

The Core Course: Nepal Studies

(1 course credit = 4 semester units)

Description

The Nepal Studies course makes use of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Nepal and provides you with the intellectual foundations with which to pursue your own more specialized interests. In the belief that formal, academic studies are necessarily enriched by your experience of living with Nepali families, the course is designed to integrate both the academic and personal dimensions of your life in Nepal. Given the fundamental role the language learning process plays in the program as a whole, essential to this course are assignments, interviews and research projects that require you to utilize your Nepali language skills. The Nepal Studies course includes the following components:

Lectures

The lecture series exposes you to a range of topics and perspectives and acquaints you with some of the main historical, social, cultural, and political issues fundamental to Nepal's history and modern identity. The lectures provide a base of knowledge, which you will expand and refine throughout the semester. Our lecturers include professors from Tribhuvan University, as well as scholars and activists from non-governmental organizations, government, and the private sector; you will typically attend three to four lectures per week. A complete list of recent lecture topics and lecturers is included below.

Day and Half Day Study Trips

These study tours are led by Tribhuvan University professors and allow you to complement classroom learning with direct observation and experience in the field. You will visit the most important cultural and religious sites in the Kathmandu Valley, including the medieval royal palaces of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur; Pashupatinath, Nepal's most revered Hindu temple; the stupa at Bouddha, an important Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage site; and Changu Narayan, one of the oldest extant religious complexes in the Valley. A list of recent study tours appears below.

Longer Study Trips

You will take several trips to different regions of Nepal, focusing on the areas' cultural and natural heritage. Trips may include visits to Chitwan National Park, the Annapurna Conservation Area, Lumbini, Bandipur, and an extended family stay in a remote hill village. In each of these areas, you will complete a number of interviews and small projects on topics specific to the area. Lectures, readings, and discussion sessions supplement your experience in the field.

Readings

In conjunction with lectures and field trips, a selection of required readings will focus and expand upon issues raised in the classroom. Readings include articles and essays by both foreign and native scholars and expose you to contemporary scholarship and debate on a diverse set of issues. A list of required readings is included below.

Discussion Sessions

The program features periodic student-led discussion sessions, which provide a forum for you to discuss and explore issues raised in lectures, readings, and your own experience. These discussions also allow you a chance to articulate and refine ideas you will explore in more depth in your writing for the Fieldbook.

Fieldbook

In the course of the program, you are assigned a series of papers, which together comprise the Nepal Fieldbook. Fieldbook assignments are designed to take advantage of and develop your skills in Nepali, and draw upon learning in the classroom, family stays, and research in different regions of Nepal. Assignments include focus on socio-cultural studies, kinship and family relations, development and environmental issues, and religion, and help to prepare you for the more extended independent research project you will undertake during the last month of the program. Assignments are coordinated to support current level of language competency and in country knowledge.

Family stays

Living with Nepali families helps provide necessary context for issues raised in lectures and readings and is one of the foundations of your experience in Nepal. Accordingly, your participation in Nepali family and cultural life is a factor in the grade for the Nepal Studies course. Over the course of the program, you live with two Nepali families, representing different ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds. For the majority of the program, you live with Brahman or Chhetri families in rural villages of the Kathmandu Valley. During trek, you live with Sherpa, Tamang, or Gurung families in the Himalayan foothills.

General topics addressed in the Nepal Studies Course

- History – ancient, medieval, modern
- Geography
- Women in Nepal – Brahman-Chhetri women, women in development and law
- Hinduism
- Buddhism – Newar, Tibetan
- Environment and Ecology
- Foreign Aid and Development
- Kinship
- Health: Traditional healing, modern
- Media
- Caste and Ethnicity
- Education
- Current Political Issues

Recent lectures have included:

- “Politics of Nepal” Dr. Bhaskar Gautam
- “Ancient Medieval and Modern History of Nepal” Dr. Pratyoush Onta
- “Introduction to Hinduism” Dr. Sudhindra Sharma
- “Introduction to Buddhism” Fr. Greg Sharkey
- “Conservation and Natural Resource” Mr. Anil Chitrakar
- “Urban environmental Issues” Mr. Bhushan Tuladhar
- “Beyond Pitzer, How to Give Back to Nepal” Ben Ayers
- “Chitwan National Park and Tharu Issues” Mr. Birendra Mahato
- “Nepal China Relation” Mr. Trailokya Raj Aryal
- “Research Methodology” Mr. Vibhav Pradhan
- “Socio-Economy and Inequality” Ms. Astha Bhatta
- “Tibetan Refugees of Nepal” Mr. Sonam Sangpo
- “Brahmin and Chhetri Women: A Personal Perspective” Ms. Sarita Sharma
- “Public Health in Nepal” Dr. Aruna Uprety
- “Education System of Nepal” Ms. Milan Dixit
- “Maoist Conflict and Role of Media” Mr. Kunda Dixit

