Serving children with disabilities, Empowering local women, Assisting older adults (SEA)

Instructor:

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Course Outline

Why Travel to India

Travel broadens the mind and expands the self. Imagine a pilgrimage to Southern India, the State of Tamil Nadu. The trek involves three weeks in a land with great dichotomy. A truly ancient place flavored and coupled with a fast move toward modernization. During the journey, students will be able to take a life changing cultural plunge. India is an amazingly huge country with a variety of climatic conditions combined with diverse flora and fauna. Otherwise known as the cradle of the Indus civilization, India is known for its cultural wealth and heritage running back into prehistoric times. This course will be based in south India, the state of Tamil Nadu, in the beautiful coastal and tropical city of Pondicherry. Southern India is brimming with natural splendor and cultural diversity. Participants will experience India's vibrant culture in one of the most exciting healthy and safe parts of the country.

Instructor

Motié Haskins is an Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Iowa, School of Social Work. He received his degree in Social Work from Syracuse University. He teaches courses on Discrimination Oppression and Diversity, Organization and Community Development, Individual Families and Groups and Integrated Theory and Practice. He is the Coordinator of the Critical Cultural Competence Certificate Program. He was born in Harlem, New York and has traveled and studied in several countries including (Europe, South America, Africa, The Middle East and Asia).

*The instructor is an experienced faculty director with prior travel to Pondicherry, India.*
Student Reactions to previous trips to Pondicherry, India (2014-2015)

What is your overall evaluation of your study abroad experience? Are you glad you did it? Would you recommend that other UI undergraduate students study abroad? On this particular program?

1. My time in India was such a heartening experience and I most definitely will go back. I am so blessed that I had the opportunity to travel half way across the world and work with amazing and inspiring people. This trip was everything that I had hoped for and more.

2. This trip helped me understand the potential in the future and the potential for tomorrow. I can and will be so great. I want so much more for myself than Iowa. I want so much more for my family than Iowa. I want so much more for my family in Sudan. I want so much more for the world than the present condition it is in. I thank India for this.

3. They are two of the things that impacted myself the most during this trip. I think that just these two characteristics; selflessness and graciousness are two things that every person in this world could use some help with. There is always room for improvement and I will be the first to say that I need to improve myself in these aspects. I honestly did not realize this until I saw the people of India, until I saw how people could live with nothing and still be happy as can be. The people of India taught me that I could be happy, no matter what. I really appreciate your thoughts on this.

4. This three-week course has taught me more about my privilege and myself than I could have possibly imagined. I came to India thinking that I would be helping teach those in the rural villages, little do I know they would be teaching me more than anything. Each day I was there and every person I met taught me what life is truly about.

5. "There's no guarantee when you set out to change the world that you'll be in any way successful, except it's absolutely guaranteed that you'll change yourself and that I have found to be true." Ben Affleck. This quote was shared with me by one of our group members the day one of our assignments felt like failure. I read this quote a few times to myself and I realized that I had changed and learned so much in what at the time was only two weeks. I think the biggest impact for me on this trip was learning to embrace moments where things don’t go as planned because everything always seems to work its way out, and also to be more attentive of the world around me.

The Course

Students will be placed with the most respected organizations throughout South India. Students will choose from working with the differentially-disabled, older adults, the sick, and impoverished women. Get hands-on experience at health clinics and hospitals. In this course we will visit, participate with, and learn village development which includes the inner growth of people as well as the outer development of the community; with a people-centric inclusive and participatory process of growth; where developing programs and activities are identified, planned, organized and managed with village communities. Students will learn directly from several organizations, employing a diverse variety of
techniques to address social problems such as: poverty, healthcare for the poor, illiteracy, and disabilities.

**Our Host Organizations**

1) **Satya School for Children with Special Needs** ([http://www.satyaspecialschool.org/](http://www.satyaspecialschool.org/))
   Satya is a nonprofit, voluntary organization. The school was started in June 2003 with 40 special children with various mental disabilities - like Autism, Down's syndrome, Mental Retardation, Learning difficulties and multiple disabilities. The vision is to change the current fragmented rehabilitation system into an integrated holistic rehabilitation system. The staff at Satya is dedicated at improving the lives of intellectually disabled children through individual specialized training making meaningful and sustainable services a reality.
   **Students who select this NGO will engage children with various disabilities.**

   The Society is a not-for-profit NGO, working throughout the world for individual perfection, social transformation, and human unity in diversity. It invites participation from all who want to work together for a better tomorrow, with no distinction of nationality, religion, caste or gender. SAS seeks to bring a dynamic spirituality into material life and all its activities, so that the global problems can find a true solution, and the dreams of humanity, through the ages, can be realized.
   - SAVRAM Sri Aurobindo Rural Village Action and Movement (SARVAM), is the Rural Development wing of Sri Aurobindo Society. The SARVAM can be considered as an experimental “action-research” in integral community development. The program of action is four-fold, covering the following areas:
     - Physical and economic development using available local materials and technology.
     - Development of the family and community, particularly empowerment of women, skills enhancement and entrepreneurship.
     - Psychological and cultural development through education and training.
     - Spiritual development through the right understanding of religion, spirituality and Yoga, and their role in life.

