

# Himalayan Geography



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Hanifl Center

Day “D” During Expeditions

## **COURSE STRUCTURE**

This course involves engaged participation in each of the expeditions/special programs that are featured on the itinerary for Pitt in the Himalayas 2020. Each of the field trips, as outlined below, will count as a class meeting. Instruction during each field trip will be intensively experiential, with a focus on directed field-based learning.

The course is required for all students enrolled in Pitt in the Himalayas.

## **COURSE BACKGROUND**

The Himalayan region is characterized by a tremendous range of social and cultural diversity that corresponds to climatic, ecological and geographical variation, as well as local and regional geopolitical factors. Historical change from the emergence of early forms of social complexity centered on chiefs and their forts – from which the regional designation of “Garhwal” takes its name – through the development of kingdoms and larger polities shows the intimate link between geography, environment and socio-political transformation. Similarly, local language patterns, regional religious practices, musical styles, mythology, food culture, sartorial fashion, architectural design, agricultural and transportation technologies and engineering and trade networks have all been shaped by the structure of mountain barriers, bounded valley communities and bracketed lines of communication that follow river systems. Whereas the political economy of the Himalayas has been structured around agricultural production, and the development of elaborate field terrace systems, there have also been subsidiary economies centered on trans-Himalayan trade and pilgrimage as well as pastoral nomadism and transhumance. Since the colonial period, the Himalayas have increasingly become a place for rest, relaxation, tourism and adventure, and this – along with further political transformations since Indian independence -- has led to the rapid development of urban areas.

This course will provide a survey of Himalayan history, society and culture through experiential expeditions that will provide insight on the relationship among nature, the environment and geography.

## **TEXTS and READING ASSIGNMENTS**

Articles and reading assignments will be posted online. Readings are selected to provide background on aspects of Himalayan Geography that are relevant to the field expeditions.

### **Suggested Reading and Source Books**

David Zurick, Julsun Pacheco, Basanta Raj Shrestha, Birendra Bajracharya, (2006) *Illustrated Atlas of the Himalaya*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

William S. Sax. (2002) *Dancing the Self: Personhood and Performance in the Pandav Lila of Garhwal*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- William S. Sax. (1991) *Mountain Goddess: Gender & Politics in a Himalayan Pilgrimage*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Alter, Andrew (2014) *Mountainous Sound Space: Cultural Practice of Music in the Himalayas*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.
- O.P. Kandari and O. P. Gusain (eds.) (2001) *Garhwal Himalaya: Nature, Culture and Society*. Srinagar, UK: Transmedia.
- Vineeta Hoon (1996) *Living on the Move: Bhotiyas of the Kumaon Himalaya*. New Delhi: Sage Publications
- Gerald Berreman. (1993) *Hindus of the Himalayas: Ethnography and Change*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Channa, Subhadra (2013) *Inner and Outer Selves: Gender, Ecology and Cosmology on the Himalayan Border*. Delhi: Oxford.
- O. C. Handa (2001) *Temple Architecture of Western Himalaya: Wooden Temples*. Delhi: Indus Publishing Company.
- Ramchandra Guha (1989) *The Unquiet Woods – Ecological Change & Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Antje Linkenbach (2007) *Forest Futures: Global Representations and Ground Realities in the Himalayas*. New Delhi: Permanent Black.
- Michael Benanav (2015) *Himalaya Bound: An American's Journey with Nomads in North India*. Harper Collins.
- Sir Charles Bell (1931) *The Religion of Tibet*. Asian Educational Services; New edition of 1931 edition (1992).

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND FORMAT**

### **GRADING**

The course may only be taken on a Pass/No-Pass Basis (S/U)

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

**Students** will keep a **journal**. Journal entries will be guided by key questions for each of the expeditions/special programs. Journals will be evaluated on the basis of 1) thoroughness; 2) thoughtfulness; 3) inquisitiveness; 4) clarity of thinking about questions and issues. **NOTE:** Your journal entries will be very useful for you in thinking about and working on writing assignments in other courses. **Journals will be handed in twice: March 2 and April 6<sup>th</sup>.**

## **SCHEDULE**

*(Please see the Master Itinerary for specific dates)*

### **FIELD TRIP – JABERKHET NATURE RESERVE**

Jaberkhet Nature Reserve is an experiment in community-based environmental conservation. It is located 2km from the Hanifl Center. Throughout the semester, JNR will serve as a laboratory for the study of biodiversity and conservation.

### **FIELD TRIP – SONGTSEN LIBRARY**

Songtsend Library is a non-profit institution dedicated to the collection, preservation and dissemination of literary works on various subjects associated with Tibet and Himalaya as well as related to research, publication, academic studies and conferences. It was established by His Holiness the Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche – Head of the Drikung Kagyu order of Tibetan Buddhism, and was Inaugurated on March 6th 2003 by His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama.

