Independent Study Project (ISP)

ISPR 3000 (4 credits / 120 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Nepal: Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples

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

Description

The Independent Study Project (ISP) provides the opportunity to study in greater depth an aspect of particular academic interest relating to the program theme. In most cases, the topic proposed in the students' applications are revised once in-country, or a new topic is developed out of the lectures, discussions, and field trips of the thematic seminar. With the assistance of the Academic Director, a project advisor appropriate to the topic is selected. Advisors are usually host country professors or experienced field professionals but may also be experts in a particular area of study. In conducting their projects, students directly utilize the concepts and skills of field-based learning discussed in Field Methods and Ethics, use language skills developed through formal instruction and informal practice, apply knowledge gained in the Religious Change in Tibet and the Himalayas and Politics of Tibetan and Himalayan Borders, and explore contacts made in the homestay or larger community setting. In the process, students hone their skills in dealing with and learning from the unexpected, while accomplishing a major academic project in a challenging new environment.

Learning Outcomes

The ISP comprises 120 hours of field work. Upon completion of the ISP, students will be able to:
- Select, design and implement an individual project that investigates a topic agreed upon by the student and AD;
- Use effective field study methodologies and techniques to gather data;
- Increase their capacity to think critically and creatively and integrate and analyze information from primary and secondary sources;
- Present their study in both a written and oral presentation;
- Understand and demonstrate appropriate ethics for undertaking field research.

Language of Instruction

This ISP will be written in English but students should include vocabulary in Tibetan, Nepali, etc. when relevant.

ISP Locations

We encourage students to develop their research projects in culturally Tibetan and Tibetan refugee settlement locations in Nepal and India (e.g. Dharamsala, Ladakh, Spiti, Sikkim, or Darjeeling), or equally in another Himalayan culture. Each location is evaluated prior to the ISP period to ensure that students are able to accomplish relevant and fruitful month-long research.

ISP Requirements

General requirements are:
- Satisfactory completion of the Research Methods and Ethics course.
- A majority of the ISP work conducted in the field (as opposed to in libraries, for example)
- Approximately 120 hours of work for a four-credit project, 180 hours for a six-credit project.
- Periodic progress reports sent to the program staff.
- Final product in the form of a major paper, internship report, creative project, e.g., portfolio of drawings, or possibly special advanced language work, as agreed upon by the academic director, project advisor, student, and where required, US home institution advisor.
- A 20 - 30 minute oral report to the group and invited guests.
- Multiple copies of the paper are required for the SIT program library, advisor or organizations involved; some of those may be electronic.

All students should complete Ethics and Consent to Use of ISP forms. Copies of all ISPs will be kept in the program library for reference by future students.

Specific requirements are:

1) Three interviews with the AD, Hubert la, program staff and/or your ISP advisor prior to the beginning of your ISP in order to discuss your topic and your research approach. **Students must have their ISP journals with them for each meeting in order to take notes.**
2) A 2–3 page ISP proposal, which will have been developed in part through three individual discussions over the first two months of the program with the Academic Director. The proposal should include:

    a. Title of the project (even if it changes later, give the project a title).
    b. Abstract: a short summary that explains the main argument(s), topic(s) or findings
    c. Description: Overview of the ISP project discussing its goals and objectives.
    d. Methods: how the student plans to carry out the study and analyse findings.
    e. Logistics: work plan/schedule, travel, translator, communication, advisor.
    f. Bibliography and Literature review: Your proposal has to include a list of the bibliographical sources you are using and a list of between 5 and 10 articles relevant for your project. Each of the sources should have a brief description of the importance of those sources for your ISP like a thesis of one of the authors that your research supports or questions, etc.

3) Approval by the AD and the LRB (Local Review Board) of the final project regarding possible ethical issues.
4) A minimum of 120 hours of fieldwork towards completion of the project.
5) A minimum of 10 academic bibliographical sources.
6) A mid-ISP report to be sent in two weeks into the ISP period. The report should be a continuation of your proposal and should include your new ideas on the project, new sources being used, etc. Specific date TBA.
7) Two (2) clean copies, and one electronic copy (pdf) emailed to:

npt.assignments@gmail.com, of the final paper—one printed in color and bound and one b&w printout or photocopy, unbound. Double check the submitted copies to ensure that the text is readable, in order, and that no pages are missing. The bound copy remains in the SIT library (this copy must include original photos and/or color photocopies), the unbound will be compiled and sent to Tribhuvan University. If an ISP advisor has been appointed then a further copy will have to be printed for the ISP advisor, making a total of three (3).

8) A twenty-minute oral presentation to the group and guests upon completion of the project. The presentation should include:
   a. An abstract that should be handed in together with your ISP.
   b. The use, as much as possible, of audio-visual materials to enhance the presentation (PowerPoint, transparencies, pictures, maps). This will contribute to a better grade for the presentation.

9) A well-documented, sensitive presentation of field study findings following standard academic protocols and augmented by photos. The ISP should be 25-50 pages.

10) *Contacting the SIT academic staff twice a week during the ISP period (Mondays and Thursdays). If a student misses one of the contacting dates, s/he will get a warning. If s/he misses another day of checking in during the remaining time of ISP, s/he will be put on probation. Probation automatically lowers your ISP by 1/3 of a grade. A student on probation who again omits to contact the office will again have his/her grade lowered further and such omission could be a cause for dismissal from the program.*

   Sign the copyright release form.

