

Nepal: Geoscience in the Himalayas

Country Overview & Packing Guidelines

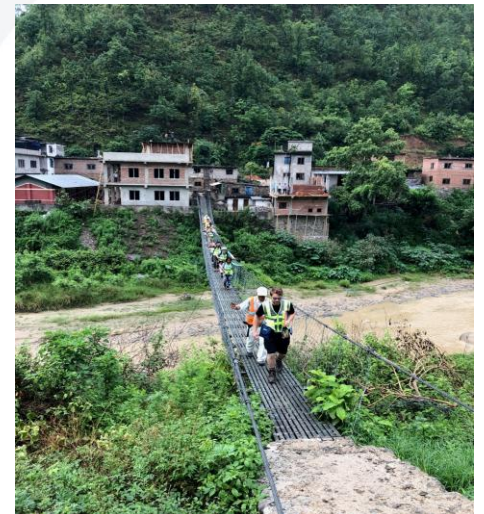
Summer 2026

Country Overview

GENERAL INFORMATION

Nepal, land-linked between China and India, is small in terms of square miles, but contains many of the highest mountains in the world. The geological contrasts within the country of Nepal are dramatic and unequalled: in a distance of less than 150 kilometers the mountains rise from the flat Ganges River plain near sea level to the highest point on Earth; rainfall varies from more than 5 meters per year (16 feet) to less than 30 cm (12 inches) from one side of the mountains to the other; river valleys cut down 6000 meters between adjacent peaks. The Himalayas are undergoing perpetual transformation – these changes affect and are affected by human settlements that line the valleys, top the ridges and spread across the mountainsides. This region provides a particularly powerful opportunity to study how societal decisions affect the geohazard risk faced by residents and to analyze steps for risk mitigation that also align with sustainable development practices.

The program is based out of Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, a busy South Asian city where both modern and traditional lifestyles live side by side amidst ancient Hindu and Buddhist shrines, stupas, and temples. Much of the program will be spent in rural areas allowing for a transect of Nepal's geological and cultural regions. After centuries of feudal rule, Nepal is emerging as a multi-party democracy grappling with the challenges of minority representation and multicultural differences.



CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

Climatic regions vary widely in Nepal, ranging from hot tropical jungles in the Terai to the permanent snowfields of the Himalayas. Kathmandu stands at an altitude of just less than 1350 m (4500 ft), nestled in the Kathmandu Valley; at times during excursions, students may travel to altitudes from 400-3800 meters (12,500 ft). Lower altitudes are hot and humid. Temperatures at higher altitudes can be quite cool, especially at night. You should be particularly aware of sun exposure and hydration when at

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high altitudes. Most homes and buildings do not have heat, and the summer monsoon means almost daily rain (mostly at night), so please plan accordingly.

Location	Height/Elevation		Average Temperature (°C)					
			Jun		Jul		Aug	
	Meter	Feet	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Kathmandu	1333	4372	25-30	15-20	25-30	20-25	25-30	15-20
Malekhu	372	1221	30-35	20-25	30-35	25-30	30-35	20-25
Jomsom	2700	8900	20-25	10-15	20-25	10-15	20-25	10-15
Pokhara	810	2656	20-25	15-20	25-30	15-20	25-30	15-20

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Generally, visitors to Nepal find Nepali people to be welcoming and flexible about differences. However, learning a bit more about local norms can help you to make deeper connections during your time in Nepal. Instead of a homestay, this program has Nepali geology majors as full participants on the courses in the program. This is a tremendous opportunity to make friends and learn about Nepal and Nepali culture, geology, and educational system. The key to having a successful experience on a program like this is compromise and adaptation. The American students will be immersed within Nepal and Nepali culture BUT within our group, Americans are the majority. In different ways you will each be living in someone else's community, and you will be partly on your home ground and partly on the home ground of another. We will go over more during the orientation, but a few Do's and Don'ts are covered here:

- Do greet people with prayer hands and “*namaste*”
- Do take shoes off at the door and leave them there
- Do walk around other people, tables, plates, books, etc. rather than step over
- Do eat and pass things with your right hand (not left)
- Do point with an open hand (not a single finger)
- Do share things, such as snacks, with others
- Do be particularly polite and respectful to people elder to you
- Don't wear revealing clothing
- Don't point the soles of your feet at anyone or at religious object when sitting on the floor



LOCAL DIET

Participating in the local food culture is a central aspect of daily life in Nepal. Special or restricted diets may not always be fully understood by your host family, although they may have previously hosted a

student with similar dietary restrictions. By trying to replicate your diet at home you may miss out on an important part of your host culture.