- “Caste and Ethnicity: A Personal Perspective” Prof. Shiva Bisangkhe
- “Foreign Aid and Development” Dr. Pitamber Sharma
- “Women and Law” Ms. Sapana Pradhan Malla
- “The Effects of Climate Change in Nepal” Mr. Kunda Dixit
- “Introduction, Usage and Difficulties of Ayurvedic Medicine” Dr. Sarita Shrestha

Half and Full Day Study Trips may include:

- “Patan Study Field Trip” Mr. Anil Chitrakar
- “Kathmandu Study Field Trip” Mr. Anil Chitrakar
- “Boudhanath Study Field Trip” Mr. Anil Chitrakar
- “Bhaktapur Study Field Trip” Mr. Anil Chitrakar
- “Pashupati Study Field Trip” Mr. Punya Prasad Parajuli
- “Visit NGO (Kevin Rohan Memorial Eco Foundation) “Mr. Krishna Gurung
- “Swoyambhunath Study Fieldtrip” Mr. Lalit Man Lama

- **Swayambhu** – important monument for Newar and Tibetan Buddhists

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with which students have been involved:

- **Nepal Forum for Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ)** – promotes environmental awareness through media
- **IUCN-Nepal** – promotes natural and cultural heritage preservation
- **Manushi** – advocate for women's development
- **Maiti Nepal** – combats prostitution and the trafficking of Nepali girls to India
- **Missionaries of Charity** — Mother Teresa's home for the destitute and dying
- **Freedom Center** – drug rehabilitation center
- **ABC** – promotes women's development
- **Child Workers of Nepal (CWIN)** – child welfare and labor advocate
- **Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP)** – advocates ecologically sound trekking
- **INHURED** – advocates human rights and tackles environmental and development projects
- **Asia Foundation** – umbrella INGO that advises smaller NGOs dealing with democracy, women's rights, and good governance
- **Action Aid** – oversees projects in poverty eradication, regional water supply, agriculture, and health
- **Saathi** – raises awareness of domestic violence; women's shelter
- **TEWA** – fosters self-help and self-reliance for disadvantaged women
- **WACN** – active in projects related to women and development and women's rights
- **WATCH** – focus on empowering women via legal advocacy and implementation of women's organizations
- **Winrock International** – main projects focus on sustaining environmental health by use of alternative energy
- **NEWAH** – develops small-scale water projects for villages across Nepal.
- **SOS Children's Village and Ryder Home** – provides homes for physically and mentally handicapped orphans, and physiotherapy and job training for disabled adults.
- **Shanti Sewa Griha** – provides a range of clinic services as well as craft work and job training to people infected with leprosy
- **Nepal Press Institute** – provides training to students interested in journalism with a focus on journalistic professionalism
- **Porter's Progress Nepal** – works to empower and provide for the safety of trekking porters of Nepal

Assessment for the Nepal Studies course is based upon the following components:

15% – Full participation in Nepalese family life in Kathmandu (required to pass)

10% -Full participation in Nepalese family life on trek (required to pass)

20% – Culturally appropriate behavior indicating a serious attempt to understand, adapt to and appropriately participate in Nepali culture.

15% – Contribution to the group learning process, including attendance of and enthusiastic participation in discussions, lectures, field trips, and other program activities.

10% – Participation in and contribution to final seminar.

