

Nepal's Economy: Trade, Tourism & Globalization

DVST-3500 (3 credits)

Nepal: Development, Gender & Social Change

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

This course provides a focused analysis of Nepal's economy, with particular emphasis on the roles of international trade, tourism, and the pervasive influence of globalization. As a developing nation navigating a complex global landscape, Nepal's economic trajectory is multifaceted case study. This course will explore the historical evolution, current state, and future potential of Nepal's economy and overall development. This course will also explore how Nepal embarked on its economic trajectory and engaged with globalization, particularly through foreign aid and trade avenues, following the introduction of democracy in the 1950s. Through a combination of readings, case studies, policy analysis, field visits and class discussions, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the key drivers shaping Nepal's economy in the 21st century.

Learning Outcomes

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

1. **Describe** the historical evolution and current patterns of Nepal's international trade
2. **Analyze** the key features and structure of Nepal's economy
3. **Evaluate** the significance of tourism as a sector within Nepal's economy
4. **Critically** assess the various impacts of globalization on Nepal's economic development
5. **Evaluate** relevant economic policies and development strategies for Nepal
6. **Analyze** the challenges and opportunities Nepal faces in a globalized world

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English.

Instructional Methods

SIT's philosophy of education is rooted in experiential learning model, which drives the design of this class. Each module allows for experience, reflection, and application. Experiences range from critical analyses of datasets to site visits and conversations with local experts. These experiences are framed by readings, multimedia texts, and class discussion. Reflection occurs throughout the learning process in various forms, such as verbal debriefs after learning on location experiences to reflexive components in papers/projects. Through reflection, students are encouraged to become aware of their process of learning, to make sense of their experiences, and connect the learning acquired on the program with previous experiences and information. Application activities reinforce learning by practicing communication skills, experimenting with theories, and preparing to transfer learning to future contexts.

Course Readings

**These are sample readings. Individual instructors may adapt as necessary.*

Acharya, S. (2024, July). Impact of globalization on Nepalese economy [Master's thesis]. ResearchGate.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/382081525_Impact_of_Globalization_on_Nepalese_Economy

Bhattarai, K., Upadhyaya, G., & Bohara, S. K. (2021). Tourism, employment generation and foreign exchange earnings in Nepal. *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality Education*, 11, 1–21.

Chaudary, M. K. (2018). Economic planning and poverty alleviation strategies in Nepal. *Research Nepal Journal of Development Studies*, 1(2).

Chhetri, A. D. (2021). The impact of trade deficit in Nepalese economy. *Journal of Balkumari College*, 10(1), 73–88. <http://balkumaricollege.edu.np/journal>

Fisher, J. F. (1987). *Trans-Himalayan traders: Economy, society, and culture in Northwest Nepal*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Fisher, J. F. (2011). *Globalisation in Nepal: Theory and practice*. Social Science Baha.

Fisher, J. F. (2017). *Trans-Himalayan traders transformed: Return to Tarang*. Orchid Press.

Gutschow, N. (2025). Urban development and town planning in a historical perspective. In B. Linder (Ed.), *Kathmandu: A reader* (pp. 29–44). Martin Chautari.

Hutt, M. (1996). Looking for Shangri-la, from Hilton to Lamichhane. In T. Selwyn (Ed.), *The tourist image: Myths and myth making in tourism* (pp. 49–60). Wiley and Sons.

Hutt, M. (2020). The changing face of Nepal. *Current History*, April, 141–145.

Jaiswal, B. (2018, November). Tourism as a tool for economic development in Nepal [Conference paper]. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Bhanupriya-Jaiswal/publication/346496767_Tourism_as_a_Tool_for_Economic_Development_in_Nepal/links/5fc528194585152e9be57361/Tourism-as-a-Tool-for-Economic-Development-in-Nepal.pdf

Karmacharya, B. K. (2001). Economic reforms in Nepal and their implications for trade, economic growth, inequality and poverty. *South Asia Economic Journal*, 2(1), 91–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/139156140100200105>

Khanal, R. K. (2023). Globalization and pace of economic growth in Nepal. *Voice: A Biannual & Bilingual Journal*, 15(2), 25–35. <https://doi.org/10.3126/voice.v15i2.61431>

Liechty, M. (2003). *Suitably modern: Making middle-class culture in a new consumer society*. Princeton University Press.

Liechty, M. (2010). Out here in Kathmandu: Modernity on the global periphery. Martin Chautari.

Liechty, M. (2024). “The key to an oriental world”: Boris Lissanevitch, the Royal Hotel, and the origins of tourism in Nepal. In P. Onta, L. Parajuli, & M. Liechty (Eds.), *Nepal in the long 1950s* (pp. 275–308). Martin Chautari.