ISP Schedule

Each student's ISP time will be quite self-regulated, basically scheduling one's own. Each student will have to consult with AD and advisor about how to make the most of the month by efficiently scheduling interviews or other field research. Some of the things students will be required to do though during the ISP period are:

Week 1–3
- Contact the office upon arrival at ISP site and twice a week from then on (Mon and Thurs)
- Establish contacts with local community (advisor, possible interviewees)
- Undertake interviews and other field work research. Make sure to keep accurate notes and transcriptions of interviews in ISP journal

Week 1–4
- Submit weekly progress report (details TBA)

Week 4
- ISP writing
- Final consultations with advisor and/or AD
- Submit ISP abstract

ISP Format

1. Must be neatly typed. There is no need for double-spacing.

   2. Formatting and submission:

      a. Title Page should include:

         1. Title
         2. Author (Last Name, First Name)
         3. AD (Last Name, First Name)
         4. Senior Faculty Advisor (Last Name, First Name)
         5. Project Advisor (Last Name, First Name)
         6. Sending School
         7. Major
         8. Location of Primary Research (Continent, Country, Region, Town)
         9. Statement: "Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Nepal: Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples, SIT Study Abroad, [insert Semester and Year]"

Example:

Cultural and Physical Barriers to Conservation:
A Study of Endangered Species Protection within the Ngöbe Comarca
Dow, Mike
Academic Director: Dagang, Alyson K.
Senior Faculty Advisor: Arenas, Reinaldo
Project Advisor: Septimo, Roger
Carleton College
Biology
Central America, Panama, Panama City
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
Panama: Development and Conservation, SIT Study Abroad, Fall 2012

    b. Use a consistent formatting style, preferably Chicago Style citation

    c. Required length is 25-50 pages, pictures included. The writing should be a solid 20-25 pages minimum.

3. Outline of your ISP

    a. Title page (see above)

    b. Abstract: a brief introduction to the student's project with specific details about topic, location, objectives of the paper, and methodological approach.

    c. Acknowledgments (required) – please remember to acknowledge project advisor.

    d. Table of contents and page numbers. [Please include subsection page numbers.]

    e. Text

        1. Introduction.

        2. Body of the paper. Here is where the specific research and analysis of findings is discussed in an organized fashion. Divide your research into subsections, as it will be more accessible to readers.

        3. Conclusion

    f. Appendices: relevant information or data that does not belong in the body of the text (maps, charts, extra illustrations or photos that do not belong in the body of the paper, etc…). The appendix should also include a discussion of research methodology (methodology used, obstacle and strategies, reasons, biases, resources, etc…). A brief biography of the student's main advisor with his qualifications should also be included.

    g. Glossary of terms, especially if using technical terms or a lot of Tibetan words. This is essential in order to keep research on par with international academic standards. In the body of the text the student can write Tibetan terms using Tibetans script or Wylie transliteration system.

    h. Bibliography

    i. Suggestions for future research: add a final page with suggestions for future ISP's with contact information. This has often helped students and has developed a line of continuity of ISP research. **Include a picture of yourself during your research.**

ISP Samples

Below are a few abstracts from recent ISP's. They have been selected to show the broad scope of topics that can be researched while on our program as well as some of the places where one can accomplish one's research.

Jenny Ding—Stories from a place called Walung, Fall '18
The goal of the project is to explore the relationship between people and the natural landscape through storytelling. I'm interested by elements like: terrain, topography, path, wayfinding, natural disasters, weather, natural resources, flora and fauna. How do these elements manifest in people's oral history, daily lives, and spatial identity? How are these elements and the environment changing, and how are people adapting to these changes? My approach will be to talk to people at Walung about their interactions with elements of the natural landscape, both current and from the past. I will also document my own observations of these elements. Then, I will try to explore how these elements appear in and shape folk stories. From the stories and experiences people share with me, I will create a collection of short stories that attempt to document narratives of the people of Walung in order to paint a picture of space and place.

Tom Stack—When tradition becomes addiction: an intergenerational analysis of attitudes towards alcohol and drugs amongst exiled Tibetans, Fall '18
Since Tibetans were forced into exile almost seventy years ago their culture and way of life have been altered dramatically. One result of this has been the emergence of substance abuse. This project, through historical accounts and the interviewing process, attempts to trace the evolution of attitudes towards substance use across multiple generations and explain why substance abuse increased among Tibetans going through adolescence in the 1990s and 2000s. Interviews are divided up according to the decades in which individuals went through adolescence, a historical account of alcohol and drugs in Tibet pre-1950 is presented as well as a review of substance abuse literature, before culminating in a description of efforts made to counter the rise in substance abuse and the problems that still remain. It's clear that substance abuse slowly became more of an issue within Tibetan refugee communities due to lack of awareness on addiction, students dropping out of school at an early age, and a dysfunctional family unit. It's also apparent that this current generation of Tibetan youngsters is at a crossroads that could define the future of the Tibetan refugee community: with either the option of continuing the downhill spiral of substance abuse or correcting their current trajectory.

Rebecca Humphreys—Still hungry: modern metal arts in Kathmandu, Fall '18
This study explores the working artistic life of a soon-to-be graduate of Kathmandu University School of Arts, Dipak Lama. Fieldwork was conducted in the Patan area of Kathmandu while all of the studio-work was completed in Hattiban on the KU campus. This project attempts to provide a broad overview of how Dipak creates a model of a work with the hopes of having the full-size piece commissioned as public art. Dipak Lama is known as "Ironman" among friends and by many at the KU School of Arts campus. He was not only a patient teacher but also a disciplined advocate for his own development as an artist. My intentions were to assist him in making a small-scale model of a larger work hopefully to be commissioned in the future, in addition to learning and practicing skills of my own to take with me back home to use in my own practice, not to mention catching a glimpse of the Kathmandu art scene.