30% – Fieldbook

Required Readings

- Banskota, Kamal and Bikash Sharma. Chapter 4, "Mountain Tourism Impacts." *Mountain Tourism in Nepal: An Overview*. Discussion Paper, Series No. MEI 95/7. Kathmandu: ICIMOD, 1995. pp. 60-87.
- Bhattachan, Krishna B. and Kailash N. Pyakuryal. "The Issue of National Integration In Nepal: An Ethnoregional Approach." In *Occasional Papers in Sociology & Anthropology: Emerging Ethnicity and Aspects of Community Adaptation*. Vol. 5. Kathmandu: Tribhuvan University, 1996. pp. 17-38.
- Bhattarai, Binod. "'If the University Fails, Then Society Also Fails'." An Interview with Kedar Mathema. *Spotlight*. July 7, 1995. pp. 20-22.
- Bista, Dor Bahadur. "Tamang"; "Gurung"; "Tharu"; "Sherpa." *People of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1980. pp. 52-61, 75-85, 118-127, 160-168.
- Brockington, J.L. Chapter 10, "Tradition Triumphant." *The Sacred Thread: A Short History of Hinduism*. Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992. [1981] pp. 190-209.
- Chhetri, Ram. "Indigenous and Community Forestry Management Systems: Reviewing the Strengths and Weaknesses." In Michael Allen (ed.) *The Anthropology of Nepal: Peoples, Problems and Processes*. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point 1994. pp. 19-35.
- Des Chene, Mary. "Loyalty versus Equality." *Himal*. July/Aug 1997. pp. 15-23.
- Dixit, Kanak Mani. "Foreign Aid in Nepal: No Bang for the Buck." *Studies in Nepali History and Society*. Vol. 2, no. 1; June 1997. pp. 173-186.
- The Porter's Burden." *Himal*. Nov/Dec 1995. pp. 32-38.
- Fisher, William. "Nationalism and the Janajati." *Himal*. March/April 1993. pp. 11-14.
- Furer-Haimendorf, Christoph von. "Buddhist Institutions and Practices"; "Social and Economic Change Among the Rolwaling Sherpas." *The Sherpas Transformed: Social Change in a Buddhist Society of Nepal*. Delhi: Sterling, 1984. pp. 84-105, 115-118.
- Gellner, David. Chapter 4, "Basic Notions of Newar Buddhism." *Monk, Householder, and Tantric Priest: Newar Buddhism and its Hierarchy of Ritual*. Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology, vol. 84. Cambridge Univ. Press: New Delhi, 1996. [1992] pp. 105-134.
- Guneratne, Arjun. "The Tax Man Cometh: The Impact of Revenue Collection on Subsistence Strategies in Chitwan Tharu Society." *Studies in Nepali History and Society*. Vol. 1, no. 1; June 1996. pp. 5-35.
- Gyawali, Dipak. "Tryst with Democracy." *Himal*. May/June 1990. pp. 3-6; J. Ervin, "'Bahudal Byabastha' Interpreted." P. 7.
- Helffer, M. "A Recent Phenomenon: the Emergence of Buddhist Monasteries around the Stupa of Bodnath." In Gerard Toffin (ed.) *The Anthropology of Nepal: From Tradition to Modernity*. Kathmandu: French Cultural Center, 1993. pp. 114-131.
- *Himal*. "Tarai: Backwater or New Frontier?," etc. September/October 1990. pp. 5-18.
- Holmberg, David H. "Tamang Comparatively Reconstructed." *Order in Paradox: Myth, Ritual and Exchange Among Nepal's Tamang*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1989. p. 11 – 50.
- Hutt, Michael. Chapter 3, "Introduction to Nepali"; Chapter 4, "Nationalism and the National Language." *Nepali: A National Language and its Literature*. Delhi: Sterling. [School of Oriental and African Studies, 1988] pp. 22-49.
- Monuments of Kathmandu"; "Monuments of Bhaktapur"; "Monuments Lalitpur (Patan)"; "Swayambhu Stupa"; "Deopatan and the Temple of Pashupati"; "The Temple of Chang Narayan." *Nepal: A Guide to the Art and Architecture of the Kathmandu Valley*. Stirlingshire (Scotland): Kiscadale, 1994. pp. 74-203.
- Institute for Integrated Development Studies. Chapter 4, "Mass Media in Nepal: A Status Review"; Chapter 5, "What Ails the Nepalese Mass Media?" *Mass Media and Democratization: A Country Study on Nepal*. Kathmandu: IIDS, 1996. pp. 37-57, 61-73.
- Mathema, Kedar. "Cheating Our Children." *Himal*. May/June 1990. pp. 22-24.

