

Pastoralism and Natural Resource Management

ASIA 3020 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Mongolia and Siberia: Nomadism, Geopolitics, and the Environment

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

This interdisciplinary course focuses on Mongolia's nomadic population and the impact of political, social and economic transformations and national resource management policies on social, cultural and physical environments. The course centers on two key academic themes:

- The history, traditions and livelihood of Mongolia's nomadic communities and the challenges for this population as a result of Mongolia's political transformations and development policies;
- Mongolia's attempt to create a national resource management policy that balances conservation and traditional values and practices with the demands of the mining industry and other modern business and economic development opportunities.

Methodology

This ten-week course employs a variety of formats, both classroom and field-oriented, to engage students in thinking critically about the changing nature of Mongolia's pastoral traditions, increasing urbanization and associated challenges of natural resource management. Through meetings with prominent leaders of NGOs, environmental activists, government agencies, and wildlife management and mining corporation officials, students learn about the attempts to balance the fragile natural landscape and environmental character of Mongolia in a new socioeconomic and newly democratic context.

Rural homestays and participation in nomadic activities enable students to appreciate the dramatic changes that accompany urbanization. Homestays in Ulaanbaatar provide contrasting experiences to nomadic life and facilitate cultural immersion. Visits to development organizations, and direct engagement with government leaders supplement classroom activities. The core series of the course takes place in Ulaanbaatar and lectures are delivered by professors from partner universities including the Mongolian Academy of Science, the National University of Mongolia, as well as from accomplished government and development specialists. Student learning is facilitated and synthesized in group discussions and numerous reflection assignments that take place both inside and outside the formal classroom.

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Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the course, it is expected that students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast Mongolia's and the Lake Baikal (Siberia) region's various ecological zones and identify the most important environmental challenges facing populations in each zone, and their interrelationship across international borders;
- Articulate the values shared among the groups that make up Mongolian society and analyze the interests and priorities that differentiate and divide groups in this society;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the global environmental factors that impact changes in traditional nomadic livelihoods in Mongolia;
- Analyze the national policy issues and debates about indigenous life-ways and natural resource management and development in Mongolia;
- Utilize the unique, primary resources available in the Mongolian setting through contacts with leading Mongolian professionals and academics

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well as the nuances of economic change and development through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Lectures delivered by Mongolian language speakers will be translated into English.

Course Requirements

Course Schedule

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: Mongolian Nomadic Pastoralism and Nature (28hours)

This module focuses on the following issues: inventory of the ecological zones of the country, introduces the main geographical areas and climatic pattern that influenced the development of pastoral animal husbandry in the Mongolian territory; raises socio-economic issues of latest policy decisions (privatization of livestock, land privatization law etc.) that produce long-term implications on urban and rural communities' livelihood.

Session 1: Mongolian Nature and Environment. Facts, Issues and Solutions. Q&A.

This session introduces geographical and ecological zones of Mongolia; provide facts and describes specific features for each of the zones and introduces environmental issues raised due to growing exploitation of the resources of ecosystems. Compare and contrast Mongolia's various ecosystems and identify the most important environmental challenges facing populations in each zone.

Required Readings:

UNDP, (2011) Mongolia Human Development Report 2011, From Vulnerability to Sustainability: Environment and Human Development, Ulaanbaatar, UNDP. Retrieved from:
http://www.mn.undp.org/content/dam/mongolia/Publications/NHDRReports/NHDR_report_english_2011_last.pdf.

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The World Bank (January 2009) Safeguarding Important Areas of Natural Habitat alongside Economic Development, Discussion Paper, Ulaanbaatar, World Bank.

Komonen, A., (2001) An Introduction to Ecology, Eastern Steppe Biodiversity Project, Ministry for Nature and Environment, UNDP, GEF, Ulaanbaatar, Haan Printing.

Session 2: Political Debates and the Human-Environment Nexus in Mongolia

This session introduces the people and livelihoods in each of the ecological zones, examines Mongolia's location in "Inner Asia" region, provides an introduction to mobile (Nomadic) pastoralism, discusses strengths and vulnerability of the Mongolian pastoralism in the era of globalization and looks at the attitudes of Mongolian herders towards their environment.

Required Reading:

Editor Humphrey, C. and Editor Sneath, D., (1996), Culture and Environment in Inner Asia, (161-188) Cambridge, The White Horse Press, Vol. 1.

Session 3: Pastureland Management Issues of Livestock Sector Development in Mongolia

Historically Mongols have been herding livestock on vast communal land. Today nomadic and semi-nomadic people comprise one-third of the country's population. This session describes the present situation of the extensive livestock industry, analyses the devil's circle weakening this sector and some ways out of the created situation that are feasible and herder friendly.