The staple of the Nepali diet that is served for most meals is *dhal bhaat*, a meal centered around rice and lentils with sides of curried vegetables, pickle, and sometimes meat. It is quite easy to maintain a vegetarian diet in Nepal, though it is more difficult to be vegan or to maintain a kosher diet. In urban areas, most people eat three meals a day and mealtimes are similar to those in the west, but in rural areas, there are usually only two main meals, at mid-morning and late evening, supplemented by snacks. The program will usually have three meals per day near the times most Americans would consider typical.

Note: if you have special dietary needs, including allergies, please inform the office of [Student Health, Safety & Wellbeing](#) prior to the start of your program. We will advise you on realistic expectations about avoiding or incorporating certain foods within the program context.



SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH

Maintaining good health is essential to having a successful study abroad experience.

SIT recommends you do research prior to departure about the health, safety, and security specifics of the country(ies) you plan to visit. Consult the [U.S. Department of State](#) website and search their [Countries and Areas Archive](#) for international travel information and current travel advisories for each country. Search the Center for Disease Control [Traveler's Health](#) page to see travel health notices and vaccine requirements and recommendations for any country(ies) you plan to visit.

SIT recommends doing research ahead of time to stay up to date on It will be critical that you educate yourself about the potential health and safety hazards that may exist in your areas of travel and make informed decisions about what preventative measures to take prior to departure. You should also reference the Health, Access, and Identity information on your program's [webpage](#). If you have any questions, please reach out to the [Student Health, Safety, & Wellbeing Team](#). Students are thoroughly briefed on safety considerations during in-country orientation and are updated throughout the semester if and when circumstances change. For information regarding safety and security, emergency communications, SIT policies, health and personal property insurance, and general program tips, please read the Safety, Security, and Health document and Student Handbook on your program's [predeparture page](#).

ACCOMMODATIONS

During the time in Kathmandu, students will stay in a small tourist hotel near the SIT program office located in the city's Boudha neighborhood. Field accommodations will include guest houses and small hostels, called tea houses, as well as dorm-room style accommodations or tourist hotels.

TRANSPORTATION

Many areas of Nepal still have no roads or roads that are not passable during monsoon season. While conducting field work, we will be hiking for many hours every day. You should be prepared to walk a lot, including in higher altitudes. You do not need to be an Olympic athlete, but you should be in good physical shape, able to handle rough trails, uneven terrain, and some scrambling.

For whole-group excursions within Kathmandu and other regions on the road system of Nepal, we will use hired buses, vans, or jeeps. Short flights are also a possibility. In Kathmandu, when moving about personally or in a small group you will mostly travel on foot or public transportation (local mini-buses). Taxis are widely available and reasonably priced. Students should expect traffic congestion during commuting times and pollution related to the traffic in Kathmandu. The Nepal program center does not provide bikes for student use but bikes can be cheaply rented nearby. However, most students prefer to walk given the chaotic nature of the streets in Kathmandu, which are narrow and frequently unpaved.

COMMUNICATION

While you may want to be in regular communication with friends and family from home during the term abroad, please bear in mind that different time zones, unreliable phone lines, and changing program activities can complicate communication.

It's important to be clear with family and friends about your availability during the term. Many students recommend making an appointment to call home or to receive a call. You should also consider the impact of constant communication with friends and family at home on your cultural immersion.

Visit our [Contact & Communication](#) page for practices on program communication, emergency communication, and home institution communication.

