

# ***INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS, CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY: FOCUS ON INDIA***

January-Term Course

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*In 2016, Dr. Michael Dutch participated in a Teaching Interfaith Understanding faculty development seminar, run in partnership between the Council of Independent Colleges and Interfaith Youth Core, and generously funded by the Henry Luce Foundation. For information on future seminars, and to access more resources created by seminar alumni, visit <https://www.ifyc.org/content/ifyc-cic-resources>.*

## **Course Description**

This is an experiential course which will allow students to gain a greater appreciation of the influence of culture on human relations in general and business interactions specifically. Through pre-trip readings, presentations, writings, and discussions, students will be introduced to the cultural differences between and India and the US, building a better understanding of life in India. This understanding will become the foundation for a cultural immersion in country during a 10 day trip to India. Students will experience Indian culture in person and gain insight into the country's business environment. Students will also explore and reflect on the growth of the Indian economy and form conclusions regarding the sustainability of this growth. This is a team intensive experience and students are required to participate in group activities.

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<sup>1</sup> In consultation with the author, this syllabus has been edited for length, removing details particular to the author's context such as office hours and location, absence policies, honor codes, and other instructor-specific (or institution-specific) details.

This class may be used to satisfy:

- ▶ Intercultural Requirement
- ▶ Business and Policy Studies Breadth Requirement
- ▶ An elective course for the International Business Minor
- ▶ Your curiosity about India!

## Course Learning Objectives

### 1. Business and Policy Studies Breadth Course Expectations

- ▶ Explain the research approach taken by the discipline and explain how that research approach can help to answer real world problems. Students will research the impact of cultural differences between the US and India as they influence business and sustainability issues.
- ▶ Identify the structures and processes of organizations. Students will make observations of organizations in India and in reflection pieces that discuss these structures.
- ▶ Perform the specific skills directly applicable in business, sport and/or public service (e.g., group facilitation, conflict resolution, leadership, management of people, organizational analysis, quantitative analysis, oral and written professional presentation skills, motor skills, planning, budgeting, forecasting). Students will lead course discussions concerning culture, trade, and sustainability, and will prepare written reflections on these topics.

### 2. Intercultural Course Expectations

- ▶ Focus on Africa, Asia, Middle East, and/or Latin America. The entire focus of the course is to gain a better understanding of culture and practices in India.
- ▶ Study the peoples of these regions on their own terms and within their state or societal context. Students will be immersed in the culture of India in a 10 day excursion. Understanding of Indian culture will be facilitated by pre trip readings and discussions providing a framework for understanding.
- ▶ Examine the world views of these people primarily from their own perspective (i.e., primary texts such as films, novels, analytic essays should be produced by members of the societies being studied). Students will observe Indian culture in person and reflect on these observations:
  - Students will describe the basic beliefs and practices of the major Indian religions.
  - Students will describe interreligious conflict and cooperation in India.
  - Students will identify laws, policies, and ethical and cultural frameworks that create barriers and opportunities for diverse religious groups.
- ▶ Cultivate understanding of how history and culture influence political, social, and economic development. Students will read and report on selected texts, attend lectures on campus and in country and observe and reflect on the culture, trade and sustainability issues regarding India. Students will reflect on the influence of the religions of India.
- ▶ Illustrate the political, social, economic, and cultural interdependence among the geographic areas of the world. Students will in discussion, reflection and in a research project present

how the interrelatedness of the US and Indian economies.

- ▶ Foster a respect for human diversity. Students will directly experience the Indian culture allowing them to formulate an understanding of the people of India and the US are similar.
- ▶ Examine issues from multiple perspectives. Urbanization, sustainability and business practices of India will be reflected up by students.
- ▶ Stimulate comparative thinking about values. Issues such as quality of work life and sustainability will be analyzed in reflections and in the final paper.

### 3. Specific Content Learning Expectations

- ▶ Explain how cultures differ between the US and India. Students are required to submit reflections, discussions and a final paper.
- ▶ Analyze how business practices differ between the US and India. Students will reflect upon, discuss and write about quality of work life issues.
- ▶ Demonstrate understanding of the impact of exchange rates and their impact on trade. Students will participate in exchange rate discussions and the actual exchanging of funds.
- ▶ Apply problem solving and resilience when issues arise. Student reflections are to record issues encountered and how they were met.
- ▶ Evaluate in country practices in regard to sustainability both in light of the environment and culture impact. The growth of India and its impact will be analyzed by students in the final paper.
- ▶ Experience life in India! Students will tour, eat, and sleep in India!