Required Readings:

Hardin, Garrett, (Dec. 13, 1968), The Tragedy of the Commons, Science, New Series, Vol. 162, No. 3859. 1243-1248. Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=00368075%2819681213%293%3A162%3A3859%3C1243%3ATTO TC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-N>.

Sternberg, T., (2008) Environmental challenges in Mongolia's dryland pastoral landscape, Journal of Arid Environments 72, 1294–1304.

Center for Policy Research: <http://www.cpr.mn/en/>.

Session 4: Range Land Conservation

According to the land law of Mongolia, the pasture land is state property used by all herder communities in the country. This session introduces alternative ways to change herder behavior and the challenges in developing community-based pasture land management strategies.

Required Reading:

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, (June 2010), Mongolian Society for Range Management, Livelihood Study of Herders in Mongolia, Selenge press, Ulaanbaatar.

Session 5: Climate Change Adaptation: Mongolia Case

This session introduces climate change forecasts for Mongolia, implications of climate change for the Kharkhiraa and Turgen River Basins, government adaptation strategies, including identified strategies for the agricultural and livestock sectors.

Required Readings:

Diamond, K., In Mongolia, (July 23, 2012) Climate Change and Mining Boom Threaten National Identity, New Security Beat, Wilson Center. Retrieved from: <http://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2012/07/in-mongolia-climate-change-and-mining-boom-threaten-national-identity/>.

UNDP, (2011) Mongolia Human Development Report 2011, From Vulnerability to Sustainability: Environment and Human Development, Ulaanbaatar, UNDP. 28-42. Retrieved from http://www.mn.undp.org/content/dam/mongolia/Publications/NHDRReports/NHDR_report_english_2011_last.pdf.

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Session 6: Rural Homestay: Observation Sessions and Discussions

In this two-hour session students discuss insights and reflections on material that they can use for further analyses in preparation for the mid-term and final essay exam. This session will help students hone in on issues that they find particularly interesting and provocative by analyzing the content of lectures, readings and site visits. The result is a deeper understanding of difficult concepts, the lecturer/author positions and arguments. The discussion is an opportunity to critically review the lecturers, readings and site visits by articulating and defending students' personal opinions and drawing connections between the module's content and their experience of living and studying in Mongolia.

Required Reading:

Goldstein, Melvyn C. and Beall, C.M. (1994), *The Changing World of Mongolia's Nomads*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, ISBN: 978-0520085510.

Jiang, Rong, (2008) *Wolf Totem*, The Penguin Press, New York, ISBN: 7-5354-3669-6.

Session 7: Student Led Discussion (SLD) Pastoralism and the Environment

This is a two-hour session where students bring up important insights and material that they can use for further analyses and reflection in preparation for your mid-term and final exam papers. This session will help students hone in on issues that they find particularly interesting and provocative, analyze the lectures, the readings and on-site visits, gain a deeper understanding of difficult concepts, examples, the lecturer/author's position, and the lecturer/author's arguments. This discussion is an opportunity to critically review the lecturers, readings and site visits articulating and defending own personal opinions, and to connect the issues students have analyzed and criticized to their experience of living and studying in Mongolia, to their learning.

Required Reading:

Students who lead the SLD session will choose at least one reading from the required reading list and bring it up for further discussion.

Sessions 8-10: NGO Practicum

NGO practicum is an opportunity to enhance educational and intercultural experiences through the application of classroom and field experience learning in a professional environment. This assignment is a work or service experience that will orient students to the work of various NGOs in Ulaanbaatar and provide the opportunity to learn through observation and participation. The NGO practicum allows students to examine development work first-hand and gain practical experience in the field before the Independent Study Project.

During the two or three-full-day practicum with an NGO of their choice, students are required to visit one NGO, INGO or other development organization in Ulaanbaatar, gather information about the aims of the organization and discuss these in a comprehensive analytic paper which synthesizes information from the seminar with the specifics of the data collected.

Required Reading:

State of Civil Society in Mongolia, CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Mongolia (2005) Center for Citizens' Alliance (former CEDAW Watch)/ICSFD Ulaanbaatar Secretariat. *Retrieved from* http://www.civicus.org/new/media/CSI_Mongolia_Country_Report.pdf.

Session 11: NGO Practicum Discussion

NGO Development Paper Due

Module 2: Nature Conservation and Natural Resource Management (20 hours)

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This module focuses on the following issues: government strategies to create a national resource management policy; its attempts to promote nature conservation; role of NGOs and INGOs in keeping the fragile balance of traditional values and practices with the demands of economic development opportunities.