PHONES AND INTERNET

[Cell Phone Policy](#)

As part of SIT's commitment to student safety and security, all students are required to have a working cell phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls, including a data plan so that your phone is operational when you are away from wi-fi. If needed, during orientation SIT staff can assist students in purchasing a local SIM card and acquiring minutes for calls and texting. Failure to maintain a working phone capable of making and receiving calls/texts will be considered a conduct violation and a breach of our student code.

Telephone: Landline calls from Nepal are very expensive (\$3/minute) whereas cellular calls are quite cheap (<5¢/minute). You should bring an **unlocked** smart phone with you to Nepal. The program will

issue you a local SIM card so you can use the local cell network. “Unlocked” means that your phone will accept a different SIM. Most carriers have a process for requesting a phone to be unlocked. If your phone is still being paid off, they may not allow you to unlock it. If you do not have an unlocked phone the program will issue you a simple handset cell phone to use. While you can use the local cell network to send/receive international calls and texts, please keep in mind that a functioning phone on the local network is an integral part of our safety and security procedures and students are required to recharge their phones keeping at least a Rs. 300 balance at all times. These SIMS/phones belong to SIT and if lost, students will be required to replace.

E-mail: There are some Internet cafes in Kathmandu and other larger towns from which you will be able to access your home e-mail account, but connections are slow. The program site also has wireless access for students, but keep in mind that this is only during non-class business hours and bandwidth is limited. In addition, most of our hotels have Wifi, but may periodically not work due to intermittent power outages.

MAILINGS

Unlike receiving a package here in the US, receiving a package at your program site is usually **expensive** and **problematic**. Customs agents must inspect all packages and you, as the recipient, are responsible for duty and storage fees. In addition, there are cases of items being lost in the mail or taking so long to reach the recipient that the recipient is nearly back in the US by the time the items are received. For these reasons, sending packages should be done only for emergency situations. Additionally, sending valuables is highly discouraged. Mailing prescription medication abroad is illegal.

For this program, **DHL, FedEx, and UPS services are available in country**. Despite cheaper prices, reliance on the US Postal Service is not advised due to delays and unreliability. When given the option, it’s always a good idea to send packages certified and with a tracking number that allows the sender to track the package.

If it is necessary for someone to send you mail then posted letters and packages should be sent to the following address:

Student Name
c/o School for International Training
PO Box 23923
Boudha
Kathmandu
Nepal

However, you will not be physically in Kathmandu for large stretches of the program, making the already slow USA-Nepali mail even more delayed.

MONEY

The local currency in Nepal is the Nepali Rupee. Nepal is generally inexpensive, although inflation rates are rising steadily. ATMs are readily available in Kathmandu and in many large towns throughout the country and can be relied upon to withdraw significant amounts of rupees (up to 25,000 rupees at a time). Although possible, it is difficult and expensive to transfer or wire funds to Nepal. It is also possible to get cash advances, in rupees, against a MasterCard or Visa credit card, but only in limited amounts. Keep in mind that debit/ATM cards will usually not work for purchases the same as a credit card would, so we recommend both. Aim to have the US\$ cash you bring to be relatively fresh and crisp bills in several denominations (\$20, \$50, \$100). If you bring travelers checks (less common now but still used) American Express appear to be the ones most easily replaced if lost or stolen. Please consider what balance of cash, traveler's checks and credit/debit cards you will need. There is a safe in the program center to securely store your excess cash and cards.

Check current exchange rates: <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>

If using a debit and/or credit card, you should contact your bank and/or credit card companies regarding your travel plans. If you don't inform these companies that you will be away, they will often assume the card has been lost or stolen and will put an immediate hold on the card. You should also check on costs of withdrawal, as these costs vary and can sometimes be very expensive. Renewing and receiving reissued credit and debit cards while on the program will be an expensive and highly inconvenient process. Before you leave for your program, please check the expiration dates on your cards to ensure that they will not expire while you are abroad. It is also very important that you make photocopies of all your debit/credit card information and leave them with someone you trust in case your card(s) is/are lost or stolen.

