

## Sustainable Futures: India and Beyond

ASIA 3020 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
India: Sustainable Development and Social Change

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

### Course Description

The *Sustainable Futures: India and Beyond* course provides knowledge and wisdom to inspire students to think and act towards local and global sustainability from an individual and collective level. The course necessitates critical reflection on and rethinking of development to address the current social, economic and environmental crisis facing India and the world. Building on the Development Approaches and Distributive Justice module, it exposes students to conceptual and theoretical frameworks for rethinking development, and to learn from various movements searching for alternatives to the growth-led development model and related measures of human well-being. Integrating hands-on, experiential learning in-country with academic understandings of sustainability and social change, students are exposed to NGOs and other organizations engaged in shaping sustainable social change in India through carefully designed educational excursions and workshops in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand sustainability from global and Indian perspectives and what it means for India's future;
- Employ conceptual frameworks for rethinking development and understand their significance in current forthcoming development crises;
- Identify development actors and institutions and understand their role in shaping sustainable social change;
- Identify and critically evaluate the effectiveness of various development "alternatives" posed in India today;
- Integrate hands-on, experiential learning in-country with academic understanding of current development approaches and theory.

### Language of Instruction

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All classroom lectures, workshops, and excursions are conducted in English, including the readings assigned. Students are exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well as the nuances of sustainability and social change through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Students simultaneously learn Hindi which provides functional skills for connecting with community members. Students are expected to engage with them in this language (to the best of their abilities). The student will simultaneously with the communities during the field excursion and workshop in the rural settings.

## 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: Sustainability, Alternatives and Way Forward (8 sessions - 90 minutes each = 12 class hours)

#### **Topic 1: Introduction to Sustainable Development**

##### **Readings:**

- Sen, S. A. (2000). Human development and economic sustainability. *World Development*, 2029-2049.
- Lele, S. M. (1991). Sustainable development: A critical review. *World Development*, 607-621.

#### **Topic 2: Rethinking Development & Sustainable Community Practices in India: Cases (2 sessions)**

##### **Readings:**

- Shrivastava, A., & Kothari, A. (2012). Stories from tomorrow: From developmentality to ecologicality. In A. Shrivastava, & A. Kothari, *Churning the earth: The making of modern India* (pp. 254-292). New Delhi: Penguin.

#### **Topic 3: Creating a Roadmap for Sustainability in India & Radical Ecological Democracy (RED)**

##### **Readings:**

- Kothari, A. (2013). Development and ecological sustainability in India: Possibilities for the post-2015 framework. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLVIII (30), 144-145.
- Kothari, A. (2014). India 2100: Towards radical ecological democracy. *Futures*. LVI, 6272.

**Group Discussion:** Critical reflection on course topics, readings, and insights

#### **Topic 4: Rethinking Education (3 sessions)**

##### **Readings:**

- Gatto, J. (1996). The public school nightmare: Why fix a system designed to destroy individual thought?. In M. H. (Eds.), *Deschooling our lives*. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers. Excerpts retrieved from [http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/resources\\_gatto.html#top](http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/resources_gatto.html#top)
- Soni, S. D. (n.d.). *An illiterate's declaration to the literacy preacher*. Retrieved from [www.swaraj.org](http://www.swaraj.org): [http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/resources\\_soni3.html](http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/resources_soni3.html).

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- Tagore, R. (1994). The parrot training. In V. Bhat, *Rabindranath Tagore: Pioneer in education*. New Delhi: Sahitya Chayan. Retrieved from [http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/resources\\_tagore.html](http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/resources_tagore.html)
- Zerbo, J. K. (1997). Education as an instrument of cultural defoliation: A multi-voice report. In M. R. Bawtree (Eds.), *The post-development reader* (pp. 152-160). Halifax: Fernwood Books. Excerpts retrieved from [http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/resources\\_ki-zerbo.html](http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/resources_ki-zerbo.html)
- Hodge, H. (1996). The pressure to modernise and globalise. In J. M. (Eds.), *The case against the global economy and for a turn towards the local*. San Francisco: Sierra Club. Excerpts retrieved from [http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/resources\\_norberg\\_hodge.html](http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/resources_norberg_hodge.html)

## **Module 2: Field Excursion in Jaipur, Rajasthan (7 hours \* 2 days & 2 hours debriefing – 8 class hours)**

During this excursion, students observe the work of organizations and communities to enable the bridging of classroom gained knowledge with ground realities. Specifically, students learn in detail bottom-up approaches to development and sustainability defined and executed by communities themselves in their own context. Observation and interaction enables students to understand human capabilities, empowerment of the rural poor, and the Gandhian idea of self-sufficient villages.

