Course Syllabus

National Identity and the Arts Seminar
ASIA 3000 (6 Credits / 90 class hours)
Spring 2015

SIT Study Abroad Program:
India: National Identity and the Arts

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description
The National Identity and the Arts Seminar offers a foundation in Indian arts, culture, and religion in the context of the on-going formation of Indian national identity. Today and throughout history, the arts have played a critical role in the making of cultural and political identities. Essential to human life, the arts and humanities are often co-opted and, as we see so often in the media, are questioned, if not destroyed in the name of a political mission or nation-building.

The aim of this seminar is to give a framework for the understanding of India as an ancient civilization that has shifted and reformed identity many times. The current identity of the modern nation state of India is a result of those centuries of religious, political and artistic interactions. In this seminar students will be challenged to consider the relationships between religion, politics and art in the restructuring of cultural and national identity in India through three broad themes: 1) Aesthetic Heritage and Preservation; 2) Cities and the Arts; 3) Artistic Production, Tradition, and Identity. These three themes will be interwoven throughout the seminar in every seminar activity: in the classroom, at archaeological sites, in museums, during workshops and on heritage walks.

The roots of present day Indian aesthetic ideals developed during the Golden Age of the fifth century A.D. when the Vakataka and Gupta dynasties set the norm, not just for Indian art, but much of pan-Asian art. During the Mughal period (apogee 16th-mid-18th c.), Indian painting and architecture flourished under the lavish imperial patronage of the Mughal rulers. During the British period India began to establish a program of archaeological assessment and preservation that continues to this day. Contemporary arts reflect a merger between international and Indian sensitivities and a restless quest to establish a distinctively “Indian” identity in the arts.

Integrating different types of learning, such as classroom lectures, readings, site visits, workshops, and varied cultural experiences may be challenging. Occasionally, it may be challenging to appreciate the varied presentation styles of local scholars, as Indian pedagogical styles differ from American teaching methods. This aspect of the course is a critical part of the cross-cultural experience.
Learning Outcomes

- At the end of this course, students should have gained basic familiarity with the broad outlines of traditional and contemporary Indian arts and their covalent religious structures.
- Students should be able to discuss issues of Indian art history as expressed through the creation of the national identity discourse and their importance in contemporary Indian society and politics.
- Through the integration of classroom and site visits students should understand that Indian religions, sculpture, painting, architecture, literature and music, and dance are all interwoven in their devotional and aesthetic purpose. Students should learn that fieldwork and classroom work must be wholly integrative and mutually supportive for successful art historical study.
- Students should be cognizant of the long historical trajectory of Indian arts and religions and their contributions to Asian and world cultures. Students should be cognizant of the historical interactions with the many foreign visitors, pilgrims, invaders and colonizers that have shaped the arts and national identity of India.
- Students should have developed an aptitude for thoughtful observation and nuanced connoisseurship in the arts, through study of both postmodernist critical theory and Indian historical aesthetic philosophies, such as rasa.

Course Requirements

Practica, Walks, Excursions, Workshop, Presentations and Classroom Integration

This is a program focused on the visual and performing arts of India. It makes sense for students to leave the classroom and actually study Hindu temples in situ, Buddhist pilgrimage in situ, colonial architecture in situ, dance in situ, and theatre in situ, etc. There can never be an equivalent classroom experience to the value of walking through a site with a knowledgeable teacher.

It is important to remember you are in India, not as tourists, but as students. The field experience must be supported by readings and classroom lectures. Students are guided towards awareness of thoughtful observation and away from the tourist perspective of casual sightseeing and tourist photography.

Practica, excursions and workshops provide invaluable opportunities for students to think “outside the box,” and to negotiate and analyze an art historical or performance evaluation in the field. Fieldwork builds confidence in connoisseurship, quick and decisive analytical skills, thoughtful articulation, and the necessary integration of research/classroom/reading information with assessment of field-based performance and visual arts.

The National Identity and the Arts Seminar (NIA) coincides with the Delhi Homestay period and includes the following activities: attendance at the lecture series, submission of written assignments, analysis of required readings at synthesis sessions, participation in excursions, participation in the workshops, and participation in the practicum.