Shaelyn McHugh—Women's movement: travelling Nepal, Fall '18
Nepal is a country formed by the highest peaks in the world, numerous unique cultures and ethnicities, religious pilgrimage sites for both Buddhist and Hindus, and more festivals than days in the year. For Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2017, Nepal was deemed the world's "Best Value Destination." Tourism plays a vital role in Nepal's economy, but is still heavily aimed towards the international market. Nepalis in the hospitality industry, scholars, and economists have argued that domestic tourism could be a key component for overall socioeconomic and cultural changes in their society. There has been a surge of domestic tourism in recent years, opening new doors for the economy of rural Nepal and the imaginations of the travelers themselves when they bring their experiences back home. A special component of these travelers are women traveling solo. The idea of a woman traveling on her own for the purpose of exploration and learning, rather than pilgrimage or to visit family, is a radical one in Nepali society. The travel community Nepali Travellers facilitates a "Women Solo Travel Challenge," which provides grants to accepted applicants to plan, prepare, and complete an extended travel period to destinations throughout their country. The long-term goal of this challenge is to change the narrative around young Nepali travel, especially for women. In the following paper, these women's stories of travel, from the perceptions they challenged, to the reactions they got, and what they learned, will be told.

Ariel Murray—Money speaks: education, awareness and facing development in Rasuwa, Spring '18

In the Rasuwa district of Nepal, an area affected profoundly by the 2015 earthquake, development and infrastructure have been fast growing both since the natural disaster and the opening of Rasuwa Gadhi as the more formal trade route to and from China. For those in the district, a race has commenced building as much as possible in anticipation of an influx of tourism and business opportunities from both the border and new trekking in the area, though at varying expectations for both. With all this change on the rise, a big question is how are local efforts – like local schools and local radio stations – informing people of this change and how to manage it, if at all, and how are they responding to it? For the villages of Thuman, Nagathali, and Brenthang, how can efforts by both outside forces and locals themselves bring opportunity for awareness and education now that their socio-economic status is changing and more opportunities present themselves. Also, even when they have changed, how are they handling it in the face of an intergenerational lack of education, with fading tradition and out-migration in the present day? The rate of development in the district, while happening at a speed which delights many, could prove too fast in building a unified community. Through a series of interviews with locals from these three villages, the radio outlets of the region as well as media outlets in Kathmandu, a picture of education and awareness in Rasuwa is presented, drawing from factors pertaining to Nepal in its entirety.

Emma Cyr—Shadow of the Himalayas: preserving identity through discourse in a changing Ladakh, Spring '18

Situated in the rain shadow of the Himalayas, Ladakh is a vast high-altitude desert. It's looming mountains, rocky vistas, crystalline lakes, and unique indigenous culture makes Ladakh not only a favorite destination for adventures, thrill seekers and photographers of all types, but also marks it as one of the most ecologically fragile areas of the world. There has been a steady increase in visitors to the region since 1974 when it was first open to tourists, which has brought numerous changes to the area. Tourism, interconnectivity and development have had immense consequences for Ladakh's environment and society. Before 1974, the region was largely self-sufficient. Now, tourism is replacing agriculture as the main component of Ladakh's GDP. Additionally, effects of global climate change threaten the region's livelihood and water supply. This ISP explores identity and resilience in the face of change from the perspective of Ladakhis and tourists.

Candice Jiang—The lives of smart phones: people's relationships with technology along the Tamor valley, Spring '18

The way people interact with smart phones and technology in their everyday life reveals much about the culture, history and politics of a place. In the Taplejung district of Northeastern Nepal, the Tamor valley has been a historical pathway for trans-himalayan trade, business and commerce. However, today it is considered one of of the most virtually and physically remote places in Nepal due to lack of physical and internet infrastructure that enables various kinds of access. Nevertheless, smart phones have become an essential part of most people's lives in this region. This ISP explores the way people interact with technology in their everyday life, their relationships to their phones, and how that reflects broader aspects of history and culture in the area. Through photography, a theoretical study of the pathway and through personal accounts of residents in the area, this project argues that physical infrastructure development has profound impact on mobility, culture and everyday life along the Tamor valley.

Sheldon Wong—A collection beyond borders: reimagining the meaning of existence through fashion, Spring '18

This research primarily focused on the work of emerging Tibetan fashion designers and artists in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India. The author engages with local designers Tenor Sharlho thorough an apprenticeship where he worked alongside the designer in the workshop observing how the clothes were made. With the support of additional interviews, the author used the observations and conversations held in the workshop to come to an understanding of the evolution of Tibetan heritage and culture through the medium of clothing. The paper also includes a theoretical analysis on the formation of culture and how it relates to fashion. This ISP examines Tibetan culture and fashion on the basis of identity, cultural phenomena and ethic diaspora.

Emma Austin—Little Miss Shangri-la: Tibetan beauty pageants, *Fall '17*

Every year in the mountains of McLeod Ganj, India, Tibetan women compete for the crown of Miss Tibet in hopes of representing their nation and taking the issue of Tibet to the international pageant realm. Existing as a beauty pageant anomaly, Miss Tibet proclaims a national identity without having an official nation. The recent emergence of other Tibetan beauty pageants across the globe insinuates a growing admiration for this platform, though not without condemnation from some for being at odds with Tibetan culture. Through a series of interviews, the profound meaning of Tibetan beauty pageants comes to life. To the Tibetan community, the winner embodies the traditional preservation of Tibetan culture and a powerful assertion of nationality. When Miss Tibet dons her sash, she carries Tibet with her. Heavy is the head that wears the tiara.

