The program will reimburse you that amount in rupees on your first day so you will not need to change money in the airport and you’ll have plenty of rupees right off the bat. You will also need one passport photo, and your Covid vaccination card (which they may or may not check). You can do everything upon arrival, but if you fill out the form on-line before your arrival it could save you as much as 1.5 hours of waiting in lines. You can do so at the following link: [https://nepaliport.immigration.gov.np/](https://nepaliport.immigration.gov.np/) Click on the box that says, “Visa Upon Arrival” Your entry point will be Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA). You will apply for a 90-day multiple entry tourist visa. Your purpose of visit will be tourism. Your address in Nepal will be the same as in the back of our handbook:

Suryabinayak 2 Balkot - 5/53
Bhaktapur, Nepal

You can download your completed form and present it as a hard copy (best) or digital copy to the person who collects the money, and then to the immigration officer who will issue the actual visa. Once the visa is entered into your passport double check to make sure you got the 90-day visa before you leave the immigration officer.

As soon as you have your visa, you will go downstairs, collect your luggage, pass through customs, and exit the terminal where our program staff will be waiting for you and take you back to the program house. If you come out of the terminal and can’t find our program staff, please wait next to the terminal. Occasionally there are huge traffic jams on the way to the airport and we assure you our program staff will be there soon. If no one from the program shows after a reasonable time, please ask someone to call our program directors for you (see numbers in the back of this book).

Please remember not to eat or drink anything at the airport. We’ll have snacks and chiyaa waiting for you at the program house, and we want everyone to start off the program healthy.
You don’t need to buy a sim card at the airport. We will assist you in doing that once you are at the program house. Also, the program house has Wi-Fi and as soon as you arrive there you will be able to let your parents know you have arrived safely.

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!

Program Dates

The Pitzer in Nepal fall 2023 program will run from August 10 2023 (arrival) – December 15 (departure). Students should try to arrive before 2 p.m. on the arrival date, morning arrivals are preferred. 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 a major Asian city such as Singapore, Bangkok or Hong Kong, or through the Middle East (e.g. Doha, Dubai or Abu Dhabi) 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

KIM RUDD at Corniche Travel
Email: pitzer@corniche.com
Phone: 479-488-6058 7:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. PST

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.

**Itinerary**

**Upload a copy of your itinerary to your study abroad portal** when you book your flights. Remember to **upload a new itinerary each time there is a change** so the most current version is always visible.

**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 your host country. File a claim with the airline before you depart the airport. Program staff will follow up by contacting the airlines office in your host country. Keep your baggage tags. Usually lost baggage is recovered in two to three days.

**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.

In the very unlikely situation that you can’t find anyone from the program when you arrive, Pitzer in Nepal staff mobile phone numbers are listed on the final page of this handbook.

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 on the last page of the student version of this Handbook.

**Money Matters**

Most students do not have to spend a great deal of money in Nepal, but we **strongly recommend you come prepared to spend US. $1200 to $1500 during the program.** Such expenses could 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

You may want to bring more or less than this amount 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 $5 to $10 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 What to Bring)
- 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 are 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 $10.00 to $15 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 for times when you need to exchange money and can’t find a working ATM machine. Normally, you will get most of your money through your ATM Card and we recommend that you have another $1000 in your ATM account.

**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).

**Guest 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.**

**What to bring**

**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, 2 long-sleeve shirts, we recommend bringing a button down for sun etc. as well as a tighter long sleeve base layer for warmth which can be worn under t-shirts (this might include several nicer “blouses,” but are not required)
  - 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 pairs). Do bring bras. It is nice to bring a few tank tops to wear under shirts or under a button down for warmer weather.
  - Work clothes: Having 1-2 T-shirts and a pair of sweats, cargo, or other pants that you do not mind getting dirty while working in the fields might be a good idea. These also work well for trekking/ study trips.
  - 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). A pair of good sweatpants are nice to have for sleeping as well as hanging out at home. We also recommend a casual sweater or sweatshirt for this purpose as well.
  - 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: 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 encouraged 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 will not 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 have 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!). Program Alums recommend bringing a large selection of socks (10-15 pairs)!

- **Shoes and boots** - It will be hard to find a comfortable fit on site (especially if you have large feet, size 9½ 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** - Do not 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 fanny pack** 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.

- **Extra passport photos** - These will be used for your visa upon arrival and for historical site passes. It is helpful to have 5-10 extras.

