

Field Study of Traditional Indian Healthcare Practices

ASIA 3020 J Term Course

(3 Credits)

India: Traditional Medicine and Healthcare Practices

This syllabus is representative of a typical term. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from term to term.

Course Description

The three-week *Field Study of Traditional Indian Healthcare Practices* course will be a field-based course delivered in India by emphasizing field study methods that give students a foundation for engaging in basic ethnographic approaches to studying and understanding the practice of traditional medicine and healthcare practices in India. Through visits to and interaction with organizations and individuals working in India's traditional healthcare system, students gain first-hand exposure to the practices and environments of these holistic systems of health and wellness. Through observation, note-taking and interviewing, students gain experience with primary sources for knowledge of traditional medicine in India.

In line with its emphasis on field and clinical practice, the main objectives of the *Field Study* course are to introduce the techniques of eliciting and analyzing the methods used in the systems of Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Amchi (Tibetan) and Folk medicine by interviewing the practitioners of these medical arts; to teach basic methods of data collection such as observation, note-taking, and interviewing in order to conduct a brief field study project; to consider the ethical issues embedded in health and wellness discourse and practice within and across cultures; and to utilize case studies of the practice of traditional medicine as the basis for discussion and analysis of the sustainability of these systems.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Relate field study methods and approaches to findings and understandings of the healing practices used in India's major systems of traditional health;
- Compare and contrast the paradigms, efficacies and indications of different therapeutic techniques using data collected from clinical site visits and examples drawn from case studies observed in Palampur and Dharamsala;
- Critically appraise traditional approaches to healthcare in a diversity of rural and urban settings in North India;
- Apply the methods of observation, note-taking and interviewing in the completion of an ethically sound short field study project.

Course Requirements

The course features field visits to Ayurvedic hospitals, Yoga Centers, Tibetan clinics, ashrams, and local organizations involved in the practice and support of traditional healing. Students are taught

foundational ethnographic techniques in order to be able to learn through field experience. By observing traditional health practitioners in a diversity of settings students will be able to situate their practices within specific the socio-cultural and economic contexts. By visiting the Himalayan locations of some of India's rich botanical resources, students will understand how environment and health are linked at state and local levels. A brief homestay in Dharamsala, a town of Tibetan refugees and home to the Dalai Lama, enhances direct experience and understanding of the cultural and social dimensions of people actively using systems of traditional medicine and healing. Finally, a brief field study project requires students to apply knowledge of fieldwork methods to gather primary data and synthesize it in a coherent written and oral presentation.

January Schedule Overview

Week One: Arrival and Orientation in New Delhi

Lecture topics include: Introduction to India; health systems and traditional health practices; fieldwork in Indian context; critical use of secondary sources on traditional medicine; problems in integrating data from primary and secondary sources; medical ethics: a cross-cultural discussion; fieldwork ethics.

Weeks Two - Three: Palampur and Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh

Lecture topics, activities and field practices may include: Introduction to Yoga, *Prayanama*, *Hath* yoga and Spiritual health practices Herbal medicine; Revitalization; Acupuncture; Panch karma; Interviewing; note taking; compiling a field notebook; establishing rapport and gaining entry in primary field research; Introduction to Tibetan Medicine-Amchi and brief account of Men-Tsee-Khang's work in promoting health and wellbeing among Tibetan community; Concept of Medicinal Buddha in Tibetan Medicine; Diagnosis and Treatment in Tibetan Medicine and observation in Amchi clinics; participant observation in ethnography; advanced interviewing and data gathering in the field; critical observation skills; reflection notes related to key research questions; research paper structure and composition.

Seminar Faculty, Advisors and Resource People

Academic Director: Dr. Azim Khan

Academic Coordinator: Abid Siraj

Faculty

Dr Ashutosh Guleri, Head of the Department, Ayurveda and Panch Karma, Kayakalp, Himalayan Research Institute for Yoga and Naturopathy, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh

Dr Tsering Thakchoe Drungtso, Professor and practitioner of Tibetan medicine and astrology, Director-Drungtso Tibetan Healing and Astrological Centre, McLeodganj-Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh

Dr Malvika Badyal, Physician and Panch Karma Specialist, Kayakalp, Himalayan Research Institute for Yoga and Naturopathy, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh

Dr. Rajeev Prasad Bijalwan MD (Ayurveda) and MA in International Health Management and Development; Research Coordinator, Himalayan Institute of Medical Science, Uttarakhand

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

With the exception of journals and field notebooks, all assignments should be typed and double-spaced. Spelling and grammar are part of grading criteria; careful proofreading and editing are essential parts of the writing process. Please note, *description is not analysis*. While there is a place for description of people, events or organizations in your assignments, be aware that extensive description is not a substitute for critical analysis based on independent thinking and understanding. The more the writing reflects synthesis of theory, observation and reflection, the more successful it will be.

Assignments

Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized.

All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

DIE Exercise at Majeedia Unani Hospital	20%
Fieldwork Journal	25%
Field Group Project (Oral – 20%, Written – 20%)	40%
Discussions and Participation	15%

DIE Exercise at Majeedia Unani Hospital 20% The tasks may involve meeting with a traditional doctor, visiting a pharmacy or finding a hospital and are constructed to introduce students to the Indian healthcare environment. After completion of the assigned tasks students will write up a summary of their experience using the D-I-E format.

D-I-E Approach to Processing Field Learning

Recording accurate description and distinguishing between its interpretation and evaluation is important for interpersonal relations and intercultural communication as well as conducting field study. It's an important skill in order to avoid making assumptions and premature judgments. In drop-off write-ups, your results should be descriptive, discussions interpretive, and conclusions should be evaluative.