Clara Hare-Grogg—Pads, posts and problems:
menstrual resources and perception in lower Mustang, Nepal, *Fall '17*

Thanks to human rights activists and legislative changes, the Hindu practice of *Chhaupadi* has received ample publicity in recent months. However, Chhaupadi is a declining tradition that is only prevalent in the Far and Midwestern regions of Nepal; other menstrual taboos exist in cultures all over the country. Lower Mustang presents a unique location, home to an intertwined population of Buddhists and Hindus, in which culture is rapidly evolving due to education, road, and tourism. While roads increase the remote region's accessibility for tourists, they also increase residents' access to medical care in Pokhara and Kathmandu. The alarming state of government-funded medical facilities makes such outward mobility a necessity. The following ISP draws information primarily from interviews with residents of eight settlements in Lower Mustang. This is a study of menstruation in practice with special emphasis on the context of poorly supported general health facilities. By focusing less on the underlying religious influences, this study aims to understand the medical and educational resources available for menstrual help as well as the social implications and perceptions of menstruation in lower Mustang.

Jennifer Lundt—On the heir: the role of FM radio in Nepali politics, *Fall '17*

One of the main staples of democracy is a free press, as being able to freely criticize and discuss the government is a necessary measure of accountability for a system. In a year when Nepal is solidifying its commitment to democracy, it is important to assess and report upon where the country's media and politics intersect. Being able to analyze where the country falls in terms of free press will be a successful indicator of the preparedness for full democracy. For its easy accessibility and widespread penetration of rural Nepal, radio has been hailed as the democratic media of Nepal, with many likening it to a "vital organ". However, with over 450 stations throughout the country resulting in an over-saturation of the airwaves, this paper will identify the ways in which radio has an impact on Nepalis in this transformative year. Why are there so many? Who do these stations benefit? What is the role of politics in them? How are governmental policies influencing the landscape of this media? What is the role that radio will play in the future? Will continued development and increased technology brought on by political stability completely eradicate radio media from the country? Essentially, it is a snapshot of where radio and politics meet and what that says about the nature Nepal in 2017.

Jona Block—Lives of ash: workers of the Bhaktapur brick kilns, *Fall '17*

The urban development of Nepal requires a significant amount of raw building material. Brick is the most prevalent material used due to its relative affordability and already existing manufacturing infrastructure. There are nearly 800 brick kilns in Nepal which are located primarily throughout the Kathmandu Valley and the Terai region. Those working at the kilns are some of Nepal and India's poorest individuals. The days are extremely long, often more than fourteen hours, during which workers primarily load fired bricks onto trucks and mold new bricks by hand. The kilns are one of the biggest culprits for environmental and public health degradation. This study examines the life of kiln workers and those living nearby the kilns of Bhaktapur through the medium of photography. The images are a candid portrayal of life and work at the brick kilns of Bhaktapur. Through detailed images of work techniques and a series of portraits of the workers, a complete story of kiln life in the early season is chronicled.

Lani Cupo—Heretical science:
deconstructing the false dichotomy of Buddhism and science, *Spring '17*

What is consciousness? Are the mind and brain the same thing, and if not, how do they interact? What do we accept as valid methods of investigating sentient experience? This study undertaken at Sera Jey Monastic University, a home to a Science Center in Bylakuppe, India investigates both the lens of the cognitive scientists and the academic Buddhist to sketch the problem-space shared by those studying the mind, whether through the lens of empirical experiments or introspection. In-so-doing, this study attempts to dismantle the mythical dichotomy created by those who think Buddhism and Neuro/cognitive science are incompatible and even assert the obligation both Buddhists and scientists have to seriously consider each other's' field.

Mira Guth—From behind bars: how female prisoners and their children experience physical and social captivity in Nepal, *Spring '17*

This study examines the realities of female prisoners and their children, who often end up behind bars with their mothers when they are below five years old or have nowhere else to go. These inseparable populations are uniquely vulnerable as they face a patriarchal criminal justice system, a government with neither the awareness nor resources to meet their specific needs, and heightened rejection at the hands of their society and family members. While several NGOs in Kathmandu are working to rescue children from prison who don't have relatives to take adequate care of them, these organizations face a host of challenges trying to safeguard each child's wellbeing, safety and future. This study first focuses on the conditions of Nepali prisons, and the discrimination female prisoners experience at every stage of the justice system. It then addresses the experiences, traumas and victories of the children of prisoners, including those who live in prison, who stay with their relatives, and who grow up in children's homes. Lastly, it offers a quick survey of current prison reform efforts in Nepal.

Anna Franceschetti—Challenges as a Tibetan refugee in Nepal: Tibetan family dispersal and emotional wellbeing, *Spring '17*

Today out-migration is the primary cause for the shifting demographics of the Tibetan Exile Community. With an already complicated social identity as an exile community, this study aims to examine the obstacles of remaining in Tibetan Settlements; why people eventually choose to migrate; and also to evaluate the emotional impact of Tibetans who are left behind. Therefore, it explores how family fragmentation often resulted in deep longing for family and various coping mechanisms were used such as connection through technology and drawing on Buddhist philosophies. The research was conducted in the four Tibetan Settlements in Pokahara, Nepal: Tashiling, Tashi Pikel, Paljorling and Jampaling.

Willy Bresee—Leh's Moravian community: an exploration of Ladakhi Christianity, its associated institutions, and missionary work, *Spring '17*

The Moravian church in Leh, Ladakh, in the Jammu & Kashmir state of India is the subject of this study. The church and Christian community in Leh is a curious case, in that it sits at the intersection of the Muslim and Buddhist worlds. This is in a place where religion and language are central to individual and group identity, as well as local politics.

Hence, this study provides a history of Moravians in Ladakh, drawing on works of Juliani and John Bray with my personal experiences with leh's Christian community during my fieldwork with the aim of introducing the reader to the modern dynamics of the church. Studied extensively in a historical sense, the Moravian community is alive and evolving, particularly as its ethnic and cultural makeup changes.

