

## **Conservation and the Economics of Cultural Heritage** ICHR-3000 (4 credits)

### **International Honors Program (IHP)** **IHP Cultural Heritage: Legacy, Identity, and Curating the Future** **Nepal, Ghana, Netherlands**

*This syllabus is representative of a typical 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**

Given time, a simple terracotta pot can impart as much cultural import as a cave painting or a temple, assuming it is properly understood, and duly commodified, packaged, marketed, and sold to a public. In this course we think about that process, about the business of commodifying, packaging, and marketing conservation and cultural heritage. The stakeholders in the activity of conservation are numerous and diverse. On the front lines are museums and curators, of course, university faculty, and artistes such as the members of dance companies performing traditional dances for public consumption. Government ministries, public donors, and occasionally inadvertent collateral actors (like the landowners upon whose property an archeological dig might have been discovered) all find themselves in the fray, balancing the cost of conservation with the benefit of tourist dollars and the global good face they can earn from careful marketing of their social brands. The modest merchants who hawk tourist tat, the baristas pouring substandard coffee at the cafes attached to attractions, and the licensed tour guides hovering around the gates of historical sites are equally concerned with the decisions, if not equally considered in the discussion, about cultural heritage management. In all, patrimony is big business.

The very practical concerns like keeping museum lights on and building fences around protected locations marry with more philosophical questions as well. What is cultural heritage and patrimony? Where do we draw the line between artifact and old garbage? Should everything be saved? To whom does an Indigenous location belong? Under whose curation can religious artifacts be conserved? What sort of duty does a colonizing country owe its former colonies? At what point in history does a culture exist? At what point are their transgressions forgiven? Ought the global community to intervene to preserve world heritage? And who gets to decide what are world heritage sites anyway? In this course we examine these questions in our three locations through numerous site visits and in-depth discussion.

#### **Course Goals**

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Create a working definition of ‘cultural heritage,’ and identify the myriad stakeholders in the conservation and curation landscape to navigate those fields successfully;
- Explain the relationship between curation, tourism, and the creation and maintenance of a cultural identity in a manner that demonstrates understanding of the economics of cultural heritage;
- Identify the challenges facing the preservation of Indigenous physical and intangible cultural heritage in Nepal, Ghana, and the Netherlands;
- Design an economically and politically viable curatorial project with cultural value.

## Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but in each program country students will be exposed to vocabulary in various languages related to course content.

## Instructional Methods

SIT’s teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; “knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

## 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: Conservation and the Economics of Cultural Heritage in Nepal

In this module, we will explore the preservation of cultural patrimony in Nepal. Never colonized by European powers, Nepal bridges the gap between the superpowers of India and China. How do global superpowers compete for influence in the extensive programs of post-earthquake reconstruction of the Kathmandu Valley’s multitude of World Heritage Sites? Through lectures and visits, we will investigate how communities in Nepal balance the preservation of living cultural heritage with an economic reliance on foreign tourism. On excursion to the lowlands of the Nepal Terai, we will learn about how efforts to conserve wildlife in Chitwan or to preserve the Buddha’s birthplace in Lumbini have affected local Indigenous populations, Adivasi Janajati.

## Session 1: Intangible cultural heritage

Lecture: Honey hunters as intangible cultural heritage—*Amish Raj Mulmi*

### *Required readings:*

- Mulmi, A. R. (2021, November 24) The honey hunters of Dolakha. *The Kathmandu Post*. Retrieved December 7, 2021, from <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2021/11/25/the-honey-hunters-of-dolakha>
- Park, S.-Y. (2013). *On Intangible Heritage Safeguarding Governance: An Asia-Pacific Context*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.  
<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=649569&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- UNESCO—*What is intangible cultural heritage?* (n.d.). Retrieved December 7, 2021, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003>

## Session 2: Geopolitics of cultural heritage

Visit: Kathmandu Durbar square

### *Required readings:*

- Hutt, M., Liechty, M., & Lotter, S. (Eds.). (2021). "Kathmandu's Durbar Square: Heritage Reconstruction as a Political Process of Negotiating Ownership and Authority." *Epicentre to aftermath: Rebuilding and remembering in the wake of Nepal's earthquakes*. Cambridge University Press.
- Paudel, D., & Le Billon, P. (2020). Geo-Logics of Power: Disaster Capitalism, Himalayan Materialities, and the Geopolitical Economy of Reconstruction in Post-Earthquake Nepal. *Geopolitics*, 25(4), 838–866.  
<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=144989420&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Rimal, P., Rajbhandari, S. (2021, October 7). In reconstruction, local ownership goes a long way. *The Record*. <https://www.recordnepal.com/in-reconstruction-local-ownership-goes-a-long-way>
- Weise, Kai (2018) *Sustainable post-earthquake rehabilitation in Kathmandu and Bagan*. In: ICOMOS 19th General Assembly and Scientific Symposium "Heritage and Democracy", 13-14th December 2017, New Delhi, India. [Conference or Workshop Item].  
<http://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/1919/>