Session 1: Environmental Policy of Mongolia

Mongolia's unique natural environment is losing its original features under the pressure of fast economic development. The session discusses the key changes in environmental protection and nature conservation policy in the contemporary milieu dominated by the mining industry. It describes the present status of environmental challenges and policy goals of Mongolia's central government. The lecture is followed by a 30-minute group discussion.

Required Readings:

Oyun, S., (October 5, 2012) "I'm sorry; if you don't build a road you will not transport that coal.", UB Post. Retrieved from: <http://ubpost.mongolnews.mn/?p=1340>.

Oyun, S., (June 4, 2013) Our ministry is working to set the grounds for green development policy of Mongolia. ASSA, Retrieved from: <http://www.assa.mn/content/13962.shtml?a=english>.

Session 2: Introducing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in Mongolia

The government of Mongolia has recently introduced a mandatory requirement of all economic projects to conduct EIA prior to any practical implementation of exploration and excavation activities. The session looks into political, economic and cultural factors influencing the successful enforcement of the law using the example of the Oyu Tolgoi mining project in Southern Gobi.

Required Reading:

Oyu Tolgoi. (2013). Environmental Protection Plan and Environmental Monitoring Programme for 2013 by the Holder of License 6709A at Oyu Tolgoi Deposit, a Copper-gold Mining Project at Oyu Tolgoi, Retrieved from: http://ot.mn/sites/default/files/reports/Oyu%20Tolgoi_EPP_2013_EN.pdf.

The World Bank, (January 2010) *Southern Gobi Regional Environment Assessment*, Discussion Paper, Ulaanbaatar, World Bank.

Session 3: Wild Life Trade in Eastern Mongolia

Hunting has always been considered an inseparable part of nomadic culture, an activity that has in most cases become illegal under the new conditions. Illegal hunting has wiped out local populations of many species, with thousands of gazelles, marmots, and other species being slaughtered in recent years. The session discusses cultural, socio-economic and geopolitical reasons for poaching. Through analysis of findings of multi-agency team collaborative inspection and monitoring, we also explore the challenges the Mongolian authorities face in enforcing hunting laws over such a vast area.

Required Reading:

The World Bank, (July 2006) Wild Life Conservation Society, Silent Steppe: The Illegal Wildlife Crisis in Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, World Bank. Retrieved from:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/EXTEAPR EGTOPENVIRONMENT/0,,contentMDK:21019441~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:502886,00.html>.

Session 4: Case Study: Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

The Mongol people have historically herded livestock across communal lands. Today, approximately 30 percent of the population is nomadic or semi-nomadic. This method of livestock production often causes habitat destruction and loss of native wildlife. WCS has been working with herder groups to develop wildlife management, protection, and monitoring plans in their community-managed areas.

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Herders and volunteer rangers learn to rotate their pastures and enforce wildlife protection laws against illegal hunting.

Required Readings:

Mongolia, Wildlife Conservation Society. Retrieved from:

<http://www.wcs.org/where-we-work/asia/mongolia.aspx>.

The Rougher Side of Cashmere (24 July 2013). Wildlife Conservation Society. Retrieved from: <http://www.wcs.org/news-and-features-main/cashmere-and-wildlife.aspx>.

Session 5: Ecology of Lake Baikal, transborder natural resource management issues

Ecosystem of Lake Baikal is rich and diverse. This session provides not only an introduction to this unique ecosystem, but also discusses natural resources management issues that require involvement of more than one country (Russia, Mongolia and China). The session will be later followed by a visit to Limnological Museum of Lake Baikal.

Session 6: Geographic and Political issues of Northern Asia. Food safety and security in Siberia in the face of economic and political sanctions.

Session 7: Identifying Conservation Priorities in the Face of Future Development

This session introduces the latest analytical methods of nature conservation utilized by an international NGO. The session describes their project of implementing a new systematic, science-based approach to determine location, objects and strategies using a case of preserving the Eastern Steppes ecosystem in Mongolia.

Required Readings:

Kiesecker, J.M., Copeland, H., Pocewicz, A., Nibbelink, N., McKenry, N., Dahlke, J., ..., Stroud, D., (January 2009) A Framework for Implementing Biodiversity Offsets: Selecting Sites and Determining Scale, / Vol. 59 No. 1, BioScience.

Watts, J., (2012) Gobi mega-mine puts Mongolia on brink of world's greatest resource boom, guardian.co.uk, Monday 7 November 2011 11.54 GMT, <http://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2012/07/in-mongolia-climate-change-and-mining-boom-threaten-national-identity/>.

Banyan (Feb16th, 2013) Before the gold rush, Online Column, retrieved from:

www.economist.com/blogs/banyan.

Otter Creek Aerial Photography, Kestral Aerial Services, Inc. Retrieved from:

http://www.kestrelaerial.com/#/aerial-photography/otter-creek-colstrip/OC_3329.