   **Visit Auroville (universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities. The purpose of Auroville is to realize human unity)** [http://bit.ly/19ayJOH]

   **Students interested in: Integral Education, Integral Health, Rural Development, Sustainable Development or Indian Culture will benefit from this experience.**
3) A Health Care Facility (TBA)

Students interested in Medicine, Nursing will benefit from this experience.

4) Help Age India [http://bit.ly/131TNpP](http://bit.ly/131TNpP) is a registered charity working for the care and concern of the elderly particularly the dis-advantaged elderly. Help Age India touches the lives of elders through its services. A secular, not-for-profit organization that raises resources to protect the rights of India's elderly and provide relief to them through various interventions such as: *advocacy* with national & local government to bring about policy that is beneficial to the elderly and raising *awareness* of the concerns of the aged to promote better understanding of ageing issues.

Students interested in issues relating to Older Adults will benefit from this experience.

A collaborative learning approach will be used while in India. That is, a philosophy to learning not just a classroom technique. The students will come together as a single group. This approach suggests a way of dealing with people which respects and highlights individual group members' abilities and contributions. There will be a sharing of authority and acceptance of responsibility among group members for the group’s actions. The underlying premise of this collaborative learning is based upon consensus building through cooperation by group members, in contrast to competition in which individuals best other group members.

**Course Requirements**

**Prior to departure**
- Attend orientation meetings.
- Skim Read *How to Change the World*.
- Watch the following movies:
  - *The Story of India* (Disc 1 & 2), *Namesake*, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, *Slum Dog Millionaire*, *The Million Dollar Arm* and *The Life of Pi* (filmed in Pondicherry) available from Netflix or your local video/DVD rental store.

**During our stay in India**
- Attendance at all planned activities and excursions.
- Attendance at regular group meetings with the instructors to process experiences.
- Active engagement with our hosts and partner organizations that have agreed to work with us—you will spend 8+ days with your partner organization.
- Keep a daily journal.

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Each student (or group of students) is expected to produce and deliver a high quality presentation detailing their findings on a topic of their own choosing to the NGO staff/leadership community.

Upon our return from India
- Prepare a short paper (500 words) on the most important part of your experience with your partner organization.

Research

***I would like to use materials for this course in my research. I will only do so with your explicit consent and whether or not you decide to allow me to use your materials, your grade will NOT be affected.

Required Reading


Course Grades

Grades for the course will be based on the following elements:

- **25%** 500 word paper on the most important part of your experience with your partner organization, due on or before January 18, 2016.
- **30%** Active engagement and discussion with fellow students and instructors, our hosts, and the sponsoring organizations. (On-going).
- **20%** Group presentation to the host organization (TBA). *See below.
- **25%** Participate in daily reflection groups, and keep a daily journal: record your thoughts, feelings, ideas, fears, joys, anxieties, and experiences. No self-censorship is wanted or needed. The instructor will keep what you write confidential. Submit to Professor Motier Haskins on the last day of the trip. (On-going).

*Group Projects*

We strongly encourage students to choose from one of the following two types of projects:

1) **General evaluation**: provide detailed background (statistics, theories) on one social problem, critically evaluate the efforts of your chosen organization to address the problem, and based on your experiences with the organization and background reading, suggest potential (general approaches) ways of improving such efforts.
2) **Project plan:** work with one of the host organizations to learn in detail about their operations. Design a project that will help improve the organization’s services or take the organization in a new direction, and develop a draft plan to implement your project; if possible, lay the groundwork for your plan before leaving. What factors are most important in determining whether your project will be helpful, successful and viable?

3) **Group and other projects:** in the past, students have come up with project ideas that fall outside our own categorizations. We encourage you to discuss your creative ideas with us prior to fully implementing them.

- [http://www.nationmaster.com](http://www.nationmaster.com)
- [http://www.censusindia.net/](http://www.censusindia.net/)

**Partner Organizations**

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**Selected further reading and exploration:**

**Websites:**
- India Travel Forum (India Mike) [http://www.indiamike.com/](http://www.indiamike.com/)

**Administrative Home**

International Programs, University College is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 111 Jessup Hall or see: [http://uc.uiowa.edu/academics](http://uc.uiowa.edu/academics).
Study Abroad Application and Funding

The India Winterim program application is available on the Study Abroad web site (under the “Application” tab): http://international.uiowa.edu/india-winterim/

The application deadline is Monday, September 21st. UI students submit their applications through an online form to Study Abroad. Students from other colleges/universities, please visit the web site for application instructions.

For information about scholarships and financial aid, go to http://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/financial-aid and click on either “undergraduate scholarships” or “graduate fellowships.”

For More Information

Contact Professor Motier Haskins at motier-haskins@uiowa.edu or stop by his office (North Hall room 334) TTH at 11:00 am or call 641-954-6600.

Students may contact Study Abroad advisor Cory Petersen to discuss the application process, scholarships, and financial aid. To schedule an appointment, please call Study Abroad at 319-335-0353 (M-F, 8-5) and the receptionist who answers the phone can help you set up an appointment with Cory in International Programs, 1111 University Capitol Centre.

Waitlist Procedure

This course can accommodate no more than 30 students. If more than 30 students apply, seats in the course will be granted based on the time the application was submitted to Study Abroad, with preference given to students who applied earlier than others, assuming all other acceptance conditions are met (good academic and disciplinary standing, permission of the instructors). Study Abroad will maintain a waitlist and will notify any students who are waitlisted. Further information will be sent out at that time to waitlisted students about next steps and alternate options.

References