Lectures (39 class hours) & Delhi Walks (10 class hours)

Due to logistical realities, the seminar schedule will vary each semester. Readings are to be found in sequential lecture order in the NIA course reader. To avoid luggage weight there will be a separate reader for our excursion period.

Lectures, excursions and Delhi walks involve interactive learning and discussion. The city name, e.g., (Delhi), indicates the location where the lecture and discussion will take place.

National Identity and the Arts Seminar Lectures

*Delhi Walks and Talks with Academic Director Dr. Mary Storm (5 class hours)*
Humayun’s Tomb; National Crafts Museum; Dargah of Nizamuddin

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Delhi Walks and Talks with Harini Narayanan (5 class hours)
Mehrauli Archaeological Park, Lutyen's Delhi, Akshardham, Mayawati Memorial Park Temple

1) Contemporary Social and Political Issues, Dr. Azim Khan (Delhi)
Readings TBD

2) Nationalism in Indian Art History. Dr. Mary Storm. (Delhi)

3) Rasa: Indian Aesthetic Theory. Dr. Mary Storm. (Delhi)

4) History of the Cities of Delhi. Part 1 Ms. Harini Narayanan, (Delhi)

5) Food and Identity: Memsahibs and Mulligatawny. Dr. Mary Storm (Delhi)

6) Introduction to the Hindu World: From the Vedas to Hindutva
Dr. R.P. Bahuguna (Delhi)

7) Reading Ancient Texts in a Modern World: The Case of the Bodhicaryāvatāra, Dr Mary Storm (Delhi)

Short Excursion to Amritsar (see “Course Detail: Excursions” for more information)

8) Introduction to Sikhism, Dr. S. Lakhbir Singh Lodhinangal (Khalsa College, Amritsar)

9) Politics, Religion and Heritage Preservation. Dr. Mary Storm (Amritsar)

10) Indian Classical Dance. Dr. Urmimala Sarkar. (Delhi)
Reginald Massey. “Indian Classical Dance: The Background,” in India’s Dances: Their History,

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11) History of the Cities of Delhi. Part 2 Ms. Harini Narayanan, (Delhi)

12) Film Music and the Common Man Ms Shika Jhinghan. (Delhi)

Long Excursion (see “Course Detail: Excursions” for more information)

13) The Creation of an Imperial Image: Mughal Patronage Dr. Mary Storm (Fatehpur Sikri and Agra)

14) The Temple as Cosmic Axis Dr. Mary Storm (Khajuraho)

15) The Subaltern Statement: Hero Stones and the Image of Valor. Dr. Mary Storm (Dubela)

16) The Hindu Temple, Dr. Mary Storm

17) “A Little Warmer than Necessary:” Ancient Tantrism and Modern Prurience. Dr. Mary Storm (Khajuraho)

18) Is Buddhism still an “Indian” Religion? Dr. Mary Storm (Sarnath)
Vinay Lal, “Buddhism’s Disappearance from India,” https://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/Religions

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19) Pilgrimage and Sacred Geography, Dr. Rana B.P. Singh and Mr. Ajay Pande (Varanasi)

20) Textiles of Benares Dr. Anjan Chakravarty (Varanasi)

21) The Semiotics of Indian Art: Breaking down the Purpose of Symbolism, Dr. Mary Storm (Delhi)
Diana Eck. “Seeing the Sacred,” in Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India, New York: Columbia

22) Public Art and Community: Power, Politics and Identity. Ms. Harini Narayanan (Delhi)

23) Modernist and Contemporary Art: Does it Still need to be “Indian?”
Dr. Shukla Sawant. (Delhi)

24) Whose Sari Now? The Hegemony of Western Fashion. Ms. Shomya Aggarwal. (Delhi)

25) Social Fabric of Indian Theatre. Dr. Bishnupriya Dutt. (Delhi)

26) Indian Classical Music. Ms. Maria Stallone. (Delhi)

Small Group Workshops (South India Architecture Workshop, Molela Pottery Workshop): See “Workshop Detail” for more information

27) Calendar Art: The Mass Production of the Holy Image, Mr. Yousuf Saeed (Delhi)

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Final Seminar Discussion: National Identity, Religion, and the Arts
This two-hour session asks students to debate the question of “What is Indian about India’s arts? Whose identity?” and to defend their Independent Study Project proposals in conversation with seminar themes.