### **Readings:**

- Roy, B (2008). *Empowering the rural poor to develop themselves: The Barefoot approach*. Massachusetts: Innovations. Retrieved from <http://www.barefootcollege.org/Empowering%20the%20Rural%20Poor%20to%20Develop%20Themselves.pdf>

## **Module 3: Sustainability and Social Change Workshop at Various Sites in India (6 hours \* 5 days = 15 class hours)**

The program will arrange contacts with several different organizations for the one-week workshop which takes place in the 8th week of the program. During the workshop, students observe and volunteer in small groups for one week and are immersed in learning about concepts, strategies, sustainability issues, challenges, or opportunities related to sustainable social change. The workshop provides students the opportunity to examine development work first-hand and gain practical experience in the field before the Independent Study Project.

### **Workshop Oral Presentation (2 class hours)**

Each workshop group delivers an oral presentation about their workshop after returning from the workshop site

## **Module 4: Synthesizing Trajectories of Sustainability in India (10 class hours)**

### **Topic 1: Gandhi Vision as an Alternative to Development (1.5 class hours)**

#### **Readings:**

Chopra, V. V. (Director). (2006). *Lago raho Munnabhai* [Motion Picture]

#### **Please watch the movie before class**

Ishii, K. (2001). The socio-economic thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi: As an origin of alternative development. *Review of Social Economy*, LIX (3), 297-312.

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## **Topic 2: Two Half-day Workshops: Humanity, Happiness, Spirituality and Sustainability (7 class hours)**

### **Readings:**

- Johnson, J. (2008). *Development as freedom, freedom as happiness: Human development and happiness in Bhutan*. Thimpu, Bhutan: Centre for Bhutan Studies. Retrieved March 9, 2013 from <http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/articlesongnh/ArticlesonGNHinPDF/Gnh&dev-23.pdf>.
- Leonard, A. (2010). Recommended individual actions. In A. Leonard, *The story of stuff* (pp. 260-264). New York: Free Press.
- Ohayon, J. (Director). (2006). *Crossroads: Labor pains of a new worldview*. [Motion Picture]

### **Final Synthesis Discussion (2 hours)**

Review of learning outcomes by revisiting lectures, discussions, field visits, readings of the preceding sessions.

## **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

### *Description of Assignments*

#### **1. Attendance, Participation, and Completion of Required Readings**

All students are required to attend all class and field visit sessions. Student's absences must be approved by the Academic Director.

Field excursions support classroom learning and allow first-hand observation of seminar topics and students are expected to not only be present on all excursions but also to participate meaningfully and to show keen interest and engagement. Paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, engaging in discussion, giving comments, demonstrating interest and enthusiasm, exercising critical thinking, and note-taking will be all be included in the assessment of active attendance.

Students are expected to do the readings and watch audiovisual resources assigned for each class beforehand. The audiovisual resources are available in hard drives with the librarian, and it is the responsibility of the students to acquire it and use it to their advantage.

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

- **Attendance:** promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- **Active Listening and Meaningful Participation:** paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, and note-taking.
- **Involvement in Class Discussions:** either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge and information. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually do not, and allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- **Group Accountability:** participating positively as a part of a group during field excursions and classes
- **Respect:** interacting in a culturally appropriate manner with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities. This includes appropriately greeting people when entering offices and classrooms and saying thank you.