Wensday Berman—Pathways to positive change: a people's perspective of healthcare in Humla, *Fall '16*

The villagers of Humla have suffered from unreliable health services and unjust indifference from the Nepali government for too long. Many global health initiatives and international NGOs have tried and failed to step in and make an improvement of health within these villages, because they are lacking an understanding of how these villages are run, what villagers prioritize, and how to continue providing reliable, supervised support. Because of the remoteness of the Humla area, it is difficult for allopathic medicine to be sufficiently provided here, and access to emergency medical resources are limited. Global health organizations such as WHO and UNICEF have made general plans for areas of remote villages such as this to provide allopathic healthcare resources, but many of these decisions are without considering the medical system already in place, the traditions and understanding of medicine of the villagers, and the villagers' perception of what healthcare they want/need and would choose from what was provided to them.

This study, I explore health in Humla from the perspective of the villagers themselves. What health services do villagers use and value? What health services aren't available, but are the most necessary? Who do villagers look to as a medical authority, and how can this person further provide services?

Jennifer S. Brady—Conservation as mutualism: a case study of Thulo Syafru, *Fall '16*

This study examined the opinions, perceptions, and knowledge of residents of Thulo Syafru, a small village in the buffer zone of Langtang National Park, Nepal, regarding conservation efforts spearheaded by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and the World Wide Fund for Nature. 26 community members were interviewed along with key figures in community leadership and the two aforementioned organizations. Thulo Syafru is an essential location for red panda conservation, leading to many conservation efforts being focused in the area. Overall, people expressed very positive opinions regarding red pandas and their protection, positive attitudes about conservation, and appreciation of the World Wide Fund for Nature. Responses regarding the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation were mixed between appreciative thoughts and complaints regarding restriction of harvesting natural resources.

Weston Conner—Watch Chöd self:
an examination of Chöd, its practitioners, and its music, *Fall '16*

The practice of Chöd is a form of Vajrayāna meditation that involves cutting one's attachment to one's self and compassionately offering one's body as a feast for various deities and spirits. This study examines the practice of Chöd in the context of Boudha, Kathmandu, where there is a large community of Chödpas, Chöd practioners. This work aims to document the history of the practice, the experiences of some current Chöd practitioners, and the role that music plays in Chöd. This knowledge was acquired through observing Chödpas, speaking with them directly, and sitting in on various learning opportunities to gain firsthand knowledge of the intricacies of the practice. This study particularly focuses upon the use of instruments and music in the practice of Chöd. It examines how Chödpas think about the music used in their practice, how they learned to utilize the instruments involved, and the instruments themselves. It also briefly examines the history of the practice and some of the individual Chödpas who agreed to discuss their practice. Understanding the differences in practice and conception among various Chödpas allows a more nuanced view of Chöd to be formed, while an examination of the music focuses on a part of the practice that is often examined in less detail and adds to the body of information on ritual music in Tibetan Buddhism.

Anna Cadwell—Dharma dogs: a narrative approach to understanding the connection of
sentience between humans and canines, *Fall '16*

India has the highest population of stray dogs in the world. Dharamsala, a cross-cultural community in the north Indian Himalayan foothills, is home to a number of particularly overweight and happy canines. However, the street dogs of Dharamsala are not an accurate representation of the state of stay dogs across India. This paper explores why this may be through narrative stories about the day-to-day interactions between humans and dogs. The following research addresses religious motives as well as the lack thereof.

Emma Squier—The women of Helambu: life after the 2015 earthquake, *Spring '16*

Disasters exacerbate inequalities that are already present in society, and put particular groups of individuals at risk, specifically women. The vulnerabilities of women shape the way they experience disasters as well as their ability to recover from them. This study explores the post-earthquake recovery process which has been slow, and the destruction that it has caused is still greatly visible. For this study, women in the Helambu region of Nepal were interviewed to learn about how their lives were affected by the earthquake and the challenges that they faced over the past year.

As is the case with other disasters, the experiences of women during and after the earthquake in Nepal have been different from those of men. By understanding some of the specific difficulties faced by these women after the earthquake, we can gain a better understanding of their needs during the recovery process and learn about better ways in which to assist them in future disasters.

Isabella Pezzulo—Song of the *Dzopa*:
a case study of traditional farming, food, and community in Ladakh, *Spring '16*

Despite Ladakh's high altitude and mountain-desert landscape, it is home to villages such as Tar which still revolve around traditional methods subsistence farming. The intention of this study is to see how traditional subsistence farming actually takes place and the social settings formed by these practices. A twenty-day case-study of Tar looks into age-old practices in which nourishment is produced and community formed through working the land. What is revealed is the interconnectedness of agricultural systems and the social fabric of Tar. Modernization, government subsidy, and the migration of youth to the cities are all contributing to slow by meaningful changes to farming and food practices in the villages. Furthermore, perceived changes in farming and the foods that are produced and consumed in Tar are used to anticipate changes in the livelihood of the *Tarpas* in the face of development. Further implications for agriculture in Tar are also discussed, of which sustainable development projects and the encouragement of young farmers are a light for the preservation of this rich aspect of Ladakhi culture.

Maxwell Shaw-Jones—Kompa as a lesson in value

or **a semi-voyeuristic appreciation of the bamboo basket in Dolpa,** *Spring '16*
This study explores two central topics: 1) The logistics and details of basket weaving as both a skill and a business in Dolpa and 2) The cultural value of the woven bamboo basket, also in Dolpa. Fieldwork was conducted in lower Dolpa, (Dunai and Bysagar), as well as north in the Tarp valley. The project attempts to provide an insight into the way people, of all walks of life in Dolpa, think and relate to this tool (*kompa*), and then attempts to derive larger moral implications from observations. The study is both pragmatic and abstract, part hands-on apprenticeship and part philosophical discourse.