- Michaels, Axel, ed. "Rituals and Forms of Worship"; "Ethnographical Observations and Temple Organization." *A Rama Temple In 19th-Century Nepal: History and Architecture of the Ramachandra Temple in Battisputali, Kathmandu*. Nepal Research Center Publications No. 20. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995. pp. 51-61.
- Pignede, Bernard. "Clan and Hierarchical Organization"; "Religious Framework"; "Official Religious Festivals." *The Gurungs*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1993. [1966] pp. 157-185, 303-318, 319-332.
- Shah, Rishikesh. Chapter 3, "Licchavi Society"; Chapter 11, "Social Conditions in Medieval Nepal." *Ancient and Medieval Nepal*. Delhi: Manohar, 1997. pp. 25, 38, 98-105.
- Shrestha, Tirtha B. "A Simplified Framework for Assessing Carrying Capacity in Mountain Tourism." *Mountain Tourism and Environment in Nepal*. Discussion Paper, Series No. MEI 95/4. Kathmandu: ICIMOD, 1995.
- Slusser, Mary. Chapter 10, "Buddhism: Evolution and Dissolution." *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*. Vol. 1. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. pp. 270-306.
- Stone, Linda. "Concepts of Illness and Curing in a Central Nepal Village." *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*. June 1976. pp. 55-80.
- Tamu, Bhovar Palje and Yarjung Kromchhe Tamu. "Long Road to Gandaki." *Himal*. July/August 1993. pp. 27-28.
- Thapa, Prem J. "Water-led Development in Nepal: Myths, Limitations and Rational Concerns." *Water Nepal*. Vol. 5, no 1; January 1997. pp. 35-57.
- Thompson, Julia. "'There Are Many Words to Describe Their Anger': Ritual and Resistance Among High Caste Hindu Women in Kathmandu." In Michael Allen (ed.) *Anthropology of Nepal: People, Problems and Processes*. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 1994. pp. 358-371.
- Tuladhar, Jyoti. "An Overview of Women & Development in Nepal." Center for Women and Development. 1993.
- Uprety, Prem R. Chapter 1, "Foundations of the Political Culture of the "Rana Oligarchy." *Political Awakening in Nepal: The Search for a New Identity*. New Delhi: Commonwealth, 1992. pp. 1-15.

The Fieldbook

Introduction

As many of us know from our experiences with traditional coursework, ideas removed from the complicated realities of daily life can often be dry and academic at best, inaccurate and irresponsible at worst. But experience alone, without the benefit of serious reflection, has its own shortcomings, particularly in a place as unfamiliar, stimulating, and challenging as Nepal. As you struggle with the daily demands of learning Nepali; participate in Nepal's many festivals and complicated rituals; work, eat, and laugh with Nepali friends and family; and walk Nepal's streets and mountain trails, it will be important to step back now and then to try to make sense of everything you observe and experience. How do we – as people new to the country – begin to understand Nepal's very different peoples and cultures? What factors – social, historical, religious, geographic, economic, etc. – have shaped Nepal into the nation it is today? What have you learned from your relationships with Nepalis, and how have these relationships shaped your experience and understanding of the country around you? Considering these issues can lead to deeper, perhaps even more important, questions: What is culture? What can I really know – about myself and others; about my own culture, and the cultures of another place and people? What are my responsibilities and obligations here in Nepal and in the world more broadly? Drawing from your conversations, observations, and daily life in Nepal – both academic and personal – your writing will be an important means by which to understand, appreciate and share the lessons that Nepal's cultures, peoples, languages and landscapes have to offer.

The fieldbook provides you with an opportunity during your time in Nepal to record, evaluate, and communicate your thoughts, observations, and feelings on a range of areas central to Nepali life: family, religion, women's issues, development, health, agriculture and the environment, etc. Whatever the subject, assignments will ask you to synthesize material from traditional sources such as lectures or readings with what you learn through in-depth conversations and interviews with Nepalis. The fieldbook asks you to make the most of your valuable time in Nepal not by isolating your ideas from your experience, but by combining academic reflection and experience into a more meaningful whole.

- Please note:
 - Assignments will typically be due every couple of weeks.
 - The length of your responses should be, on average, the equivalent of 4-5 typewritten pages. Notebooks will be provided; please write on standard-sized college-ruled notebook paper.
 - Please write legibly and in black ink. If you don't feel your written work is legible please type your assignments at a local computer shop or in the city.
 - Assignments should be turned in before morning class on the day they are due. You can either place them in the fieldbook box in the library or give them to the Program Asst.
 - Late assignments will be marked down a full grade per week late (e.g., A becomes B).
 - Assignments more than two weeks late will not be accepted.
 - Please write your full name, the name of the assignment, the date, and the semester (e.g., Spring 2009) on the top of the assignment, as well as number each page
 - Graded assignments that were turned in on time can be rewritten and submitted for additional marks (up to full credit) up to two weeks after the papers are handed back.
- In your responses, please be sure to include:
 - Substantial material from conversations and interviews with Nepalis.
 - Evidence for your arguments and points of view.
 - Definitions of key terms – e.g. modernization, poverty, development, Buddhist, democracy.
 - Material from relevant readings and lectures.
 - Self-awareness about methods and assumptions.
 - Multiple perspectives and points of view.
 - Introduction and conclusions where appropriate.