## Session 3: Conservation & cycles of time

Lecture & visit: Swayambhu post-earthquake—*Anil Chitrakar*

Film & discussion: *Light of the Valley: the 15<sup>th</sup> renovation of Swayambhu* (dir. Pema Gellek, 2011, 32 mins)

### *Required readings:*

- Maitland, Padme Dorje. (2011). "A Structure for Veneration." In *Light of the Valley: Renewing the Sacred Art and Traditions of Svayambhu*. Edited by Tsering Palmo Gellek & Padme Dorje Maitland. Cazadero, CA: Dharma Publishing, 24–31.

Neve, Evangeline. (2019, July). Many gods many blessings: A stupa rebuilt. *ECS NEPAL*.  
<http://ecs.com.np/features/many-gods-many-blessings-a-stupa-rebuilt>  
UNESCO Office in Kathmandu. (2021) *The restoration of Mangal Bahudvara Caitya, Tashi Gomang Stupa, Svayambhu, Kathmandu Valley world heritage site*.  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000376715.locale=en>

#### Session 4: Cultural heritage & entrepreneurship

Lecture & visit: A walk through time: understanding the historical town of Patan—*Anil Chitrakar*

##### *Required reading:*

“Patan Heritage Walk—About.” <https://patanheritagewalk.com/about>

Ostrom, E. (2009, December 8). Beyond Markets and states: Polycentric Governance of Complex Economic Systems. [Nobel Prize Lecture].  
<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2009/ostrom/lecture/>

#### Session 5: Conservation & Buddhist pilgrimage

Excursion: Lumbini

Visit: Lumbini Crane sanctuary—*Dharmendra Pal*

##### *Required readings:*

McHugh, Shaelyn. (2019, November 29) “Preserving the Buddha’s Birthplace: a case against a spiritual Disneyland.” *Buddhistdoor global*.  
<https://www.buddhistdoor.net/features/preserving-the-buddhas-birthplace-a-case-against-a-spiritual-disneyland>

UNESCO. (2018 April) “The greater Lumbini area religious and archaeological sites.” Durham University: UNESCO Chair.

#### Session 6: The tourist gaze

Excursion: Chitwan National Park

Lecture & visit: Tharu Museum & talk on the Tharu—*Birendra Mahato*

##### *Required readings:*

Gachhadar, Pramila. (2012) “Chapter IV: Indigenous arts & crafts of Tharu.” *Tharu Women and their arts & crafts*. Social inclusion research fund, SNV Nepal.

Ghale, Shradha. (2018, June 5). “The pitfalls of imported notions.” *The Kathmandu Post*.  
<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2018-06-05/the-pitfalls-of-imported-notions.html>

Guneratne, A. (2002) “The Tharu and the Tarai.” In *Many tongues, one people: the making of Tharu identity in Nepal*. Cornell University Press, 20–61.

Guneratne, A. (2011, September). Shaping the tourist’s gaze: representing ethnic difference in a Nepali village. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 7, no. 3, 527–543.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3134417>

## **Module 2: Conservation and the Economics of Cultural Heritage in Amsterdam and the Netherlands**

In this module we will explore the way the Dutch mobilize their culture and cultural heritage, as both a lure for tourists and a brush to flesh out their identity as a modern, liberal mecca. We will examine the aggressive marketing of Van Gogh and the Dutch Masters and how that nests with the language surrounding the “Dutch Golden Age.” In addition, we will investigate niche tourism aimed at the gay market, food tourism and selling a national identity, and ways you can cycle your way to an “authentic Dutch experience.” Though we focus primarily on the Dutch, all of these issues are at play in other regions and we will step back to talk about the broader picture when we discuss the EU and UNESCO Cultural Heritage Sites.

### Session 1: Conservation is a Sound Investment

#### *Required readings:*

Nuria Recuero Virto, Maria Francisca Blasco Lopez, Sonia San-Martin. (2017). How Can European Museums Reach Sustainability? *Tourism Review*. 72.3, 303–18.

Greg Richards. (2019). Culture and Tourism: Natural Partners or Reluctant Bedfellows? A perspective paper. *Tourism Review*. 75., 232–34.