DESCRIPTION: to report on the phenomena that we observe with maximum fidelity and without attributing meaning. It is to count, list name, define, record; in other words, it is the **information recorded by all our senses**.

Example: The majority of patients waiting for treatment at the Tibetan Astro-Medical clinic in Nizamuddin are Indian.

INTERPRETATION: to make inferences, to attribute meaning, to explain, relate, summarize, combine, and generalize. It is what we think about the recorded information.

Examples:

- 1) Tibetan medicine appeals to many Indians who already have a holistic and natural view about the treatment of illness and use of medicine though exposure to other systems of well-being such as yoga.
- 2) Tibetan medicine is affordable and accessible to Indians, and the Tibetan doctors all speak Hindi because they are born and raised in India.

EVALUATION: to pass judgment, to make comparisons, to accept or reject. It involves what ought to happen or what should not be. It is our reaction to the phenomena, i.e., how we feel about it.

Examples:

- 1) The examination rooms at the clinic do not appear particularly hygienic; someone should tell the doctors.
- 2) Indians should support Ayurvedic medicine more than Tibetan medicine because it comes from India.
- 3) The Indian government should give support to the manufacture and practice of Tibetan medicine because otherwise it will die out.

Fieldwork Journal – 25%

At the end of the three-week period students will hand in a journal containing extensive notes from daily

attendance at lectures and observations at and wellness hospitals and daily **one-page** summaries of each day's learning. The assignment requires keeping a daily observation journal while in Palampur and Dharamsala and provides the basis for developing skills of observation and note-taking as techniques of fieldwork.

The guidelines for the journals are as follows:

- Daily notes should be properly noted in a systematic fashion, with dates, locations of entries, and complete data entry.
- Posing and then attempting to answer critical and important questions arising from the day's activities should be reflected in the time and effort spent on daily summaries. It is not enough just to recap. Students must link observations in Palampur and Dharamsala with broader knowledge of health practices and philosophical traditions in India.

Field Group Project – Oral (20%) Written (20%)

Oral: This assignment requires students to conduct a short fieldwork project in the areas of Palampur and Dharamsala. Students will work together in small groups of two-three for the duration of the project and each group will be asked to research a specific aspect of one healing system such as diagnostic techniques, philosophical underpinnings, or medicine manufacturing. Using some basic techniques of fieldwork such as participant-observation and interviewing, students are required to prepare a 30-minute oral presentation on their topic of interest addressing relevant questions, which might include:

- In what ways does this system understand the connection between mind and body?
- How do systems of diagnosis in this particular system reflect specific cultural beliefs about environment and place?
- How are the causes of illness understood in this healing system?
- What ingredients are used to make the medicine it uses and where are they found?
- Who utilizes these healing techniques?
- For what kinds of diseases is this system most effective?
- What is the training to become a doctor or practitioner of this system?
- Does this system also combine its approach with allopathy?

The oral presentation will be evaluated according to organization of material, depth of information collected, and creative analysis of the material in light of the larger investigation of traditional health in India.

Written: At the end of this group field study project, students will submit an eight-page paper that critically considers some of the following questions:

- How do the practitioners and users of this traditional health system understand health, both physical and mental?
- In what ways does this system of health provide viable options for patients seeking health care? What are challenges to its sustainability?
- Would you consider using this if you were ill? Why or why not?

Papers will be evaluated according to the following: clarity of presentation of thesis statement; cogent organization of ideas; sophistication of analysis; proper use of the English language and careful editing; creative and effective conclusion.

Discussions and Participation – 15%

This course focuses on active learning during field excursions. Each student is required to lead at least one synthesis discussion session on a visit to a clinic, hospital or other organization during the course.

They are expected to demonstrate attentiveness and proactive engagement during all excursions in order to facilitate group analysis of key themes and ideas. All seminar lectures and activities are mandatory, and students must discuss absences with the Academic Director before their absence.

Participation is not the same as attendance. All students are expected to participate fully in all aspects of the seminar. This means asking pertinent questions to the course's guest lecturers, engaging in discussion and analysis during question opportunities after lectures, in group discussions and while visiting seminar locations. Students are expected to complete the required reading in a timely fashion, and to demonstrate their understanding of texts through reflection, writing, and discussion.

Participation includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions and excursions using the following criteria:

- Attendance - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening - paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, note-taking;
- Involvement in Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge and information. This means speaking up and allowing others to speak;
- Group Accountability - participates positively as a part of a group during excursions and classes;
- Respect - culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities. This includes appropriately greeting people when entering offices and classrooms and saying thank you.

Late papers will be marked down one step (B- to C+, e.g.) for each day they are late.

Grading Criteria

All grades assigned will take into account the special circumstances and challenges of students in a foreign country. An "A" grade for an assignment entails superior (not just "very good") performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of Class Participation, an "A" grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips, workshops and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students' participation will be monitored and taken into account.

Grading Scale

The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
Below 64	F

Student Expectations

Responsibilities when conducting fieldwork:

- Students must respect, protect, and promote the rights and welfare of all those contributing to,

and affected by, their work by protecting the privacy and dignity of the people and communities with whom they conduct field study.

- The right of those providing information to students to either remain anonymous, or to receive recognition, must be scrupulously defended and respected.
- Students must acknowledge the help and services they receive and must recognize their obligation to reciprocate in culturally appropriate ways.
- Students must record and represent accurately all aspects of the field study. This includes not representing as their own work - either in spoken or written form - materials and ideas directly obtained from other sources.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.

Disability Services: For information about and support from Disability Services (DS) to facilitate an accessible educational experience, please contact disabilityservices@sit.edu or +1-802-258-3390. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services can be found on the DS website at: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.