Course Detail: Excursions
Short Weekend Excursion
Amritsar (3 class hours)

Amritsar is the home of Sikhism and the place of its holiest shrine. At one time Sikhs lobbied hard for independence, even resorting to violence, but have now integrated into mainstream Indian culture. We will ask: how has this been done, so that Sikhs maintain identity, but also see themselves as part of a larger secular state?

Long Excursion
Agra (6 class hours)
Fatehpur Sikri, Taj Mahal and environs; Itimad ud Daula; Tomb of Akbar, Sikandra; Red Fort

The Mughals were Central Asians who invaded India in the 16th century in search of empire. Their dominance resulted in a unified empire encompassing the Subcontinent from present day Afghanistan to Bangladesh, from Kashmir to the Southern Deccan Plateau.

The Mughal empire was famous for wealth, power and luxuriant arts and architecture. Along with the ancient Empire of Ashoka, the Mughal empire created a model for the creation of the modern Indian nation state.

During the 17th century, before the Mughal capital was shifted to Delhi, Fatehpur Sikri and Agra were the seats of the Mughal court in India. The cities was strategically located on the banks of the Yamuna River and along the Grand Trunk Road, and flourished under the patronage of the emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. The Mughals attracted artists from Persia, Central Asia, and other parts of India who built the luxurious forts, palaces, and mausoleums that still stand today. Of these structures, the best known are the Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, and Agra Fort, which have been declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. This is unquestionably the best area to understand the glories of the Mughal period.

Orchha (3 class hours)
Jahangir Mahal; Orchha Palace; Royal Chhatris; Chaturbhuj Temple; Lakshmi Narayan temple

Orchha, in the state of Madhya Pradesh, is a scenic town positioned on a rocky island enclosed by the Betwa River. It was founded in the early 16th century as the capital of the Bundela kings, and continued as the capital until the mid-18th century, when it was abandoned.

The town contains many forts, palaces and temples that were constructed during its heyday, and were built in the unique style of architecture known as the Bundela style – a synthesis of the traditional Hindu, hybrid Indo-Saracenic, and ornate Mughal styles. Orchha reflects the integration of indigenous Hindu Rajput and foreign Muslim Mughal cultures. This Bundela style can be seen in the town’s three main palaces – the Raj Mahal, the Rai Praveen Mahal, and the Jahangiri Mahal.

Khajuraho (4 class hours)
Eastern Group of Temples; Western Group of Temples; Southern Group of Temples

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Khajuraho is noted for its Tantric sculptures and represents important changes in medieval Hindu devotional practice, changes which are both admired and distrusted by contemporary Hindu nationalists. The Khajuraho Temple complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the state of Madhya Pradesh, contains one of the greatest collections of medieval Indian temple art. The 1,000-year old temples display an exquisite sense of architectural form and proportion, and their facades are decorated with carved deities, nymphs, beasts, warriors and, most famously, erotic sculptures.

Over the course of the period from 950-1050 AD, the rulers of the Chandela Dynasty built 85 temples at Khajuraho, of which about 20 still survive today. The most impressive temple is the Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, located in the Western Temple Complex, which represents the pinnacle of North Indian temple art and architecture.

**Varanasi (4 class hours)**
River Ghats; Historical River Boat Ride, Pilgrimage walk

Varanasi is one of the oldest living cities in the world, and is arguably one of the most intense in all of India. For more than 2500 years, the city has attracted seekers and pilgrims. It is also where visitors will experience what is said to be the most sacred stretch of the Ganges River. It is believed that to die in Varanasi on the banks of its holy river is to receive *moksha*, and to be liberated from the cycle of life and death. In addition to its intense spirituality, Varanasi is also known for its textiles. A wide range of silk brocade saris, scarves, and Tibetan-style fabrics are made and sold in the city.