### 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**

- **Universal Power converter**: The outlets in Nepal are different from those in the US. You can find an example of a power converter [HERE](#).

**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](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 antibiotics (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

- **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.

- **Extra prescription glasses and contact lenses**

- **Mole skin (or foam)** - four sheets, 8" x 8"

- **Insect repellant** - 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 choose 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/teffa 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 do not 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 does not taste nearly as good. Invaluable for trekking and/or if you get sick.

- **Chapstick** - Chapstick is nice to have on you at all times (alums also recommend bringing hand cream because you will be washing your hands often)

An alumna suggested bringing a large bottle of Dr. Bronner’s (biodegradeable, multipurpose castile soap found in most health food/ outdoor supply stores). It is 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/](http://www.keeper.com/) or [www.Divacup.com](http://www.Divacup.com).

Laptops
Students are required to bring a laptop to Nepal as all written assignments are required to be typed and submitted as word documents attached to an email. You will be glad to have it for your written assignments and other functions. Some of the host families have internet (we can’t guarantee it) and there is internet at the program house during certain times of the day, and there are restaurants and internet cafes where you can go and get good Wi-Fi. If you are not comfortable taking your laptop to your host family’s home or on a study trip, we have a secure safe at the program house where you can store it. Please make sure to back up your files on your laptop before heading off to Nepal.

Gifts
It is 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 potholders, 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 suggest frisbees, small (travel-size) lotions, and cosmetic items as gifts. Host mothers and sisters will greatly appreciate makeup or jewelry.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

A Note on Covid and Covid Protocols
Pitzer College has effectively set up a vaccine-to-vaccine study abroad model in all our sites, including Nepal. This model calls for all students to be fully vaccinated (including getting a booster at least two weeks before departure), and for our key people at each site (program staff, faculty, guest speakers, host families) to be fully vaccinated. The idea is that we will mitigate the risk of catching a break-through infection and/or spreading the virus by structuring our program as much as possible to have students interacting primarily in environments where the majority of vaccine eligible people are vaccinated. Of course, this is not going to be 100% possible in Nepal, just as it isn’t possible in our surrounding communities here in Claremont and SoCal, or anywhere in the US for that matter, but we believe we can organize the program in Nepal to minimize student exposure to
unvaccinated people and, of course, have strong protocols in place for social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing etc. at all times during the program.

Covid Situation in Nepal as of April 2023:

Vaccinations:
Nepal has made stunning progress in vaccinating its population:
As of April 18, 2023, according to the New York Times World Vaccine Tracker
https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/world/covid-vaccinations-tracker.html 85% of the population in Nepal as a whole are fully vaccinated (Compared to the US which is currently running about 68%). Additionally,

- The Kathmandu Valley has well over 90% vaccinated, perhaps even higher.
- The village of Simigaun is 100% vaccinated.
- We are attempting to select only host families where all eligible members are fully vaccinated and where there are no family members with higher-than-normal risk factors (immunocompromised, underlying health conditions)
- To the extent possible we will assure that all program staff, guest speakers and teachers are fully vaccinated
- Program staff will select study trips and other program activities with Covid 19 safety in mind.

Testing:
There are many places in Kathmandu where students can get the PCR tests and rapid antigen tests. The program provides at home testing kits to students when necessary.

Quarantine:

- There is no quarantine requirement upon arrival if a student shows proof of vaccination.
- If a student tests positive after arrival the student will quarantine at the Pitzer in Nepal program house for the appropriate amount of time. If a host family member test positive the student will quarantine at home with the host family or at the program house depending on the situation. In both cases, internet will be provided so that the student can keep up with course work virtually as much as possible

The Health Care System in Nepal

The health care system in Kathmandu and throughout Nepal is in good shape. Students will have no problem receiving quality medical care as they did in pre-Covid times, whether their condition is related to Covid or for other illnesses or accidents. Just as important, Pitzer students who need medical care will not be impacting the health care system in a negative way (e.g., taking up beds that should go to Nepalis).

Covid Protocol for the Pitzer in Nepal Program:

- As mentioned above, students will be required to be fully vaccinated, including a booster shot, at least two weeks before arrival in Nepal.
- Students will need to have their vaccination card available to present at immigration upon arrival in Nepal and possibly to their airlines upon departure from the US. We recommend students create a digital copy of their vaccination card that they can access on their smart phone as well as carry the original copy with their passport.
- Students should always remain masked when in the airport and when checking in and departing from the US or transiting through other airports.