### **FIELD TRIP – HAPPY VALLEY, TIBETAN HOMES FOUNDATION**

THF is one of the several institutions established in exile by His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama to provide home-like care, education and an environment that encourages learning of Tibetan language and unique cultural values to Tibetan refugee children. The system of children's upbringing and care are broadly modeled on the Four Basic Principles of SOS Children's Village ethos of having a Mother, Brothers and Sisters, The House and , The Village where children share a bonding sense of family ambience ensuring congenial environment for sustenance and promotion of the Tibetan language and the unique cultural values and traditions.

### **EXPEDITION – MAJKHALI VILLAGE HOME STAY**

Majkhali is a village area near the hill station of Ranikhet, a small mountain city to the east of Mussoorie. Students will pair up to spend five days living with families in Majkhali to learn about gender roles and everyday life in a Himalayan village. The experience will highlight the changing nature of village family patterns and migratory work since many people from Majkhali work in cities and towns outside the village, or go to school in Ranikhet.

### **EXPEDITION – CORBETT NATIONAL PARK, KYARI VILLAGE CAMP**

Jim Corbett National Park, which is a part of the larger Corbett Tiger Reserve, a Project Tiger Reserve lies in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand. The magical landscape of Corbett is well known and fabled for its tiger richness. Established in the year 1936 as Hailey National Park, Corbett has the glory of being India's oldest and most prestigious National Park. It is also being

honored as the place where Project Tiger was first launched in 1973. This unique tiger territory is best known as the father who gave birth of the Project Tiger in India to protect the most endangered species and the Royal of India called Tigers. The park pans over an extent of 520 square kilometers, its whole area comprises of hills, marshy depressions, riverine belts, grasslands and large lake.

#### **FIELD TRIP – SURKANDA DEVI MANDIR**

Surkanda Devi Mandir is a temple dedicated to the mother goddess in one of her many manifestations. The temple is on the top of one of the highest peaks in the first range of the Himalayas, about 35 kms from the Hanifl Center. It is an important pilgrimage site for people living in villages near Mussoorie, especially as a place to go to take a vow, ask for the goddesses blessing or thank her for granting a boon.

#### **FIELDTRIP – RISHIKESH, [PARMARTH NIKETAN](#) AND THE [DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY](#)**

Rishikesh is a pilgrimage city on the banks of the Ganga at the point where the river flows out of the Himalayas. Parmarth Niketan is the largest ashram in Rishikesh, providing its thousands of pilgrims who come from all corners of the Earth with a clean, pure and sacred atmosphere as well as abundant, beautiful gardens. With over 1,000 rooms, the facilities are a blend of modern amenities and traditional, spiritual simplicity. The Divine Life Society is the oldest ashram in Rishikesh. It was established by Swami Sivananda, one of the most important spiritual leaders in the 20<sup>th</sup> century yoga renaissance.

#### **FIELD TRIP – KOLTI VILLAGE**

Kolti is a village in the valley at the base of the north slope of the Landour ridge. The trail down takes your through the old British Cemetery, through a dense chir pine forest, past the pump house used for bringing drinking water to Landour, and then to Kolti. Kolti village has a long connection to Mussoorie through dairy farming and is part of the community-centered conservation effort in Jaberkheth Nature Reserve.

#### **SPECIAL PROGRAM – HIMALAYAN HEALTH CONFERENCE**

This two-day conference will focus on public health problems and the challenges of delivering medical care to people who live in the Himalayas. The conference will bring together leading sociologist, anthropologists, public health researchers and officers, policy makers, and NGO activists who will give presentations on specific topics.

#### **EXPEDITION – GARHWAL ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOL, SAINJI VILLAGE**

Garhwal English Medium School is a unique experiment in rural education. Located in the village of Sainji, GEMS provides students with an English medium education with the goal of

providing them with skills for self-improvement. The school was founded by Kunwar Singh and Lori McFadden, drawing on McFadden's training as an anthropologist and Sings experience as a village leader.

### **FIELD TRIP – PLACES OF WORSHIP IN LANDOUR**

One of the oldest neighborhoods in Mussoorie established by the British, Landour represents the full range of religious diversity in India. Consequently, it is an example of modern, South Asian cosmopolitanism. The field trip explores the range of religious diversity with visits to Hindu and Jain temples, a Sikh gurdwara, a mosque, a Tibetan Buddhist stupa and a Christian church.