#### **2. Excursion Journal (rough, handwritten)**

Student participation and learning during excursions are carefully evaluated through excursion journal

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assessment. The journal provides a record of the student's activities in the field and evidence of field observational skills. Assessment of the journal takes into consideration the spontaneity in note-taking during each field session/activity, the quality of the information noted, as well as the accuracy and relevance of the entries in a given context, which may also include reflection on subjective thoughts and feelings. Students should include drawings, photos and other non-written material related to the field activity. The journal should be provided for evaluation in rough, handwritten format as it is done in the field. **Typewritten journals will not be accepted.** It is the responsibility of the student to submit the journal on the declared day and time.

### **3. Social Change/Capacity Building Workshop**

#### **a) Week-long Field Experience**

Demonstrating the development of critical analysis and reflection skills while engaging with an organization is the anticipated outcome of the assignment. The Workshop aims to orient students to the work of various organizations, individuals, and communities on a particular theme and to provide the opportunity to learn development in practice through observation and participation. Students also contribute to the work of the organization as per its need. This provides the students with an opportunity to examine development work first-hand and have some practical experience in the field before the Independent Study Project.

#### **b) Oral Presentation**

Students work in groups of three or four to deliver to individual oral presentations following the workshop. In their oral presentation, students begin with an introduction to the workshop organization, its mission and objectives, the activities/project(s) in which they were engaged. This is followed by critical analysis of the organization's or field site's sustainability and social change activities relative to the mission and objectives of same. Students should engage with the core conceptual and field-based issues the organization deals with, in total respect of local guidelines of ethics and etiquette, and propose workable alternative solutions to perceived problems. The students must also provide a candid assessment of their accomplishments and the impact of this learning experience. Each group is allotted 30 minutes for each group's presentation.

#### **c) Workshop Journal**

Student participation and learning in the workshop are carefully evaluated through assessment of the workshop journal. The journal provides a record of a student's activities in the field and evidence of field observational skills. Assessment takes into consideration spontaneity in note-taking, the quality and accuracy of the information reflected in the journal, along with the relevance of the entries in the workshop context. The journal may contain reflection on subjective thoughts and feelings. Students should include drawings, photos and other non-written material related to the field activity. The journal must be provided for evaluation in a rough, handwritten format as it is done in the field. **Typewritten journals will not be accepted.** It is the responsibility of the student to submit the workshop journal on the declared day and time.

### **4. Synthesis Session: Final Discussion**

During this two-hour closing session of the thematic seminar, small groups of students, guided by the Academic Director, are assigned to review a particular aspect of the course content, such as lectures and module readings, site visits and the workshop, and provide a summary of key learning outcomes of the course. Students are encouraged to compare, contrast, draw distinctions between theory and experiences on excursion and the workshop, and to find creative ways of expressing the connections and insights they have learned in this course.

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### Assessment:

1. <b>Attendance, active and meaningful participation</b> at all lectures, field activities, site visits (5%), and completion of assigned readings and watching audio-visual resources (5%)	<b>10%</b>
2. <b>Excursion Journal</b>	<b>20%</b>
3. <b>Social Change/Capacity Building Workshop/Internship Workshop</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active and meaningful participation in the workshop including contribution made (25%)</li><li>• Oral Presentation (20%)</li><li>• Workshop Journal (15%)</li></ul>	<b>60%</b>
4. <b>Synthesis Discussion: Final Session</b>	<b>10%</b>

### 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 receive a passing grade. Graded assignments will be returned within two weeks of submission.

Field Trips/Excursions. Eight hours in a day are expected to be spent doing field work and visits. You are expected to act appropriately; by taking notes, paying attention, and engaging the host through careful listening, making eye contact and asking questions. You should refrain from using cell phones, iPod, the internet and engaging in side conversations during learning sessions. Photographs should be taken at the end of a session only.

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

Respect differences of opinion (of 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.

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### **Further Information & Policies**

Students are expected to attend and participate in all class and field sessions. Specific information on assignments will be handed out during orientation and also discussed during the semester. This syllabus including the course schedule is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. If you are late to or absent from any activity, it is your responsibility to get in touch with the Academic Director and other students to check on announcements made while you were absent.

**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](mailto: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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