The Nepal Department of Immigration rescinded all previously issued orders regarding country-specific travel limitations as of March 10, 2022. All travelers regardless of vaccine status can receive on-arrival visas at the port of entry. None the less, regulations can change at a moment’s notice and all Pitzer students need to be prepared to present a certificate of full vaccination against COVID-19. https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Nepal.html
● Students will be required to follow all masking, social distancing and hand washing requirements recommended by their airline for their international flight.

● Students will be required to follow all Covid guidelines recommended by the Nepalese authorities and Pitzer in Nepal. Students are required to follow these guidelines at the program center, when attending classes and meetings there, during study trips, and on-site visits to schools, NGOs, offices, etc. Up-to-date details will be provided by the program director upon arrival.

● Some program activities, study trips, independent travel destinations and social activities that were possible on past programs may be limited or prohibited depending on the program director’s assessment of risk. The idea here is that we will run the bulk of the program in areas where there are high vaccination rates and avoid areas of the country where vaccination rates are low. Since the situation is changing so rapidly (primarily for the better as the vaccination rate rises), this will be determined at the beginning of the program and reassessed regularly as the semester progresses. Currently, it looks very good for running all program activities and study trips.

● Any student who repeatedly resists following the program’s Covid protocol could be asked to return home with no refund and loss of credit.

**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 should not 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 have not 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 have not 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 repellant, 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.

**Larium** 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-affects 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 gastrointestinal. 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 will not 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 do not 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 is impossible to boil water. Iodine kills most organisms, but it is 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 would not 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 is 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 will inevitably swallow some. Keep your toothbrush in a clean, closed container. Do not 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 will 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 is 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 do not 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, **do not 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 do not 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 do not see the food prepared, yet you can be sure they do not 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 will see what we mean.

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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 are 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 cannot see it cooked, prepared, and served to you, do not 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 do not eat it. Do not eat salad. Do not 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 is 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 achars 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. Do not 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 – do not walk around barefoot immediately after the floor is rubbed down with cow dung.

**Swimming**

Do not 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 tarp big enough to wrap around the sides of the mattress is a great way to keep out fleas and bed bugs. You will not 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 have not 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 you are bitten by any animals (dogs, mice, monkeys, etc.) you must get Rabies shots, which are available in Kathmandu, immediately. 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 Kapectate for mild diarrhea while others (Bezruchkha) say it does not 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 does not 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 have not 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**

There are no reported cases of locally acquired Zika virus in Nepal to date, but the Aedes mosquito, which transmits the virus, can be found across a wide swathe of South and Southeast Asia, including Nepal. 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 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. 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.

Zika Virus Net – Updates on Zika from many sources including CDC, WHO, PAHO, and many others.

**Dengue**

In the last couple of years, the Aedes mosquito that carries Dengue has moved into the Kathmandu Valley and is thriving. Previously the Valley was too cold for this species of mosquito to survive, but with climate change, the Valley has become an ideal habitat and the last two years have seen serious outbreaks of Dengue during the late summer and into the fall when mosquitos are most active. There is no vaccination for Dengue (unlike for Japanese Encephalitis, which is also carried by the Aedes mosquito). In most healthy adults the disease will make you quite sick for a week or two, and in rare cases, it can become quite serious. For this reason, you need to be laser-focused on taking effective measures to prevent mosquito bites, especially around the program house and at your host family homes during mosquito season (April through late fall).

**Prevention of Mosquito Bites**

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, and it is now present in the Kathmandu Valley. 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.

While the Anopheles mosquito which carries malaria is strictly nocturnal, adult Aedes mosquitoes, which carry Dengue and Japanese Encephalitis, are active day and night, and like to bite around homes, as well as inside the home, even 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, although host family homes will not have 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/oppref/insect/](http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/) for a list of repellent products approved by the EPA
    - Repellents with DEET have proven to be the most effective. Pitzer students should bring an adequate supply of mosquito repellent with DEET from home as well as any other EPA-approved repellents they prefer. Most of these will not be available in Nepal.
- 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.
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 is 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 is 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 have not had water or ice mixed in.

8. Keep away from raw vegetables, fruits that you cannot 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. Do not 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 am 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. Do not get into the trap of being paranoid of offending your host at the expense of your health. If you are not 100% sure – politely refuse it (or in the case of drinks, iodize it), the people really worth having as friends will not 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.