James Karsten—Tibetan football: **perspectives from the 2016 Gyalyum Chenmo Memorial Gold Cup,** *Spring '16*
Though a narrative account of the 2016 Gyalyum Chenmo Memorial Gold Cup this project looks into the multifaceted world of Tibetan sports in exile society, both past and present. As Tibetan exile society started to flourish, the combination of growing settlement football clubs and a desire to honour the passing of HH the Dalai Lama's mother led to the foundation of the Gyalyum Chenmo Memorial Gold Cup, a tournament between club teams. As football became more popular, the creation of an international Tibetan team came to be an important expression of national identity, and a useful method of raising awareness for the Tibetan cause. Despite this proliferation, Tibetan football still exists at the margins of the international football community and at the domestic level, is still only in the beginning stages of developing the women's game. This narrative account of the tournament was completed with aid from the perspectives of officials, players and coaches at the 2016 GCM and elsewhere, and includes additional discussion of the socio-political implications that inevitably arose from these interviews and the event.

ISP Journal

During the ISP period, the student should keep a specific journal devoted entirely to recording field experiences, observations, thoughts and musings, vocabulary notes, contact details – in short everything that may be valuable in composing an ISP. You are aiming for quantity and quality. For a project of this kind, nothing short of 50 pages written during the semester reflects serious field research. Some (though not all) uses of the ISP Work Journal are as follows:

- Recording names and locations of contacts persons, especially possible ISP advisors and other ISP resources.
- Recording thoughts about how the student wants the ISP to develop, the progress of the ISP and changes or developments in plans.
- Recording interviews conducted in the field relevant to the ISP.
- Recording observations and inferences made relating to the ISP.
- Recording statistical or other hard data useful to the ISP, whether gathered in the field or through appropriate readings.
- Recording vocabulary items, whole phrases or excerpts from written or oral works in Tibetan or other relevant language that may be useful for the ISP.
- Recording notes taken from secondary sources in preparation for the ISP.
- REMEMBER TO DATE ALL ENTRIES!!!!!

Evaluation

The Independent Study Project is evaluated based on the following criteria:

Written presentation: **a) Documentation, including photographic material**	**15%**
b) Familiarity with and reference to background published material (use of articles and bibliographic resources)	**15%**
c) Development of topic and achievement of objectives; Critical analysis and thought; Accuracy of information	**40%**
Oral presentation	**30%**

In order to get an ISP grade, the student is also *required* to complete the following:

- Produce **two copies** of the ISP: one black and white copy unbound for Tribhuvan University, and one color copy bound for the SIT NPT library. If you have identified an ISP Advisor then you will need to prepare an additional copy of your ISP for him or her, making the total **three copies**.
- Send an **electronic copy (pdf)** with or without the pictures of the ISP to npt.assignments@gmail.com.
- Use original prints or color copies within the ISP: the pictures in the ISP cannot be black and white photocopies.

Failure to follow any of these requirements will result in the final grade being diminished by a third or a half a grade, depending on the circumstances. Additionally, failure to contact as stipulated during the ISP period will also result in the final grade being diminished by a third or a half a grade each time there is a failure to contact as required.

Policies

If a student were to deviate from the expected cultural and behavioral expectations during the semester and were to be put on probation as a result, the student would be at risk for a grade reduction in both the FSS and ISP courses (this could range from the reduction of the final grade by 1/3 to failure in one or both courses, depending on the severity of the infraction). Culturally appropriate behavior is an important component of both of these courses

Late assignment policy:

All assignments must be completed on the due date by 5pm, unless otherwise specified. Any assignments received after 5pm, or other specified time, will be considered late. Late assignments will be docked 1/3 of a grade (from A to A- and so forth), for each day, or portion of a day, late. Students must notify the AD at or before the time of collection that an assignment will be late, otherwise a grade of 'F' will be given. No assignments will be accepted after 5 late days. In other words, anything more than 5 days late will receive a grade of 'F'. Exceptions to this policy will only be made for serious and substantiated medical reasons brought to the attention of the AD **BEFORE** the due date/time. (Note: individual grades in group assignments may vary.)

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. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honour by coming to speak.

- 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 Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at: http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices.

ISP proposal outline

In brief

Objective
To outline your course of action for the independent study period, which has been checked and approved by the Academic Director. This proposal can then function as a guideline for what you do in the field.

Assignment
All students must discuss their projects in depth with the AD before handing in the proposal. Below is a brief review to serve as a checklist. Remember that this assignment is also mostly about *process* – systematically thinking about and planning a fieldwork project of your own.

Title of project (even if it changes later, give your proposal a title)
Abstract – brief sketch of research questions, methods, relevance of the study
Introduction – hypothesis/expectations/theoretical models, definitions of key terms and ideas, advisor
Literature review – analytical summary of previous work in your field
Methods – how you plan to carry out the study and analyze your findings
Discussion – significance, limitations, relevance to others
Logistics – budget, workplan/schedule, travel, room & board arrangements, translation, communication
Bibliography

In more detail

The primary components of an ISP project proposal are (or rather: can include):

1. Proposal Introduction. The introduction should succinctly state the research question your topic investigates and the proposed methodology of research. Explain the value of the project. (250 words)

2. <u>Discussion of the primary themes</u> to be explored in the ISP: This should introduce the main question (the "fruitful question") behind your field study, and it should also discuss some of the sub-themes and questions that you expect to investigate, although the ideas you present in this proposal may change once you begin the actual field study. (750-1000 words)

3. <u>Literature Review</u>. A minimum of five to ten sources should be included with your draft and final proposals. This is not just a laundry list of texts, but must be an <u>annotated</u> review of applicable written sources, whether books, journals, or articles. Internet sources will be accepted only if from reliable sources.