Be sure to provide necessary context and background information – cultural, historical, etc. – in your papers. Your writing should include and integrate academic reflection, in-depth discussions with Nepalis themselves, personal experience, and other sources – readings, lectures, study trips, etc. – to provide a multi-faceted, in-depth discussion and analysis of your topic.

SAMPLE FIELDBOOK ASSIGNMENTS

I. Kinship and Family Relations

Kinship relations affect every aspect of social relationships in Nepali society and are a constant reference point for interactions at work, school, and village life in general. Learning the Nepali kinship lexicon will be helpful and important for understanding social interactions both in and outside of your family.

Site: Your family's home – find one or more people who can identify your relatives for at least three generations.

Method: Interview members of your family to develop a kinship chart following the model presented in the article “Charting Kinship.” Use this chart and your discussions as the basis for a consideration of either gender, age, or status differences you have observed in your family.

- **Please hand in:**

- a completed kinship lexicon sheet.
- a kinship chart for at least 3 generations of your family with you as “ego.” Include your hajur aamaa and hajur baa on both your aamaa and baa’s side, your aamaa and baa’s siblings and their children, as well as your brothers and sisters and their spouses and children (if they are married). On your chart, indicate each person’s sex and age as well as his or her proper name, nickname, and the kinship term you, as ego, would use to address him or her.
- a descriptive account (equivalent to 1-2 pages typed) of your initial observations on kinship relations in your Nepali family, focusing on particular aspects of kinship relations such as age, gender, or status differences. How do the kinship terms themselves reflect your observations? Do age or gender differences within the kinship terms connect to the interactions you have observed in your family?

II. Experiences and Impressions of Nepal: A Personal Account

Looking back on your time in Nepal, write a descriptive account (5-6 pages) of a cultural experience or encounter that has been especially important to you. Whatever your subject – family life, language learning, an incident during trek or your independent study project, etc. – provide enough narrative detail and description for your reader to begin to understand your experience, and include cultural information and background as appropriate.

Your writing can draw from your journal and may take the form of a personal essay or a fictional account. This is an opportunity for you to begin to process your experiences and impressions, and to present a narrative of one important aspect of your time in Nepal.

III. Contemporary Issues

From the list below choose an article on a topic that interests you. Using this article as a starting point, explore the subject through detailed conversations and interviews with Nepalis. The article will provide background information and a point of reference, but for this assignment your main focus should be on the conversations and discussions generated by the issue – i.e. your focus should not be a critique of the article itself. Who you speak with will depend upon your topic: for some issues you will want to speak primarily with your family and people in your village; other topics will require discussions with porters along the trail or an aid official at a field site. Whatever your topic, speak with several different people to get their perspectives and opinions on the issue, and include other sources to complement information gathered from your discussions.

Please note: You will have the opportunity to work with the gurus to learn new vocabulary and practice asking questions appropriate to your topic. After reading your article, make a list of vocabulary and questions that will be important and useful for your interviews and be prepared to discuss these with the gurus.

For your paper (5-6 pages):

- begin with a summary of the issue as a whole, drawing from the article where appropriate.
- provide a detailed account of your interviews and conversations, making sure to include Nepalis’ own views on the issue.

- compare lecture, reading, and discussion material with the perspectives and opinions represented in your interviews.
- conclude with your own analysis and assessment of the issue.