We suggest that you budget between US\$700 to \$1100 for out-of-pocket costs not covered by the Tuition and Housing Fees. To determine where you might fall in this range, please examine your spending habits during a typical semester at your home school and consider any exceptional expenditures you may have on the program. Please carefully consider your personal spending habits when creating your out-of-pocket expense budget. Some items to consider are textbooks, Field Study Project or Internship-related expenses (if applicable) not covered by the program, interpretation services, medical expenses, personal spending, and gifts. Use the average estimates below as a guide to help you plan for out-of-pocket expenses.

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	\$300
Books, printing, supplies:	\$50
Up-front medical costs:	\$500
Potential field study project (FSP) travel expenses:	\$200
Visas and entry permit	\$125 (cash)
Estimated total:	\$700-1100

Please note that up-front medical costs can vary widely. Though you are completely covered by SIT's travel insurance GeoBlue, which you can read more about on our [Participant Insurance](#) page, you still may need to pay up-front for medical care and then file for reimbursement.

VISITORS AND FREE TIME

SIT strongly discourages and will not provide support for any visitors to students during the term, due to the rigorous nature of the program and the disruption that such visits cause in program flow and group dynamics. Students should be sure that relatives and friends are aware of this policy and that visits are scheduled for dates after the formal conclusion of the program. Students will not be excused from program components to attend to visitors. See the [Attendance and Participation Policy](#).

If a visitor does come while a program is in progress, they must plan their own independent accommodations; SIT Study Abroad homestay families can accommodate only their assigned student and, due to cultural and contractual understandings with SIT, should not be asked to host students' guests.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

Please read our full [Independent Travel](#) policy for our definition, guidelines and how to access our independent travel notification form. Please note that independent travel is only allowed during program free time and students will not be excused from program activities to travel. SIT is not responsible for any costs of student independent travel including logistics, preparations, cancellation fees, change fees, and any other costs associated with independent travel. We highly recommend you wait to book any independent travel until AFTER arriving on program and receiving the final academic schedule from your program.

During the program, students follow an intense schedule of classes and field-based learning assignments. Free time for pursuing an independent interest or hobby during the program will be limited. Your admissions counselor can advise you about particular interests you may have. For example, if you must keep in shape for your next athletic season, or if you play a musical instrument and want to know whether to bring it, we can help you to understand your schedule and any concerns or limitations that may exist.



CODE OF CONDUCT AND POLICIES

SIT maintains a [Code of Conduct](#) and clear institutional [policies](#) regarding student behavior through a commitment to mutual learning and respect for others. Visit the policy page for detailed policies around academic integrity, alcohol and drug use, anti-harassment and non-discrimination, attendance and participation, credit hours, equal education opportunities, grading, housing, independent travel, prohibited activities, religious holiday observance, sexual harassment and misconduct, and withdrawal among others.

Packing Guidelines

LUGGAGE

Please pack lightly and include only necessary items. You should be able to carry all your luggage significant distances on your own. Try to minimize both the number of bags and weight of your bag(s) since you will likely be acquiring more belongings while abroad.

While we will be trekking on this program, keep in mind that this is not like backpacking in the states where you must carry food, cooking utensils and the like; while trekking can be strenuous with lots of uphill and downhill hiking, it is more a social and cultural experience of walking from village to village where we stay in tea houses. So, while you will not need technical or camping gear (although some students prefer their own sleeping bags) be prepared to carry your backpack, and pack accordingly.

Students report that a medium sized backpack (about 40 liters) is most useful during fieldwork and trekking. If you do not have a backpack already, it is not necessary to go out and buy one just for this program; adequate locally made backpacks are available for sale. While we are trekking, each student will be issued a medium-sized duffle bag into which all overnight gear must fit. Porters or vehicles will carry the overnight luggage; while students carry their day supplies such as geology equipment, extra clothes, water, first aid kit, and sometimes a packed lunch.

If carrying prescription medications, you should carry a letter from your doctor to prevent any concerns at customs or in transit. (Please see the “General Health Tips” section in the Safety, Security, and Health pre-departure document.)