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 will not 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 have not scared you off. We have given you our own cautious guidelines but we really do not 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 family. 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 hehead-on.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

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 they 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 next section reporting options.
SEXUAL VIOLENCE ABROAD

The risk of sexual violence is present both on and off-campus, and anyone can be a victim/survivor of sexual violence regardless of gender identity. Students studying abroad should maintain vigilance in their awareness and safety, as well as be aware of their role as an active bystander and ability to help look out for one another. The following guidelines have been adapted from the Claremont Colleges 7C Violence Prevention and Advocacy Sexual Misconduct Harm Reduction Strategies (https://www.7csupportandprevention.com/harm-reductionstrategies).

Please Note: These guidelines are provided with no intention to victim-blame. Only those who commit sexual violence are responsible for such conduct. It is never the fault of the victim/survivor.

1. While we emphasize cultural respect and sensitivity on all Pitzer study abroad programs, this should never require that you submit to behaviors that invade your personal boundaries and that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe about a person or situation, remove yourself from the situation as soon as possible. Never let anyone try to make you feel guilty for leaving a situation you feel uncomfortable in.

2. Be aware of your alcohol intake and/or other drug use. Be aware that alcohol and/or drug use can make you vulnerable to someone who views a drunk or high person as a sexual opportunity or target.

3. Do not leave your drink unattended and do not accept drinks from someone you do not know or trust. If you have left your drink alone, just get a new one.

4. If you do not want to engage in a particular activity, you can tell the other person “NO” clearly and firmly. You do not have to explain or justify your decision(s) about your personal boundaries.

5. Watch out for your friends and ask that they do so for you. A real friend will step in and challenge you if they see you are in a potentially dangerous situation. Respect them when they do. If a friend seems out of it, is too intoxicated, or is acting out of character, get your friend to a safe place immediately.

6. Do not go somewhere with someone you do not know well. If you do go to a club, bar or party, do so with a group of fellow students, your host brother or sister, or close 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.

Reporting and Support Options

If you experience sexual violence while abroad, get yourself to a safe place and consider talking to someone you trust: a friend, host parent, on-site staff, or faculty. Please know that Pitzer respects when and if you wish to share what happened. It is your story and your timeline. However, we do encourage you to contact your in-country program director if you feel comfortable doing so. While they are mandated reporters (see below) they are the best first resource to give you support and advise you about next steps including seeking medical care, professional counseling, and legal recourse. There are also other options if you prefer to speak with someone else.

Private and Confidential Resources

If you want to talk to someone about what happened or seek help, there are two main types of resources: Private and Confidential. A private resource includes Pitzer study abroad program staff, and those listed below. If you tell Pitzer program staff or faculty about an instance of sexual violence, they are required by law to tell Pitzer’s Title IX Coordinator what you have disclosed. Pitzer’s Title IX Coordinator would then reach out to you to ensure you have information about your rights and options, including counseling, academic support, and other measures for your safety and wellbeing. Please note that the highest possible level of privacy and sensitivity to your needs and preferences will be maintained, and whether to speak with the Title IX Coordinator is up to you. You are also free to contact Pitzer’s Title IX Coordinator directly to make a report, or to find out more about your options and resources. Reporting to the Title IX Coordinator does not automatically trigger a formal complaint and investigation. The Title IX Coordinator can provide information and support, regardless of whether you wish to make a formal complaint.

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1 The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines sexual violence as a sexual act committed or attempted by another person without freely given consent of the victim or against someone who is unable to consent or refuse. Not all types of sexual violence include physical contact. Threats, sexual harassment, intimidation, and spying and peeping may be considered sexually violent.
PRIVATE Resources at Pitzer
Alyssa-Rae McGinn (she/her/hers)
Interim Title IX Coordinator, Pitzer College
Open Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-2 p.m.
alyssarae@danschorrllc.com
516.382.3043

Study Abroad staff at Pitzer can also help you navigate in-country reporting options and support resources if
you do not want to contact your in-country program director. They will also consult with the Title IX Coordinator
to ensure you have information about all of your options and resources. During the day, they may be reached at
our office number 909.621.8104.

Kebokile Dengu-Zvobgo, Interim Vice President for International Programs,
Kebokile_dengu-zvobgo@pitzer.edu,

Jamie Francis, Interim Director for Pitzer Programs and Study Abroad Services,
jamie_franics@pitzer.edu,

24/7 CONFIDENTIAL/Anonymous Resources
You can access help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week without providing your name or any identifying information
through these national organizations.