Contemporary Issues Topics and Articles

1. Women's Legal Rights – ...And Justice for All, Including Women, Yuba Raj Bhusal
2. Porters – The Porter's Burden, Kanak Mani Dixit
3. Problems in Education – Higher Education: Waste of Resources, Keshab Poudel
4. Contemporary Hinduism – Challenged by the Future, Shackled by the Past, Dipak Gyawali
5. Brahmins in Nepal/Ethnicity – Bahuns in the Nepali State, Prayag Raj Sharma
6. Contemporary Marriage – Marriage: A Social Burden?, Keshab Poudel
7. Nepali Nationalism – Throes of a Fledgling Nation, Saubhagya Shah
8. Poverty – The Society of Haves and Have Nots, Narayan Manandhar
9. Stolen Temple Images/Heritage – Conservation Gods in Exile, Kanak Mani Dixit
10. Water Development/Foreign Aid – Because It Is There: Foreign Money, Foreign Advice and Arun III, Bikash Pandey
11. Girl Trafficking – Deconstructing Gita, John Frederick
12. Monarchy – A New Royal Role, Kanak Mani Dixit
13. Children's Rights – Children's Cry, Keshab Poudel
14. Maoist Movement – Erosion of the Nepali World, Deepak Thapa
15. Urban Youth Culture/Westernization – Youth Culture: Emerging Trends and Tastes, Keshab Poudel
16. Orientalism/Tibetan Buddhism – New Age Orientalism: The Case of Tibet, Donald S. Lopez
17. Kathmandu Pollution – Pollution Control: Cleaning Environment, Keshab Poudel
18. Rural Development/Economics – A Fate Other than Marginality, Dipak Gyawali
19. Democracy in Nepal – Pitfalls of Nepal's Democracy, Anirudha Gupta
20. Political Disenfranchisement – Reflecting on Contemporary Nepali Angst, Dipak Gyawali

IV. Interview: Village Life in Sikles/Tanting

Focus on one aspect of village life that interests you and examine it by conducting interviews with at least five people. Possible topics include:

- Health care – traditional and modern
- Education • Religion – practice and belief
- Agriculture
- Caste/ethnic relations
- ACAP/local development projects
- Gurkha soldiers
- Environment
- Modernization
- Community Forests
- Village history
- Marriage customs
- Women's roles
- Economics

Work with the language teachers to develop a list of vocabulary and questions appropriate to your interviews. Talk with several people in the village, making sure to include people of different backgrounds, to get their views and opinions on the topic.

Please be prepared to give a formal presentation (10-15 minutes) of your interview and to turn in a detailed outline of your presentation. In the presentation, please present a background and discuss the interviews as well as your own analysis and thoughts on the issue. Include quotes from your discussions and supplement your interview material with references to readings and lectures where appropriate.

V. Critical Encounters: Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Looking back on your time in Nepal so far, write a descriptive account (5-6 pages) of a cultural experience or encounter that has been especially important or challenging for you. You may wish to consider a single incident, or explore your on-going efforts to come to terms with a particularly challenging aspect of Nepali culture or society. You might write about your adjustments to life in a new family, your language learning experience, confrontations with caste or gender differences, or a particularly provocative conversation in the bazaar or along the trail.

Whatever your subject, please be sure to discuss and analyze the following:

The experience – describe, in detail, both the experience and your reaction to the incident, conveying the intensity and complexity of the encounter from your own perspective. Be sure to provide specific narrative detail and focused descriptions of the experience.

Cultural attitudes and influences – provide an account of the larger cultural assumptions and beliefs informing each side of the encounter:

Explore Nepali perspectives of the incident, describing the individual and cultural influences, which may explain the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the Nepali or Nepalis involved. Be sure to talk to Nepalis about their impressions of the encounter and other similar incidents; speaking with many different people of different backgrounds will help to clarify your understanding of Nepali perspectives and attitudes.

Explore your own perspectives, considering both broader cultural and more personal factors, which informed your role and your reactions to the incident. Consider how much of your experience may be traced to broader American cultural trends and perspectives, and how much of your experience is rooted in your particular personal and social background.

As you step back and reflect on your experience, also step back and reflect on your attempt to reconcile differing cross-cultural perspectives of the encounter. What kinds of difficulties do you face in trying to write about this encounter from all points of view and in explaining them honestly and objectively?

VI. Family History

Use the social, residential, and occupational history of one family as a means of understanding larger social and economic changes taking place in the Kathmandu Valley.

Find one or more people in your home who can relate to you the history of your family over three generations. Learn the educational, residential, and occupational history of each member of your immediate family, making sure to include people from three generations. After compiling these details, choose three people – one from each generation – whose lives you want to examine in more depth.

Please hand in an account (equivalent to 5-6 typed pages). In your account:

Include an overview of the educational, residential, and occupational history of each family member. Provide more detailed description and discussion of the lives of three individuals from different generations. Discuss the changes and continuities you observe from one generation to the next; choose one or two topics of particular interest and focus your discussion accordingly. What differences do you observe, for example, in the educational achievements between the youngest and oldest generations? Do

you find significant changes in religious practice and belief between generations? What social, cultural, historical, economic, and other factors would help to account for these changes? Although your main source of information should be your observations and discussions with your family, supplement these with relevant information from lectures and readings.