Please check the current requirements of the Transportation Security Administration (<http://www.tsa.gov>) as well as those of the airline on which you are flying for domestic and international baggage restrictions.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES

Dress appropriately: although Nepalese have seen nearly all kinds of dress (or virtual undress) on foreign tourists, traditional tastes are more conservative. Show respect for local customs and aesthetics and open yourself to more positive interactions with locals by adhering to modesty standards. If you want to wear shorts or skirts, make sure they come to or below the knees. Avoid revealing halter-tops. Short-sleeved shirts are probably best although tank tops have become more common with Nepali youth. It is important to dress nicely and present yourself as reasonably neat and well-groomed. Your favorite torn and worn clothes should stay at home! Also, remember to bring at least one “nicer” outfit for special events or evenings out.



Climate will be humid and warm-to-hot in the lower altitudes but more comfortable in the evenings. At higher altitudes day temperatures will be comfortable but it can approach freezing at night. The summer is monsoon time in Nepal, but the majority of the rain falls at night.

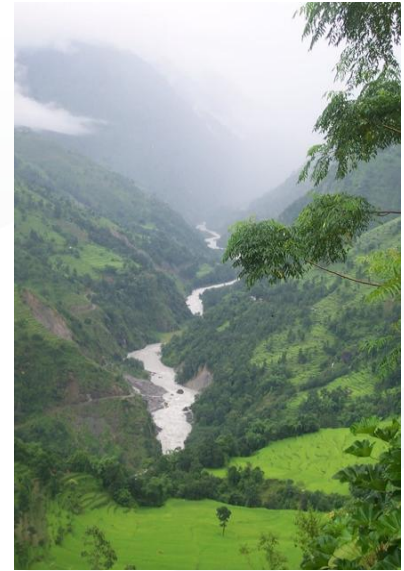
Clothing is inexpensive in Nepal and a wide variety of trekking and local styles are available in Kathmandu. Many students pack planning to purchase some things here – but again, your shopping time will be limited.

Shoes: It is very important to have a comfortable pair of boots or hiking shoes. Lightweight boots or sturdy hiking shoes are perfectly fine – it is not necessary and not recommended to have heavy-duty hiking boots. Make sure the shoes fit and are suitable for rain and a range of climates. You should also have a pair of comfortable, tough sandals. The same should be considered as for your clothes; do not bring ragged, beat up, shoes and make sure that they are comfortable as there is lots of walking in Nepal. If you have bigger than average feet, do not expect to be able to find shoes to fit you in the local market, so please plan accordingly.

EQUIPMENT

With a few exceptions, trekking in Nepal is not like backpacking in the west: it is usually from village to village where teahouses provide food and lodging. If you plan on conducting a field study project in a remote area or doing a lot of trekking after the program, keep in mind that most equipment you would need is available for rent or purchase in Kathmandu at a variety of quality and price levels.

Students need their own reasonably sized daypacks. In the past, some students have been happy to have their own sleeping bags (rating from 10° to 30° F), whereas others have preferred to use local blankets and skip a sleeping bag entirely (100% cleanliness not guaranteed). If you go with local blankets, you could still bring a bag liner. There is no need for tents or sleeping pads. If you already have a water purification filter or UV sterilizer, it would be good to bring it along. If you do not have one, it is not necessary to buy one if you are comfortable drinking iodine- or chlorine-treated water or taking turns to use the group water filters while we are trekking. As many of us share the group filters, you may need to get up a little earlier to wait your turn. Treated water is available at our Program Center in Kathmandu and a few places on the excursion. Please do not plan to rely on bottled water as plastic litter is a troubling environmental issue.



In order to conduct geoscience fieldwork, it is essential to have a set-up that will allow for easy access to field notebook, pencils, compass, maps, etc. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Please refer to the final pages in the document for more details on field equipment.

COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

It is very highly recommended that you bring a laptop computer. If you bring a laptop, the computer will be your personal property and responsibility. It is recommended that you insure your computer, smartphone, or other valuables for full coverage in the event of loss or theft (SIT insurance does not cover personal property).