### Session 2: The EU & UNESCO

Site visit: Kinderdijk

#### *Required reading:*

Bailey Ashton Adie. (2017). Franchising Our Heritage: The UNESCO World Heritage Brand. *Tourism Management Perspectives*. 24. 48–53.

### Session 3: Dutch Art & Dutch Artists

Site visit: Van Gogh Museum & the Rembrandthuis

#### *Required reading:*

Irina van Aalst & Inez Boogaarts. (2002) *From Museum to Mass Entertainment: The Evolution of the Role of Museums in Cities*. 9.3 195–209.

### Session 4: Experiential Tourism

Site visit: Cycling the Dutch Countryside and visit to Gouda cheese market

#### *Required readings:*

Francesc Fuste-Forne. (2020). Say Gouda, Say Cheese: Travel Narratives of a Food Identity. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*. 22.

Richard Prentice. (2007). *Experiential Cultural Tourism: Museums and the Marketing of the New Romanticism of Evoked Authenticity*. *Museum Management and Curatorship*. 19. 5–26.

### Session 5: Niche Tourism

Site visit: Visit to, and talk with, the proprietors of the gay hotel Golden Bear on Kerkstraat, the Nieuwzijds Gay Sauna, & Club Church.

*Required readings:*

Kelsey Brown & Joshua Buckner. (2020). *The Rich Gay? Small Museums and Funding Difficult History*.

### **Module 3: Conservation and the Economics of Cultural Heritage in Ghana**

In Ghana students examine the legacy of colonialism through different modes. As the first African country south of the Sahara to gain independence from colonial rule, Ghana is known as the Black Star of Africa. This module explores what it means to grapple with this situation in social, political, and economic terms. Through site visits, guest lectures, and discussions, we better understand how education, religion, music, social relations, and political institutions are affected by colonialism on the one hand, and how on the other hand they influence remembrance of the colonial accident.

*Site Visits:*

George Padmore Library  
Center for African Popular Culture

#### Session 1

Tour of Accra & Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana

*Required reading:*

Quayson, A. (2014). *Oxford Street, Accra: City Life and the Itineraries of Transnationalism*. Durham: Duke.

#### Session 2: Intellectual Recollections

Lecture—*Bright Gyamfi*

Visit: Dubois Center & Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum

*Required reading:*

Gyamfi, B. (2021). From Nkrumah's Black Star to the African Diaspora: Ghanaian Intellectual Activists and the Development of Black Studies in the Americas. *The Journal of African American History*, 106(4), 682-705.

#### Session 3: Music

Lecture—*John Collins*

*Required reading:*

Collins, J. (2018). *Highlife time 3*. Accra, Ghana: DAKpabli & Associates.

#### Session 4: Landscapes

*Required reading:*

Akpabli, K. (2014). *Romancing Ghanaland: The Beauty of 10 Regions*. Accra: Abacus Digital Media.

## Session 5:

Visit: Java Museum

## Session 6

### *Required reading:*

Oduro-Frimpong, J. (2021). “The Fake is News”: On Popular Visual Media, Fakery and Legitimacy Contestations in Charismatic Christianity in Contemporary Ghana. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 33(3), 325–343.

## **Assignments and Evaluation**

### Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

#### **Group discussion: synthesis and debrief (15%)**

##### **Objectives**

- To enable the group to reflect on what we have learnt from various parts of the course, to integrate knowledge gained from a variety of sources, including field trips, and to share insights;
- To provide a forum for discussion of course readings;
- To give you practice at facilitating discussions and making presentations.
- To engage critically with distinct threads from among the semester themes

##### **How it works**

In the first week of the semester, you will be assigned to one of nine groups. Each group will be assigned one group discussion to facilitate during the semester. These discussions will be guided by faculty but run by students. The group discussions will last for 60 minutes and will **foster debate or discussion** about what we have learnt in synthesis in each of the four courses, since the previous meeting and will integrate what we have learnt that week in workshops, lectures, **field trips** and **readings** with what we have previously covered in the semester. Each group will moreover be assigned a distinct thread from one of the semester themes, to be addressed in the discussion **but not as the theme of the entire discussion**.