**Sarnath (4 class hours)**
Archaeological Area: Ashoka Edict and Pillar; Dhamak Stupa; Mahabodhi Society Temple; Sarnath Museum; Japanese Temple.

Sarnath was the place of the Buddha’s First Sermon. Buddhism was heretical in the fifth century BCE and it remains so for the Hindu majority, for its rejection of the caste system and its emphasis on monasticism. By the 12th century Buddhism had all but died out in the land of its birth. Ironically, while Buddhism waned in India, it simultaneously travelled beyond India to become an international religion. Buddhism has seen a revival in India in the last 100 years, but declaring Buddhist identity is perceived to be politically problematic and socially divisive. We will consider the place of Buddhism both in modern India and in the world.

**Course Detail: Practica, Small Group Workshops and Additional Learning Activities**

**Practicum (16 class hours)**
Each student must take a practicum in Bhajan (traditional Hindu devotional signing), Indian Cooking or Madhubani Painting. Practica meet 8 times for a minimum of two hours per class.

**Workshops (10 class hours)**
Five days either in South India studying architecture of the great temples or five days in Molela village doing an intensive hands-on pottery practicum. The workshops allow students to study the religious/art historical culture of South India or to become immersed into a distinctive North Indian art form.

**South India Workshop:** Students who choose to go on the South India workshop will be introduced to the great temples of South India. During this workshop we will discuss the integration of Hinduism into every aspect of South Indian life. We will consider patterns of patronage, shifts in devotional practice such as *bhakti* and tantrism, the purpose of imagery: stone, bronze and painting. We will study the reciprocal concepts of *darshan*, the economy of the temple, the development of literature, music and dance linked to religious life and the spread of Indic culture from South India to the rest of Southeast Asia.

**Molela Workshop:** Students will stay in the nearby Hindu pilgrimage town of Nathdwara, but will spend their days 9-5 in the famous pottery village of Molela, Rajasthan. While in Molela, they will learn to make the distinctive Hindu devotional terracotta plaques that are the products of
this village. Students will work with an awarded craftsman, the descendent of many generation of
a pottery family. This is a chance to experience village life and the hands-on practice of a
hereditary craft.

Student Presentations and Directed Reading Discussions (8 class hours)
Hindu Deity Presentations
Excursion Group Presentation
Workshop Group Presentation
Reading Discussions

Bodhicaryāvatāra Readings (8 class hours)
We will read the Bodhicaryāvatāra (also titled Bodhisattva-caryāvatāra, meaning the Way of the
Bodhisattva) in English translation from the Sanskrit. This text helps students gain insight into an
important period in the development of Indian religious thought and aesthetic theory and to
understand those developments as they were exported to the rest of Asia. This is an Eighth century
root text of Mahāyana Buddhism. It is written in 10 chapters, in poetic form, explaining the value of
bodhicitta, a “wise heart,” or awakened mind. The Bodhicaryāvatāra was written by Śāntideva, a
Buddhist monk-scholar associated with the ancient university of Nalanda in Bihar. The text is
considered one of the masterpieces of medieval Asian literature. The Bodhicaryāvatāra was chosen
because it is accessible to modern readers, it is still an important texts for millions of Buddhists, and
it has many commentaries and translations.

Other Activities
Saraswati Pūjā
Music Recital and discussion

Evaluation and Grading Criteria
For all assignments it is important to read the directions below and follow them. For example, if you
are asked to use topic headers, please do so. Keep in mind that participation includes many factors
including culturally appropriate good manners.