4. <u>Itinerary for the field study period</u>. Please be as specific as possible, including dates and places where you plan to conduct your field study, and any/all contact information that you have for each location and date. If at any time we cannot contact you because you have failed to give us accurate and up-to-date information on your whereabouts, you may be subjected to penalties ranging from probation to dismissal from the program, depending on the severity of the situation. (1 page)

5. <u>Timeline for the field study period</u>. Unlike the itinerary, the timeline should focus on what you plan to do at each stage of your field study. This, again, is likely to change once you begin field study, but you should set specific short-term goals that will lead to the completion of the final project. (1 page)

6. <u>Budget for the field study period</u>. The budget should include your total projected expenditures for travel, room and board, water, laundry, phone, etc. along with any additional costs associated with hiring translators, material purchases, photocopying, and typing and binding charges. Each item should have a separate line, and the total projected expenditures must be clearly located at the bottom of your budget. (1 page)

7. <u>Information about your ISP Advisor</u>. You should have an ISP advisor. We can help you find someone, but ultimately as an <u>independent</u> study project, this is your responsibility.

8. <u>Statement of Risk Assessment</u> of project in terms of communication, travel, politics, unrest, weather, health, time, and finances. This need not be lengthy but should be thoughtful. (1 page)

9. <u>Several other forms</u> must be submitted before the ISP period begins. These will be distributed and collected in the days before departure.

Procedures and Criteria for Alternative Independent Study Projects

For certain ISPs the primary outcome or product may not be an extended narrative or monograph. Projects in creative writing, photography, theater and dance, field-based language learning, cooking/cuisine, and textiles/fashion, and musical projects all fall into this category.

Regardless of the category, the following must be included:
1. A written statement of learning goals, methods, resources, difficulties encountered, and recommendation for future study.
2. A bibliography and/or resource list.
3. Guidance, direction, and evaluation of an in-country advisor.

If the student is participating in an activity as part of the ISP process, this participation should be narrowly focused to the topic, e.g. set-design, acting, direction, etc. for a theater project.

1. Some projects in this category may require the prior approval of the student's home university if the student expects to get credit.
2. Consideration should be given to special materials expenses that such projects often necessitate.

The following suggests procedures to define and set criteria for ISPs in these categories.

Short stories, poetry or other literary narrative
The final product should be a broad sampling of writings that reflects the values, particular cultural behavior, topography, and "local color" of the host country based on the student's observations and experience in that culture. A part or the entire product might be written in the host language.

Photography
As with a monograph ISP, students should submit a preliminary outline of the study. Again, there should be a broad sampling of photos. Other criteria should include:
1. Clear labeling of photos. (Who, What, When, Where, Why)
2. The photos should have a thematic presentation; a "photo-essay."
3. The photos should reflect a depth of engagement and experience in the host culture.
4. A written explication should accompany the photos as a summary, preferably with clear parenthetical citations to individual photos.
5. Possibly a slide show during the ISP oral presentation.

Dance and Theater
A dance concert or theater performance should be in the context of the local culture:
1. It should include costumes, music, props, etc.
2. If possible, the performance should be videotaped or photographed as an archive. Video and photographic documentation can be sent to Brattleboro for archiving.
3. A written explication should deal with all aspects of the performance: historical background, ritual significance, style, costuming, music, etc.

Language Learning as an ISP
Occasionally, the student might do an ISP on an area of the host language. Please also see the section on Language Learning for further information about requirements for language-based ISPs. Following are some suggested topics:
- The language learning could be based on field study and an individualized program of study, not necessarily just further language lessons.
- The student might do a tutorial based on interviews and background readings in the political, social, economic, educational or current events in the host culture.
- Based on field methods the student might undertake a study of one of the following: proverbs, gnomic wisdom; songs; argot and slang; nomenclatures as in politics, economics or communications; ritual language; gestures and body language; writing; a series of language lessons on a focused topic such as a life situation accompanied by visualizations.
- Study of regional accents and dialects with recordings.

Cooking/Cuisine
A cookbook of the local cuisine whether original or a collection of received recipes should reflect the total food cycle in that culture: food production, marketing, processing (tools, recipes, serving, etc.), rituals and taboos. There should be a demonstration included in the final oral presentation and photos illustrating stages in the food cycle. The student might even generalize to discuss the role of food production and consumption in the overall economy of the host country.

Fashions/Textiles

The study should focus on textiles or fashions, which are native to the host culture, not imports. Moreover, the entire cycle of clothing wear should be examined: production of raw materials, fabrication, marketing, and costuming--who wears what? The study should also examine costuming rituals, aesthetic considerations, origin of the styles and geographic considerations. For the final oral report the student can give a demonstration and use visuals.

Music

Musical compositions should again be peculiar to the styles of the host culture. There should be an ample sampling, not just a single song. Songs could be written in the host language. The student should arrange for the music to be performed and recorded for final presentation and as an archive. (See Dance and Theater above). Again, archival material can be sent to Brattleboro.

Film

The film should be focused on a single topic in the host culture, e.g. village festivals. A script should accompany it. A series of touristy moving photos do not constitute a film. Is there ample time in the ISP period for the student to make even a short adequate film? Can the student sustain the expense of making a film? Is there adequate equipment available? Will the intervention of the process offend settings in the host culture?

Internship Report
See internship syllabus.