Internet cafes are becoming increasingly rare so finding a public computer that you can use in Nepal will consume valuable time you could otherwise use for doing write-up. **If you bring a laptop, the computer will be your personal property and responsibility and it is recommended that you insure it. SIT is not responsible for any duty tax you may have to pay when you enter the country, theft, or loss.**

An increasing number of geoscience apps are being made for tablets. Google Earth can be a particularly powerful way to view satellite images and other apps can help with various field measurements. If you already own a tablet and want to invest in a rugged field case for it, you could consider bringing it along. Laptops will be left in Kathmandu or Pokhara but a tablet in a sturdy case could be brought on the excursion. Initial assignments will be done with pencil and paper but students have found a tablet to be useful during independent field study project fieldwork. **As with laptops, tablets are your personal property and responsibility.**

The program center provides Internet access during business hours. You will also be able to find access to the Internet/e-mail through Internet shops/cafes in Kathmandu and Pokhara. In nearly all cases Internet speed will be significantly slower than typical speeds in the USA. Printing is not available at the program center so for printing papers you should have a flash drive to take to internet cafes.

Please see the following website for information about electricity, voltage and electrical adapters: <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/>.



If you plan to bring electric equipment, check first to see if it will work on 220V. Most modern electrical equipment is able to take a range of different power systems, thus necessitating only a plug shape change, not actual power conversion. To check your equipment, look at the power adapter unit (the box somewhere along the power cord). If you can find “Input: 100-240V” it means the equipment can input Nepal’s 220V as well as the 110V in the USA. You will just need to change the shape of the plug prongs by using a plug adapter. We recommend against bringing electrical equipment requiring only 110V because that will require a power converter, which is more expensive and bulky. Plug adapters (and power converters) are available in Nepal, but they can be difficult to find so it is best to bring them from the States to save on hassle. Many Nepali receptacles will actually accommodate Asian, European, and American plug shapes but you cannot count on it all the time, particularly in older buildings..

GIFTS

Many students are glad they came prepared with a few small gifts to offer Nepali friends and classmates as a means to share a part of our culture with them. Try to choose gifts that represent you or the part of the country and/or community you live in. Think about what your city, state, or local artisans produce. Draw upon your personal interests or hobbies for ideas. Gifts certainly do not need to be expensive or elaborate. Remember to bring pictures of your friends and family to share.

Bring a small pocket-sized album or make a digital album on a mobile device with photos of your family, home, neighborhood, school, holidays, etc., as these are invaluable in breaking the ice when meeting new people. When selecting photographs to share with people you meet in Nepal, you should remain aware of the Nepalese attitudes regarding dress and displays of affection between men and women. Pictures should not feature revealing or extremely untidy dress; pictures of boyfriends and girlfriends should be tasteful and somewhat conservative.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

Most consumer goods are now available in Kathmandu. Imported products from Europe carry a price tag comparable to the U.S. and offer a very limited choice in brand names or varieties. Items from Nepal and other Asian countries are less expensive alternatives and are often counterfeits of international products. Therefore, although the quality may sometimes be questionable, you should be able to find some form of almost all goods.

Many of the items listed on the packing guidelines are available in Kathmandu, although they may not be exactly the kind you want, they may cost more than in the U.S., and you may spend time searching them out locally. If you are very particular about the type and quality of certain items, then plan to bring them with you.

Laundry facilities are available for a reasonable price in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Elsewhere you will have to wash all your clothes by hand yourself most, if not all, the time. The program will bring laundry soap for group use on the excursion.

ALUMNI CONTACTS

If you have further questions, please contact your admissions counselor and/or ask an alumni contact: <https://studyabroad.sit.edu/admissions-aid/application-process/contact-a-former-student/>.



GEOSCIENCE FIELD EQUIPMENT

In order to conduct geoscience fieldwork, it is essential to have a set-up that will allow for easy access to field notebook, pencils, compass, hammer, hand lens, acid bottle* and maps. Here are several ways this can be accomplished. (*Acid bottles will be available to borrow from the SIT Center in Nepal. Do not bring acid.)