- Two Response Essays: Students are required to submit a typed, analytical book response
  essay. The possible books have been listed in pre-departure assignments. Students are also
  expected to write an analytical response essay of the film Jodhaa Akbar. Essays should be carefully
  crafted and well-edited.
- One Practicum: Each student will study an art or skill particular to India, such as: devotional
  music, cooking or Madubani painting. A minimum of 8 lessons or 16 hours of instruction must
  be completed. Students are also required to give a fifteen to twenty minute oral group
  presentation, which provides a description/demonstration of the practicum at the end of the
  Seminars/Homestay period.
- Walks and Talks: there will be mandatory walks and talks about different aspects of Delhi
  with Ms Harini Narayanan. Students are expected to keep current with assigned readings and
  to take notes while in the field.
- Hindu Deities: one 5 minute oral presentation on an assigned Hindu deity. Illustrations must
  be included.
- Monument Response Paper: 4-page paper in the DIE format on a monument chosen from
  the list. Illustrations must be included.
- Excursion and Workshop presentations. Students will give brief oral presentations on our
  major excursion and the workshops.
- Deity Presentation: students will give a five minute presentation of a Hindu deity.
- One Final Essay Exam: The Final Exam will be a take home essay. Information from lectures,
  readings, excursions, and personal explorations should be integrated into the essays.
  Examinations will be marked on the accuracy of the information, quality of analysis, variety of
  sources, and clarity of presentation.

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- **ISP Proposal Defense & Final Thematic Discussion**: students will gather to present their ISP topics for AD and group consideration in light of the program theme. Students must be ready to discuss topic relevance, critical theory, methodology, bibliography, ethics and logistics.

- **Participation**: The depth and quality of students’ participation in all aspects of the course is considered for evaluation, including: **cultural awareness and sensitivity**, participation in reading discussions, conscientious, prompt and courteous presence at all lectures, walks, excursions and workshops, as well as excellence of performance in the excursion, practicum and workshop presentations.

**Grading Assessment Criteria for this Course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Pre-Departure Book and Film Response Essays</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Practicum: (6 classes a minimum of 14 hours of instruction and Presentation)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) Monument Response, D.I.E. format (four-page paper)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) Walks and Talks (active participation in the explore Delhi days with the Academic Director and Ms Harini Narayanan, keeping current with assigned readings)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>(5) Oral Reports: Hindu Deities, Excursion Report, Workshop Report</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(6) One Take-Home Essay Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7) ISP Proposal Defense &amp; Final Thematic Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>(8) Participation: This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions and excursions using the following criteria:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Criteria for assessment of participation:**

- **Attendance** - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- **Evidence of Assigned Readings**.
- **Active Listening** - paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.
- **Involvement in Class Discussions** - This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- **Group Accountability** – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes, not keeping others waiting.
- **Displaying Respect** – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, AD, SIT lecturers and communities.

**Written Assignments: Expectations**

1. All written assignments are to be typed and handed into Dr Storm’s box.
2. All components of the course must be completed satisfactorily to receive a passing grade.
3. Late papers will be graded down one half grade for every day late. **Late papers will not be accepted after five days** and a grade of F will be accorded to that paper. If documentation of a medical emergency is produced, extensions for meetings and written work may be negotiated. If make-ups granted due to illness are not completed within the agreed upon time, a grade of F will be recorded for that assignment. Unexcused late assignments will not be accepted.
4. Students must **attend all lectures, complete all reading assignments** to the best of their abilities, **take an active part** in all excursions, practica, workshops, and synthesis sessions, and **demonstrate cultural sensitivity** as participants in the program.

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Grades are calculated in the following manner:

Grading Scale
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

Expectations and Policies
Show up prepared. The course is based on group learning so you must participate fully. Be on time for all lectures, workshops and field trips. There are many long days so you must be well rested and have a clear head and have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

Complete assignments on time. Assignments are due by 5pm unless otherwise instructed. Assignments are docked 5% for each day or part of a day that they are late. Contact the Academic Director in advance if health or other issues prevent you from submitting an assignment on time. All assignments must be completed to get a passing grade. Graded assignments will be returned within two weeks of submission.

The whole time we are on field trips we are in class. You are expected to act appropriately; including refraining from using cameras, cell phones, iPods, Internet etc. when we are on site. Intrusive touristic photography is not acceptable during site visits. There will be time outside of class when you can take photographs.

Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).

Respect differences of opinion (classmates’, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

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 program handbook given to you at Orientation, particularly the code of conduct, the policy on blogging and taking photographs, and the grading policy.

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