TIBETAN AND HIMALAYAN PEOPLES GRADING POLICY

ISP Paper Rubric

Category	Possible Considerations	Maximum
Title / Acknowledgements / Abstract	-The title is succinct, interesting, and engaging; and it clearly explains the project -The acknowledgements are complete and professionally written -The abstract clearly summarizes the project	5
Research Question / Objectives / Justification	-The study/research question is relevant, thought-provoking, and original -The project aims to contribute information on a topic relevant to the local community and/or other researchers -The objectives of the study are clearly presented and appropriate -The justification for the project is clear and contextualized	10
Context and Literature Review	-Context: The content is relevant. Important themes and background information are provided so reader understands study/research question and its place within the field of research -Literature Review: The paper includes appropriate, high-quality of relevant background sources, including several from refereed journals, indicating familiarity with key publications on the topic -Creative projects: background information is relevant to both the thematic topic being explored and the previous history of artistic work in this field. -Practica: the goals of the practicum are meaningful and are stated clearly; a focus project and how it relates to the program theme are clearly described. The history and work of the practicum organization, how its work relates to the program theme, and how it fits into the context of other similar organizations are all accurately described.	10
Methods	-The explanation of methodology is clear and accurate and supporting materials are included in appendices (if applicable) - Implementation of methods through the research process (e.g., interviewee recruitment) is thoughtful and handled with care -The methods are appropriate -Practica: a clear and complete description of the work undertaken is given, including dates and hours worked	15
Ethics	-Human Subjects policies and ethical research guidelines are adhered to and thoroughly discussed -Appropriate consideration is given to informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality of research participants, in keeping with human subjects protocols and the LRB-approved ISP proposal -The ISP strengthens relationships and contributes to mutual trust between the author and research participants in ways that are respectful, culturally appropriate, and collaborative -Natural science ISPs not involving human subjects show an awareness of and respect for environmental ethics, as appropriate to the topic -The ISP is responsive to host community needs, as applicable	10
Presentation of results / findings	-The findings are complete and are logically and convincingly presented -The findings are clearly differentiated from discussion or interpretation -The prose discussion of findings is clear, succinct and logical -Any tables, graphs, photos and direct quotes are relevant and support the argument -Creative projects: The thinking and concepts behind the creative work, as well as the messages contained within it are clearly explained, and the intended audience (and availability to that audience) is described.	15
Depth of analysis	-Important implications raised by the findings are included -The argument is well-structured and different sources of information are well-integrated -Patterns in the findings (or a lack of a pattern) were identified and discussed -The author gives logical explanations of what findings mean -The author clearly and specifically related his/her findings to the study/research question -The findings are linked to previous research in the field -Creative projects: An analysis of the creative piece is given, including an assessment of its educational value and aesthetics -Practica: A description and analysis of how the organization/focus project is set up and functions are given; the organization's strengths, weaknesses and challenges are discussed; observations of the organization or project are placed in the context of the existing literature	15

Conclusions	-The main findings are summarized and discussed within the broader implications or concerns of the study -The author made research-based recommendations, as appropriate, and made recommendations for future study -Practica: a range of lessons learned from the practicum are detailed	10
Technical aspects	-The paper is organized into major sections (and sub-sections, as appropriate) and/or follows guidelines established in accordance with the orientation of the program/discipline -Table of contents, In-text citations, and reference list or bibliography are done correctly and completely -There are no mistakes in writing & grammar, spelling & punctuation -The paper is clean, legible, well-formatted, professional in appearance, and aesthetically pleasing	5
Effort	*Determinations of ISP effort vary per program*	5
Creative project, performance, or practicum	*Criteria for review of creative works or performances, or for successful completion of practica, will be determined by the program academic director*	

ISP Presentation Rubric

Category	Possible Considerations	Possible
The student articulates a primary study/research question and provides a clear introduction to presentation.	The student clearly articulates a research question. It is clear what the work was about and what to expect in the presentation.	10
The student contextualizes her/his work.	The student contextualizes the work in reference to the literature/ larger social panorama/scope of problem at hand/local site or relevant parameters. The presentation begins with focus and explanation. Practica: the student describes the organization's history and work and explains how its work fits the context of similar organizations; the student describes how the organization and project relate to the program theme	10
The student addresses methods.	The student includes a clear description of the methods employed and why these methods were chosen. The student discusses the success/failure/appropriateness or challenges of these methods. Practica: the student describes the work undertaken and methods used	10
The student organizes the presentation of findings and discusses the content of the argument well.	The student clearly addresses the study/research question through well-selected examples (evidence, arguments, cases). The content conforms fully to the goals set forth in introduction or stated study/research question. The presentation is easy to follow. Practica: the student shares observations and impressions of the organization/project	10
The student provides in-depth analysis of findings, and discusses important implications of the project.	The student articulates clear/though-provoking conclusions that relate back to the study/research question. The broader implications (for further study or inquiry) are mentioned. Creative projects: a description and explanation of the creative piece and how it relates to the program theme is given Practica: the student describes what s/he learned from the experience and how s/he can apply these knowledge upon return to the home community	20
The student addresses ethics.	Ethical considerations/human subjects issues are covered fully and discussed well. The issues included are relevant.	10
The student includes a brief personal reflection.	The student discusses the personal relevance or lessons learned in the experience. The discussion is thoughtful and appropriate.	5
The student effectively manages discussion with the audience.	The student responds well to questions and can clarify or add new examples, explain points, ponder ideas, etc. "live and on-stage." The student shows the ability and willingness to open and extend the discussion with others.	10
The student's presentation is well organized, stays within the designated time, and is well articulated.	Visual or material support is clearly referred to and explained/engaged in the presentation. There is evidence that the student prepared and practiced the delivery. The student speaks clearly and employs effective body language (looks at the audience, manages papers or other things well). The student respects the time allotted for the presentation (neither too short nor too long).	10
The student delivers a respectful and professional presentation.	The student speaks and acts in a manner that is respectful of him/herself, the people and the organizations or entities involved in the work. The student is humble about what has been achieved. The student avoids stereotyping.	5