Session 8: Urban Environmental Challenges in Ulaanbaatar

Fast city driven migration has tripled the population of the only large city in Mongolia in only the past 15-20 years. The session looks into challenges the UB city ecology is facing presently, including specific characteristics of the city created by the influence of nomadic cultural patterns and the ways city government and urban communities try to cope with these new problems.

Required Readings:

The World Bank, (December 2009), Air Pollution in Ulaanbaatar, (Initial Assessment of Current Situation Effects of Abatement Measure) Discussion Papers, Ulaanbaatar, World Bank.

UB Post, Who: Ulaanbaatar tops the charts for air pollution, (Sep 30, 2011) No.079.

UB Post, (Sep 21, 2011), Public transport or public hazard? And Mongolia mining curbs key for environment-president, No.075.

Session 9: Site Visit: Fresh Water Resources and Conservation Center

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This is a half-day field activity comprised of two parts: a tour to the Fresh Water Resources and Conservation Center and a discussion session with local researchers and workers at the Center. This discussion session raises issues of citizen's participation in a local urban development process, activism for urban environmental change vs. reliance on government handouts, water usage in ger districts, air pollution and traditional methods of nature conservation and environmental protection, wetlands, as well as urban ecology, water supply and sanitation.

Required Reading:

TBA

Session 10: Student Lead Discussion (SLD) Natural Resource Management and the Environment

This is a two-hour session where students critically review the lectures, readings and site visits articulating and defending their informed opinions, and to connect the issues students have analyzed and criticized to their experience of living and studying in Mongolia, to their learning. This session helps students hone in on issues that they find particularly interesting and provocative, analyze the lectures, the readings and on-site visits, gain a deeper understanding of difficult concepts, examples, the lecturer/author's position, and the lecturer/author's arguments.

Required Reading:

Students who lead the SLD session will select at least one reading and develop questions from the required reading list to discuss.

Session 11: Final Session: Submit Final Essay Exam & Concluding Synthesis and Analysis of Course Themes

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Description of Assignments:

Attendance and Participation 10%

Regular and positive attendance is vital to success in this course. Missed lectures will not be repeated nor will lecture notes be provided. Records of attendance and participation in discussions will be maintained. For each lecture students should bring at least two written questions based on the assigned reading for the lecture for class discussion. Students are encouraged to pose these questions to the guest speakers – the main sources of information and knowledge for the seminar. Paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, giving comments, demonstrating interest and enthusiasm, exercising critical thinking, and note-taking all constitute active attendance.

Discussion Leadership 15%

Student-led discussion of a pre-assigned lecture/module topic: including emphasis on assigned readings, and supplemented by additional student research, preparation of discussion questions, and presentation of supplemental materials on the topic (interviews, articles, discussions with lecturers, etc). Evidence of Preparation, Significant Content, Ability to Stimulate Discussion, Timing and Presentational Style will be key to evaluation.

Mid-Term Paper 20%

Students will write an 8-10 page paper, critically investigating a topic related to the seminar sections. For the mid-term paper choose one specific issue related to the environmental challenges in contemporary Mongolia and conduct a short-term investigation and expect to integrate information drawn from lectures, excursions, readings, personal explorations and urban and rural homestays into this paper and to present arguments in a logical and coherent fashion. Use this assignment as a helpful

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opportunity to combine field experiences with published sources in order to discuss ideas, and depth of knowledge to a topic in Mongolian culture and in the context of rapid socioeconomic change.

NGO Development Paper 25%

The assignment requires students to visit one NGO, INGO or other development organization in UB, and gather information about the aims of the organization and discuss these in a comprehensive analytic paper which synthesizes information from the seminar with the specifics of the data collected. The essay should 8-to-10 pages write-up will be evaluated based on the paper's critical assessment of the organization's mission and their contribution to development of Mongolia, including a careful evaluation of their accountability, transparency and the sustainability of their operation. The paper should be concluded with suggestions proposed to benefit their work.

Final Essay Exam 30%

Students will be provided a list of questions from which they choose 2 questions and write a five-page long essay on each of the topics. The assignment implies conducting a short-term investigation and students are expected to integrate information drawn from lectures, excursions, readings, personal explorations and urban and rural homestays into this paper and to present arguments in a logical and coherent fashion. This assignment is a helpful opportunity to combine field experiences with published sources in order to discuss ideas that reflect the student's depth of knowledge in topics related in Mongolian culture, history and contemporary challenges related to pastoralism and natural resource management in the context of rapid socioeconomic change.

Assessment:

Attendance and Participation	10 %
Discussion Leadership	15%
Mid-Term Paper	20 %
NGO Development Paper	25 %
Final Essay Exam	30 %

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 honor by coming to speak....

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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.

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>.

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