When it is your turn to facilitate a discussion, you need as a group, to **identify the most important topics (check the learning goals) that are suitable for class discussion** (don't pick so many topics that there isn't adequate time to discuss them all). At the meeting, the facilitators should first identify the topics to be covered in the meeting. They should then encourage and direct group discussion of the topics, ensuring that every member of the group is **given space to speak**, and indeed the **everyone does make a contribution**, however small. Facilitators are scheduled to **meet with a relevant faculty member** for the 15 minutes just prior to their session in order to review the questions you will put to the group. Please feel free to approach any faculty member already prior to starting your preparation for your own meeting in order to review the topics to be discussed. We reserve the right to include critical questions or topics if they are absent from your list. **It is important to allow sufficient time for discussion of the readings.**

(60 minutes x 9)

group 1: From USA to Nepal  
group 2: Nepal midway  
group 3: Nepal & beyond  
group 4: From Nepal to The Netherlands  
group 5: The Netherlands midway  
group 6: The Netherlands & beyond  
group 7: From the Netherlands to Ghana  
group 8: Ghana midway  
group 9: Ghana & beyond

### **Grading**

Synthesis and debrief discussions make up 15% of the course grade. The quality of your contribution to the discussions throughout the semester is worth 7.5% and your facilitation of your session is worth another 7.5%. As a participant, you should come to group discussions with notes from the readings including a sentence summarizing the author's main message. You should contribute to the discussions but not dominate them, your contributions should be informed and you should respect other's opinions but not be afraid to disagree.

The criteria for evaluating the facilitators are:

- Your introduction identifying the topics to be discussed (5%)
- Your identification and framing of the important issues to be discussed from lectures, workshops, fieldtrips, etc., and the quality of the questions and prompts you used to initiate and direct the discussion (40%)
- Your identification of the important issues contained in the readings and your facilitation of the discussion of those readings (35%)
- Your facilitation of the group discussion (did you get everyone involved in and enthused about the discussion? Did you use any innovative approaches? Were you able to control the discussion and get it back on track when it wandered off the topic? Did you manage the time well—so that all topics were covered?) (20%)

### **Curatorial projects (75%)**

**Small group curatorial project—Nepal (25%)**

**Individual curatorial project—the Netherlands (25%)**

**Whole group curatorial project—Ghana (25%)**

### **Objectives**

The curatorial projects are designed to help you to reflect upon, **analyze and synthesize** what you are learning from excursions, field trips, lectures, seminars, readings, formal and informal discussions and your own observations and to **take on the role of 'curator'** to present an exhibit/archive/experience that reflects our course theme[s].

### **How it works**



In each country, you will be asked to reflect in an essay on aspects of the fieldwork you have carried out and **to relate this to what you have previously learnt and observed** in the three thematic courses. Your essay needs to be succinct, well organized and to show that you are thinking about what you are experiencing and that you are synthesizing what you learn from disparate sources. You will also **curate an exhibit/archive/experience** related to or inspired by your essay topic. Exhibits can be tangible, i.e., a physical or digital art or photography exhibit, or intangible, i.e., dance, song, food etc.

The first project, which you will complete in Nepal, will be a small group curatorial project. This will entail a 1,000-word **minimum** contribution to a paper prepared in collaboration with a small number of you program peers and a related exhibit curated by that small group.

The second project, which you will complete in the Netherlands, will be an individual curatorial project. This will entail a paper with a 1,600-word **minimum** and a related exhibit curated individually.

The third project, which you will complete in Ghana, will be a whole group curatorial project. This will entail an individual paper with a 1,000-word **minimum** and an exhibit curated through collaboration with your entire cohort.

### **Grading**

These 3 curatorial projects will each comprise **25% of your Conservation/Economics grade, together totalling 75% thereof.**

Students should note that topics for curatorial projects as well as their field study journal are open. Students should not feel they are limited only to topics explicitly explored in the courses but should feel free to use each project and paper to explore a variety of topics. To reinforce and emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of these Curatorial Project assignments, the weight given in evaluating the projects and papers in each country will be split equally between the grading of the four courses in that country.

### **Preparation, participation, and contribution to group learning (10%)**

In this seminar, great emphasis is placed on the students' active participation in their own education. This element is worth **10% of your Conservation/Economics grade.** Your grade is allocated on an assessment of your timely attendance and informed participation in all activities, including field trips; your adherence to codes of conduct and conditions of participation; and your general contribution to the maintenance of a positive learning environment throughout the course.

This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions and excursions using the following criteria:

- Attendance—promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening— paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.

- Involvement in Class Discussions—either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability—positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; not keeping others waiting.
- Displaying Respect—culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

### Assessment

Group discussion: synthesis and debrief	15%
Small group curatorial project (Nepal)	25%
Individual curatorial project (the Netherlands)	25%
Whole group curatorial project (Ghana)	25%
Preparation, participation, and contribution to group learning	10%
	(100%)

### Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

### Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Example: Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

### 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

### Program Expectations

- 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.
- 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.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Course Communication: Course documents and assignments will be posted on the learning management system, Canvas. Although the course calendar provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be posted at the course site. You will need to check the course site regularly. You are responsible for letting me know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, we will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.
- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance

written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

## **SIT Policies and Resources**

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.