In order to conduct geoscience fieldwork, it is essential to have a set-up that will allow for easy access to field notebook, pencils, compass, hammer, hand lens, acid bottle* and maps. Here are several ways this can be accomplished. (*Acid bottles will be available to borrow from the SIT Center in Nepal. Do not bring acid.)



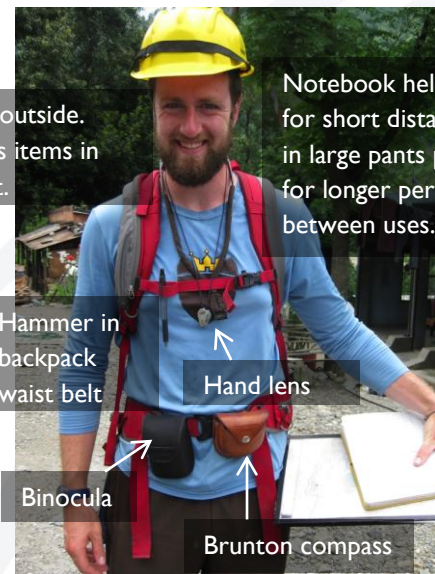
Carrying pouch for notebook, pencils, acid bottle, etc.

RECOMMENDED

Map case held in hand for short distances and moved to backpack for longer hikes between outcrops.

Silva compass in pocket

Hammer carrier



Pencil outside. Others items in pocket.

Notebook held in hand for short distances and in large pants pockets for longer periods between uses.

Hammer in backpack waist belt

Hand lens

Binocula

Brunton compass



Shoulder bag for most handy-access items. Hammer in belt loop. A few items in pockets.

REQUIRED GEOSCIENCE EQUIPMENT

- Rite-in-Rain **Geological Format** field books (No. 540F)
- Notebook holder/pouch/pocket – many people use one that fits on a belt and has quick Velcro opening and pockets for pens/pencils but the main thing is just to have the notebook in a location that is secure but handy. A notebook holder like the one pictured here is recommended but there are other organizational options (see previous page). Notebook holders can be purchased at the SIT Center in Nepal for ~\$10.
- Mechanical pencils/leads – try out different lead hardness to see what you like; most geoscientists tend to use 2H or HB
- ≥10x hand lens & neck strap – Hasting Triplet (~\$36) is best quality because it has the least lens distortion. Do not waste your money on anything less than ~\$15.
- Survey-grade azimuth compass such as a Brunton Transit, Silva Ranger, or equivalent. Azimuth compass will have numbers 0-360°. Quadrant compasses (0-90°) do not work well. Some departments have Brunton compasses available for check out by students. If that is not an option for you and you do not want to invest in the full cost of a Brunton yourself, buy a Silva or Suunto of the style pictured below (right) and described in Chapter 2 of the required text: *Coe's Geologic Field Techniques*. **The important features are: sighting mirror, declination adjustment, clinometer, and azimuth numbering.**
- Selection of colored pencils and pens (and a sharpener) – you will need to color in maps using colored pencils and ink in lines on final maps
- Plastic folder for holding papers – the ones with internal dividers are particularly helpful for organizing items such as maps and air photos
- USB flash drive



Potential online sources for geological field equipment that seem to have competitive prices

<http://ascscientific.com/>

<http://geology.com/store/>

OPTIONAL BUT GREAT TO BRING IF YOU HAVE THEM

- Clear plastic map case (also called a map board) – Many people make these for themselves from two ~9"x12" plexiglass sheets hinged together at one end by a metal hinge or duct tape. They allow you to view and even write on your maps/air photos without completely exposing them to the elements. If you do not bring your own, you will be able to get the materials to make one from the SIT Center.