Magar, U. B. R. (2021). The trend analysis of foreign trade and economic growth of Nepal. *The Journal of Economic Concerns*, 12(1) 112–122. NECS, Nepal.

Pant, B. (2005). Nepal's trade sector: Review, repercussions and recommendations. *NRB Economic Review*.

Shakya, S. (2009). *Unleashing Nepal: Past, present and future of the economy*. Penguin Publications.

Sharma, O., & Bhandari, R. (2005). Foreign trade and its effects on Nepalese economic development. *The Journal of Nepalese Business Studies*, 2(1).

1989a. Letter from Kathmandu. *P.N. Review*, 15(5), 12–13.

Course Assignments

Class Participation (10%)

Students are expected to be physically and mentally present for all classes. To prepare for class, students should critically read the assigned texts prior to each class and come prepared with relevant questions and insights.

Field Journal (30%)

Students will write weekly field journals, making connections between the course readings and the field visits. Journal entries are expected to be 250-500 words in length. Students are allowed to miss 2 weeks.

Case Study Presentation (30%)

Your group will select one compelling case study related to Nepal's economy and its engagement with international trade, tourism, or globalization. By utilizing a variety of sources, including academic articles, government reports, news media, and NGO publications, you will gather and analyze comprehensive information about your chosen case. In a 10-15 minute presentation, your group will present clear and concise key findings and insights about the case study and its broader implications for Nepal's engagement with trade, tourism, and/or globalization.

Research Project/Policy Brief (30%)

Through this written assignment, you will conduct in-depth research on a specific issue related to Nepal's economy within the context of international trade, tourism, or globalization. You can choose to produce either a traditional academic research paper or a policy brief aimed at informing policymakers or relevant stakeholders. This assignment will allow you to explore a topic of particular interest, apply the analytical tools learned in the course, and develop your research and communication skills for different audiences. Final product should be 8-10 pages and include 8-10 scholarly sources.

Note on Attendance and Participation: Due to the nature of this experiential program, full participation in all classes and program activities is required. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the Program Director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, which may impact grades. Excessive, unexcused absences could result in program dismissal. Alternative work for absences will be expected.

Note on Late Assignments: IHP programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. 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. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis with approval from the Program Director or other designated staff person. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. Students who do not submit their work within the extension period will receive a failing grade.

Grading Scale

94-100% A

90-93% A-

87-89%	B+	70-73%	C-
84-86%	B	67-69%	D+
80-83%	B-	64-66%	D
77-79%	C+	below 64	F
74-76%	C		

Program Expectations

In order to make the most of the opportunities presented in program, communicate respectfully, prepare for student success, and demonstrate best possible engagement, SIT has the following expectations of students:

- **Content Considerations:** The 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, I 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.
- **Learning Community:** 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 differences and consider other perspectives with respect.
- **Presence.** 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.
- **Engage.** Ask questions in class. Interact with the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- **Be Honest.** Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- **Store 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 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, especially during a guest lecture or presentation from a peer. 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.
- **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. Documented academic accommodations may supersede this policy.

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.

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*

Note: This is a suggested sequence of modules and topics where each location explores parallel modules with a comparative focus. Local faculty should appropriately adapt how these

topics are taught and select local texts, case studies, guest speakers, and site visits that are relevant to the context and course themes.

Session 1: Course Overview

- Review of syllabus, assignments, expectations
- Review historical overview of Nepali economy, core structure and key sectors (e.g. agriculture, industry, services)

Session 2: Economic Policy

- Discuss Nepal's trade relations & policies

Session 3: Import/Export policies & practices

- Analyze Nepal's import and export commodities and partners
- Examine cross border Trade with India and China

Session 4: Entrepreneurship and Economic Participation

- Explore the role of entrepreneurship as a driver of economic growth and job creation in Nepal
- Examine how different segments of the population, including marginalized groups, participate in and benefit from economic activities.

Session 5: Regional & international organizations & agreements

- Consider the role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and regional trade agreements (e.g., SAFTA).

Session 6: Tourism

- Examine different types of tourism in Nepal: trekking, mountaineering, cultural, religious, ecotourism and its socio-economic impacts (employment, income generation, infrastructure development)

Session 7 : Sustainable Tourism

- Consider the challenges to and benenfits of sustainable tourism
- Explore case studies that address environmental degradation, cultural commodification, etc.
- Review policy challenges and opportunities for promoting trade-led growth and sustainable tourism

Session 8: Case Study Presentations

- See assignment description for details

Session 9: International Financial Institutions

- Analyze the role of international financial institutions (World Bank, IMF, ADB) in Nepal's economic development

Session 10: Globalization

- Consider the impact of globalization on Nepali culture, society and democracy
- Discuss strategies for leveraging globalization for Nepal's economic transformation

Session 11: Course Reflections