VII. Religious Ritual

Essential for understanding religion in Nepal is an appreciation of not just the philosophical or conceptual dimensions of Hinduism and Buddhism, but an understanding of religious practice on a concrete, daily level. Observation of the rituals and observances performed at a local temple or shrine will provide insight into religious practice in Nepalis' daily lives.

Choose a public temple or shrine that is small enough to observe closely and that has several visitors (5 or more) performing puja in the mornings and evenings. Plan to spend four half-hour sessions, ideally two in the morning and two in the evening, at the site. Spend the first two sessions simply observing and recording in detail your observations and impressions of each visitor's puja. For the second two sessions, talk with worshippers about the puja – what do they say about the role of the ritual in their daily life? While it is difficult to elicit direct information about the “meanings” of a religious practice, more indirect questions can yield interesting material as well: Do you come to the temple every day? Why do you come to this particular temple? Do you always perform the same puja?, etc.

Please hand in an account (equivalent to 5-6 typed pages), which includes:

1. a brief physical description of the temple or shrine itself.
2. a detailed description of the rituals and observances performed at the temple.
3. a discussion and analysis of the worship practice, drawing upon your observations, conversations with visitors to the temple, relevant lectures, and readings. What role does worship play in the daily lives of the people you spoke with? How do you understand the physical act of puja in relation to the more metaphysical, abstract principles of Hinduism or Buddhism you find discussed in books and lectures?

VIII. DYO: Design Your Own Memory Book

Maybe you have seen something on your walk home or on a trip to Kathmandu that puzzled you or aroused your curiosity but that you didn't take the time to explore further. Or maybe there is something that you have heard about but not yet seen and want to look into. For this assignment, you can do anything from learning traditional Nepali dance to researching where Kathmandu's trash goes after it gets picked up from those roadside piles. Whatever it is, the Design Your Own is an opportunity to be creative or explore a quirky interest.

The project can take an offbeat approach or can be a more conventional look into something that has struck you about Nepal. We encourage you to find some alternative method of presenting your findings—through photo essays, maps, charts, drawings, or demonstrations. If you find some graphic way to display your research, the written component of your project need only be 2 pages (min.). If the heart of your project is in a written medium, then your write-up must be 4-5 pages.

For example, if you choose to focus on Nepali poetry, you could examine the writing of several Nepali poets, write poems of your own in the style of these poets, and then write about the tradition of poetry in Nepal. Or, if you really do like garbage, you might research the life cycle of trash, where it's made, where it's used, where it ends up, and then illustrate your research through a map or chart.

Whatever you decide to explore, we ask that you discuss your ideas with us before starting.

Be creative and have fun!

Write-Up

Be sure to consider the cultural context of your subject, and its role or function in the lives of Nepalis. If appropriate, describe the traditions – technical, cultural, etc. – which inform your topic: e.g. if your focus is contemporary thangka painting, an outline of traditional painting techniques will provide context for your examination of current techniques and practices. Also consider the impacts your subject has on the social environment of which it is a part. If you choose to study Nepali music, for example, you could focus on changes and continuities in particular musical traditions, and the social and cultural role of music in a specific community.

Possible Projects

- Mapmaking
 - of a particular area: village, homestay villages, religious site, market, watershed, forest, mountain
 - of a particular area 20, 50 or 100 years ago
 - of a particular facet of Kathmandu or Nepali society: caste, crops, temples, land use, garbage heaps, administrative districts, ethnic groups and languages, etc.
 - of a commodity trail: where do certain things like firewood or rice or oil come from and where are they used
- Photo Essay
 - electric tempo rally
 - women's workloads
 - Newar tattoos
- Regional clothing styles: Nepal-wide, ethnic and regional dressmaking, jewelry
- Folk songs or folk stories
- Nepali games: children's games, baagh-chal, cards
- Nepali architecture: regional and ethnic variations
- Song and dance: Nepal-wide, ethnic and regional
- Cooking: ethnic, regional, holiday dishes, etc.
- Music
 - learning to play the sarangi, flute, madal (drum)
- Traditional tools: agricultural, artistic
- Traditional first aid techniques, home remedies, herbal medicines
- Woodcarving or village woodworking technique
- Language
 - regional dialects
 - onomatopoeic words in Nepali: dhuwaa phususu jancha, simsimme paani paryo, etc.
 - proverbs
- Nepali measurements: time, weights, etc.
- Plant varieties
- Astrology

X. Group Discussion Sessions

In order to complement our lectures, and as a means of fostering discussion and analysis of both lecture material and related issues, we will hold periodic student-led discussion sessions throughout the course of the program. Though there are many possible topics to discuss, and though we could spend a good deal of time on any one topic, the demands of our schedule will have to limit our discussions somewhat. For each session, we will focus on two topics from the lectures we have heard; two to three students will be responsible for each topic. For each topic, the students should briefly recap the main points of the lecture, highlight any unclear or controversial points, suggest a few topics for discussion, and then open up the

session to the rest of the group. The students presenting the topic will then have responsibility for directing or mediating the discussion as needed.