RAINN National Sexual Assault Crisis Hotline
Phone: 800.656.HOPE (800.656.4673)
Online resources and chat support: www.rainn.org

7C CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES
These resources, available to Pitzer College students or other students enrolled at The Claremont Colleges, will keep
your information confidential and will not discuss what you tell them with anyone else.

The EmPOWER Center
The EmPOWER Center Director, Rima Shah, can provide helpful support and information by phone or email if you are
outside the United States. If you disclose a sexual assault or certain other crimes that occurred on your study abroad
program property or involved study abroad staff or faculty, Rima is required by federal law to provide crime data
(without your name or identifying information) in order to comply with the Clery Act. You may choose to speak with her
without disclosing any specific information if this is a concern, or you can ask her more about what information has to be
disclosed and to whom.

Rima Shah
EmPOWER Center Director
Phone: 909.607.2689
Email: RShah@scrippscollege.edu

Monsour Counseling
Phone: 909.621.8202

TCCS Chaplains
Phone: 909.621.8685
Insurance

Health Insurance

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

Regardless of what type of insurance you have, you will usually have to pay cash upfront at clinics and hospitals abroad, collect the receipts for all expenses, along with the doctor’s report, 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.

Pitzer Students Proof of Insurance

Pitzer students must 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.

Travel Insurance Provided by Pitzer College

Pitzer students and visiting students in Pitzer programs are covered by supplemental travel insurance available through a plan with Zurich. This plan is offered by Claremont Colleges and coverage is automatic. Therefore, students do not need to enroll themselves. This travel insurance is for accident and emergency care overseas and should not be confused with the Claremont Colleges’ SHIP (Student Health Insurance Program). While this insurance will cover a variety of medical emergencies abroad, it does not cover routine or ongoing medical care/treatment a student may need during their program. For this reason, we strongly advise students to maintain their comprehensive medical insurance in the event they would need to return to the US (or another home country) or need ongoing care/treatment while abroad.

A copy of the plan brochure, ID document, and medical claim reimbursement form is available in your study abroad application portal. Please familiarize yourself with the benefits outlined in the brochure.

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

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 is 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.

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 on the last page of the student version 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 travel insurance, 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 on the last page of the student version 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.
**Communications**

**Contact Information in Claremont**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>909.621.8104</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:studyabroad@pitzer.edu">studyabroad@pitzer.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jamie Francis  
Interim Director of Pitzer Programs  
And Study Abroad Services  
jamie_francis@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

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**Ways to Make Contact While Abroad**

The best way to communicate with your family back home will be through email or WhatsApp. WhatsApp can be used to make calls, send texts, and pictures. Once arriving in Nepal the program staff will help you get a Nepali SIM card for your phone so you can call and text locally. WhatsApp will be the best way to communicate with family and friends out of the country.

**Emergency Phone Numbers for Students in Nepal – on the last page of the student handbook**

In an emergency, students in Nepal should call the emergency numbers on the last page of the student version 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 version of this Handbook and are only for student use.

**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 can speak directly with a member of our staff.

**CELL PHONES**

All students on the program are expected to bring a smart phone that is unlocked and able to accept a local SIM card. Program staff will purchase a local sim card and data plan for you during your first day or two on the program. You will be able to access the internet and various apps (WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, etc.,) using your data plan in most places in Nepal, even if there is no Wi-Fi. However, the program house has good wifi and many other hotels and restaurants in Kathmandu do as well. Please also be aware that Simigaun, where the program will spend a good portion of the third month, has good cellular service. Students will be able to access the internet there on their smartphones although the bandwidth fluctuates a bit. Also, students should be able to set up a hotspot from their smartphones and access the internet on their laptops as well. We recommend that you familiarize yourself with the process of setting up a hotspot link between your smartphone and your laptop before leaving the States. Please remember to back up your files and photos, etc. on your smartphone before departing for Nepal.

Special Note: 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. Each family will be different, but 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 if the phone number listed on the last page of the student version of this handbook is included. When the DHL package arrives at the DHL office, word will be sent to 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.
STEP Registration Address - NOT for Mail

Use the following physical address to register with the US Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). See the Safety and Emergency Preparedness section in this handbook for details.

Pitzer in Nepal
Suryabinayak 2 Balkot - 5/53
Bhaktapur, Nepal
APPENDIX A: 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 subtropical 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 smart phones and use 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. This is part of life now days in the region and students need to be prepared to participate in and learn from this 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 is 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 does not 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 does not 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 is not 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 is 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.