### **EXPEDITION – HARKIDUN**

Harkidun is an alpine, glacial meadow located near the headwaters of the Tons river, one of the largest tributaries of the Yamuna. The Tons river valley has a unique history and distinctive cultural traditions. The expedition will explore the high altitude river valley, focusing on the nomadic subsistence economy of buffaloe herders and shepherds, distinctive flora and fauna as well as high-altitude lakes that are part of a unique ecology.

### **EXPEDITION – LADAKH**

Ladakh is in eastern Kashmir and has a cultural heritage closely connected to Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism. The expedition will involve flying into the high-altitude city of Leh, exploring the cultural history of Ladakhi Buddhist monasteries, backpacking on the Tibetan plateau to understand the subsistence economy of farming and to study the flora and fauna of a high-altitude desert zone, and spending several nights in Ladakhi village homes.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY – Sources for further study**

The bibliography attached to this syllabus is extensive and inclusive. Relevant scholarly articles and books are added on a semi regular basis. The goal is to produce a comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography that covers a range of topics, questions and problems that stem from the central focus of the course. The bibliography can guide you in pursuing more specialized topics for further study as well as in expanding your perspective on the interdisciplinary links produced by new research.

1. Alter, A.B., *Negotiating identity in the Garhwali popular cassette industry*. SOUTH ASIA-JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES, 1998. 21(1): p. 109-122.
2. Alter, A., *Garhwali Bagpipes: Syncretic Processes in a North Indian Regional Musical*

- Tradition*. Asian Music, 1997. **1**(29): p. 1-16.
3. Bahadur, J., *Indian Himalayas: an integrated view* 2003, New Delhi: Vigyan Prasar. xxvii, 279 p.
  4. Bergmann, C., et al., *Living in a high mountain border region: the case of the 'Bhotiyas' of the Indo-Chinese border region*. Journal of Mountain Science, 2008. **5**(3): p. 209-217.
  5. Chandola, A., *Folk drumming in the Himalayas: a linguistic approach to music* 1977, New York: AMS Press. xi, 155 p.
  6. Chandrasekhar, K., et al., *Ecological implications of traditional livestock husbandry and associated land use practices: A case study from the trans-Himalaya, India*. JOURNAL OF ARID ENVIRONMENTS, 2006. **69**(2): p. 299-314.
  7. Chaube, S.K., *The Himalayas : profiles of modernisation and adaptation* 1985, New Delhi New York: Sterling Publishers ; distributed by Apt Books. x, 238 p.
  8. Chhetri, P.B., *Sustaining agriculture in Upper Mustang: Challenges and opportunities*. Journal of Sustainable Agriculture, 2006. **27**(4): p. 109-124.
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  13. Farooquee, N.A., T.K. Budal, and R.K. Maikhuri, *Environmental and socio-cultural impacts of river rafting and camping on Ganga in Uttarakhand Himalaya*. Current Science, 2008. **94**(5): p. 587-594.
  14. Farooquee, N.A. and A. Nautiyal, *Traditional knowledge and practices of Bhotiya pastoralists of Kumaon Himalaya: the need for value addition*. International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology, 1999. **6**(1): p. 60-67.
  15. Fiol, S., *From Folk to Popular and Back: Musical Feedback between Studio Recordings and Festival Dance-Songs in Uttarakhand, North India*. ASIAN MUSIC, 2011. **42**(1): p. 24-53.
  16. Gardner, J.S. and A.J. Sinclair, *Evaluation of capacity and policy development for environmental sustainability: A case from Himachal Pradesh, India*. Canadian Journal of Development Studies-Revue Canadienne D Etudes Du Developpement, 2003. **24**(1): p. 137-153.
  17. Good, I.L., J.M. Kenoyer, and R.H. Meadow, *NEW EVIDENCE FOR EARLY SILK IN THE INDUS CIVILIZATION*. Archaeometry, 2009. **51**: p. 457-466.
  18. Heitzman, J., *Middle Towns to Middle Cities in South Asia, 1800-2007*. Journal of Urban History, 2008. **35**(1): p. 15-38.
  19. Kala, C.P., *Indigenous knowledge of Bhotiya tribal community on wool dyeing and its present status in the Garhwal Himalaya, India*. Current Science, 2002. **83**(7): p. 814-817.
  20. Kala, C.P., *Indigenous uses and structure of chir pine forest in Uttaranchal Himalaya, India*. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND WORLD ECOLOGY, 2004. **11**(2): p. 205-210.
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- through Ecotourism: A Case of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, Indian Himalaya. *Journal of Mountain Science*, 2011. **8**(1): p. 87-95.
22. Kala, C.P., *Medicinal plants: Potential for economic development in the state of Uttaranchal, India*. *The International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology*, 2006. **13**(6): p. 492-492.
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