The topic should be chosen from the lectures we have heard, but need not limit itself to the lecture material. For example, a topic could begin from a discussion of Hinduism as presented in Mukunda Aryal's lecture, refer to observations of Pashupati or a discussion with family, incorporate outside readings, etc., and then move to open discussion. Each session will run for about two hours, so we will have about an hour to spend on each topic. The presentation of each topic should run five or ten minutes, and the students should prepare and present their topic together.

In preparing your presentation, feel free to discuss any issues or questions with us. These sessions should be a chance for the group to have a more focused look at some of the lecture material, and to pursue interests and questions in more depth.

Example Discussion Session Topics

- **Ancient and Medieval History** – Dr. Mukunda Aryal Licchavi Society, Rishikesh Shah
Social Conditions in Medieval Nepal, Rishikesh Shah
- **Brahmin-Chhetri Women of Nepal** – Sarita Sharma
'There Are Many Words to Describe Their Anger': Ritual and Resistance Among High Caste Hindu Women in Kathmandu, Julia Thompson
- **Modern Nepali History** – Dr. Prem Uprety
The Thousands of Mangoes Have Been Distributed: Tanka Prasad's Early Political Agitation, James Fisher with Tanka Prasad Acharya
- **Ranas Good, Ranas Bad** – John Whelpton
- **Economics** – Dr. P. Timilsina
- **Buddhism Fr. John Locke**
Buddhism in Nepal: An Introduction, Cristoph von Furer-Haimendorf
The Vehicle of the Thunderbolt and the Decline of Buddhism in India, Ainslie T. Embree
- **Maoist Movement** – Padma Ratna Tuladhar
- **Foreign Aid and Development** – Dr. Pitamber Sharma
- **Modern Women's Health** – Dr. Aruna Uprety
- **Caste and Ethnicity** – Dr. Krishna Bhattachan
- **Issues about the Nepali Mass Media** – Mr. Bharat D. Koirala
What ails the Nepalese Mass Media?: Inventorying Issues in Public Communications, IIDS.
Promises to Keep in Kathmandu, Ajaya B. Khanal
- **Women and Legal Issues** – Ms. Sapana Pradhan Malla
Cultural, Political and Legal Setting, Shakti The Seeds of Activism, Aruna Upret
- **Foreign Aid and Development** – Dr. Pitamber Sharma
Foreign Aid in Nepal: No Bang for the Buck, Kanak Mani Dixit Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the World Bank (in South Asia), Pratap Chatterjee
- **Tourism** – Dr. Pitamber Sharma
- **Geopolitics of Nepal** – Dr. Mangal Manandar
- **Introduction to Hinduism** – Mr. Suddhindra Sharma
- **Economics of Nepal** – Dr. P. Timilsina
Manandar, "The Society of Haves and Have Nots" Face to Face, July-August 1997
- **Women and Development** – Ms. Rita Thapa
Shakti, "Cultural, Legal and Political Setting"
Uprety, "The Seeds of Activism"
Aryal, "Women in Development: What's In It for Me?" Himal, March/April 1992
Bhusal, "...And Justice for All, Including Women" Across, August-October 1997

- **Buddhism** – Fr. John Locke
von Furer-Haimendorf, “Buddhism in Nepal: An Introduction” Embree, “The Vehicle of the Thunderbolt and the Decline of Buddhism in India”
- **Tourism in Nepal** – Mr. D.P. Dhakal
Banskota and Sharma, “Mountain Tourism Impacts”
- **Foreign Aid and Development** – Mr. Dipak Gyawali
Dixit, “Foreign Aid in Nepal: No Bang for the Buck” Chatterjee, “Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the World Bank...”
- **A Picture of Politics in Nepal** – Mr. Dipak Gyawali
Gupta, “Pitfalls of Nepal’s Democracy” Himal, August 1996
- **Traditional Health and Healing Practices in Nepal** – Dr. Prem Khatry
Stone, “Concepts of Illness and Curing in a Central Nepal Village”
Dietrich, “Buddhist Healers in Nepal: Some Observations”