- Rock hammer – rock hammers are available for checkout from the SIT Center but if you have your own, please bring it.
- Compact binoculars – if you have a pair, bring them; they are very useful of viewing inaccessible features.
- Pack cover – you will be given a heavy plastic liner bag for your daypack but a nylon cover is also highly advised. They are available for purchase in Kathmandu if you do not already have one.
- Digital camera with a remote. Phone cameras are sufficient but, if you have a digital camera with a remote or phone-control app, that will be valuable for one of the assignments.
- Safety glasses – if your sunglasses cover your eyes well, you can use them for eye protection when using your rock hammer. If you do not bring adequately eye-protective glasses you will need to buy a pair of safety glasses from the SIT Center (~\$5).

Packing List

These packing guidelines are based on suggestions from past students and your academic director.

GENERAL

- 3 pairs trousers (quick-dry fabrics are best; light cotton is also ok)
- Below-knees shorts/skirt (opt.)
- 3-4 work T-shirts/blouses (quick-dry fabrics highly recommended as cotton takes a long time to dry)
- Evening shirt (clean)
- Pale-color long-sleeved shirt (for sun and bugs)
- Fleece jacket or sweater (not cotton)
- Light raincoat or poncho
- Underwear
- 3-4 pairs hiking socks (for sweating in)
- Evening socks (clean to change into)
- Sun hat
- Hiking shoes/boots
- Sports sandals
- Small fast-dry towel
- Handkerchief/bandana
- Hat & gloves (high altitude evenings)
- Thin long underwear (silk or polypro, not cotton)
- One nicer outfit for formal visit or dinner out
- 1-2 other outfits for around Kathmandu/Pokhara
- Fleece vest or thin warm long-sleeved shirt (opt.)
- Ankle gaiters (there will be leeches) (opt.)

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa (if applicable)
- 2 passport photos
- An adequate supply of any **prescription** medication you are already taking and a copy of the prescription
- Extra pair of eyeglasses or contacts and plenty of cleaning solution, if used
- Iodine tablets/drops or LifeStraw or Sawyer emergency water filter (LifeStraw or Sawyer filter HIGHLY recommended [~\$20])
- Sunscreen
- Personal toiletries

RESEARCH EQUIPMENT

- 2 Rite-in-the-Rain **Geological Format** No. 540F field books (<http://www.riteintherain.com/>)
- Notebook holder for handy access

- Mechanical pencils/leads
- Colored pencils/pens
- Survey-grade compass (Brunton Transit or Silva Ranger)
- Hand lens ($\geq 10x$) & neck strap
- Plastic folder for holding papers
- USB flash drive
- Digital camera – phone camera is sufficient but if you have a camera with a remote, that will be of value for one of the assignments (optional but nice)
- Belt or waist pack to hold field gear (such as hammer, notebook holder, compass)

GEAR

- Day pack (not too big/fancy but not tiny)
- Pack cover (for rain protection; can be purchased locally if needed)
- Water bottles (minimum 2 liters)
- Sunglasses (or safety glasses)
- Headlamp/flashlight & batteries
- Few heavy-duty Ziploc bags

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- Visa or MasterCard credit card for emergencies
- Debit/ATM Card and cash
- Laptop
- Students are encouraged to bring a **battery-operated carbon monoxide detector**)

PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT (PROGRAM STAFF WILL CARRY EXTENSIVE KIT)

- Pepto-Bismol
- Ibuprofen/aspirin
- Cough drops
- Imodium (in case of diarrhea while on a bus)
- Blister bandages, KT tape, or moleskin (for blisters)
- Band-Aids
- Topical antibiotic (ex. Neosporin)
- Tweezers
- Insect repellent (opt.)

OPTIONAL

- Sleeping bag (10 to 30° F) or bag liner (alternatively you can use local blankets)
- Clear plastic map board
- Rock hammer
- Binoculars
- Tablet (esp. iPad) & rugged case
- Small folding umbrella (highly recommended; works for sun or rain)

- Needle/thread
- Fanny pack
- Journal/reading books
- Playing cards or other travel games
- Cord for clothes line and other uses
- Few clothespins for hanging laundry
- Family/home pictures
- Water pump filter or UV sterilizer
- Lock for your duffle bag and/or luggage
- Small recharging battery (ex. Mobili or iBeek)
- Handful of power bars or other easy snacks
- Swim suit
- Rain jacket