## Five Academic Principles

*There are Five Principles of a Guilford College Education are a constant in all of your classes. Each professor adapts and interprets these principles to help you see the common threads that run through your liberal arts education. In this class the principles apply as follows:*

1. Innovative, student-centered learning. Students will participate in class discussions and are encouraged to interact with their classmates as well as the instructor. This is planned to be a highly interactive experiential course. Students will to a large extent develop teaching materials for the course and lead discussions.
2. Challenge to engage in creative and critical thinking. Students will study and visit the target country, viewing it through the multiple prisms of culture, examine business practices and sustainability. This examination will foster critical analysis of the practice of the target country and the US.
3. Cultural and global perspectives. This principle is primary focus of the course. By experiencing and reflecting on the differences between the US and the target country, students will recognize cultural differences and evaluate their impact.
4. Values and the ethical dimension of knowledge. Ethical/unethical workplace behavior, ethical decision making, and social responsibility issues will be discussed and analyzed by comparing practices in the US versus the target country.

5. Focus on practical application. Students will apply their management knowledge to analyze cultural differences and sustainability issues facing the target country, solve problems associated with traveling in unfamiliar surroundings and apply resilience concepts in a schedule intense “foreign” setting.

## Assignment Overview

*Details posted on Canvas, our course website.*

1. Pre-Trip Paper 1: My current impression of India. Complete this paper prior to any research on discussion topics.
2. Pre-Trip topical presentation and discussion of leadership
3. Pre-Trip Paper 2: What worries me about this trip?
4. Daily journals on trip
5. Discussion leadership and participation on trip
6. Each international study abroad January Term course requires that students complete a 1000 word reflection based on a prompt supplied by the Study Abroad staff. Finished narratives will be shared with the study abroad director. Students will present these narratives.
7. Final paper on business, culture and sustainability

## Texts and Readings

- ▶ *Enjoying India: The Essential Handbook*, J D Viharini
- ▶ *In Spite of the Gods: The Rise of Modern India*, Edward Luce
- ▶ *Culture Smart India*, Becky Stephen
- ▶ *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: Asia – How to Do Business in 12 Asian Countries*, Teri Morrison and Wayne Conway
- ▶ *Religions of India: A User Friendly and Brief Introduction to Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and the Jains*, Jack Sikora
- ▶ PDFs available online:
  - [Religion in India, “On Wearing Good Lenses”](#)
  - [Environmental and Energy Sustainability: An Approach for India](#) (read the executive summary)
  - [Connecting the Drops, An Indus Basin Roadmap for Cross-Border Water Research, Data Sharing, and Policy Coordination](#)
  - [Hinduism 101: The Basics](#)
  - [What Is Dharma?](#)
  - [Real Questions About Hinduism](#)
  - [Islam in Asia: People, Practices, Traditions](#)
  - [Muslim Indians](#)

## Additional Online Resources and Guides

### Islam in India

- ▶ [Patheos Religion Library on Islam](#): A website introducing the religion of Islam, its history and beliefs.
- ▶ [“History of Islam in India and Islam in Modern India”](#): Dr. Neria H. Hebbar Presents Islam as being primarily introduced in India by forced conversion. He presents the different sects of Islam present in India.
- ▶ [“Islam in India”](#): Another article stating Islam came to India primarily via forced conversion.
- ▶ [“Islam in Asia: People, Practices, Traditions”](#): A brief introduction to Islam in Asia is presented in this PDF.
- ▶ [“How Islam Spread in India”](#): While there were Islam invaders to India this article presents that India conversion to Islam was voluntary and embraced by the population.

### Jainism

- ▶ [Patheos Religion Library on Jainism](#): A website describing Jainism. There are multiple interesting links on this page.

### Bahá'í Tradition

- ▶ [“What Bahá'ís Do: Response to the Call of Bahá'u'lláh”](#)
- ▶ [“What Bahá'ís Believe”](#)

### Sustainability

- ▶ [“New Delhi, India”](#): A brief introduction to sustainability issues in Delhi is provided in Circles of Sustainability
- ▶ [“Delhi is on the Verge of a Sustainability Nightmare”](#): The Huffington Post's introduction to impending sustainability issues in Delhi

### Religious Site Visits

We will use [IFYC-provided material](#) to support the visit of a religious site:

1. As you tour the site, please consider the following questions:
  - ▶ What symbols or images do I see?
  - ▶ What sounds or scents do I notice?
  - ▶ What stands out to me?
  - ▶ What aspects seem familiar? Unfamiliar?
  - ▶ What activities are happening in this space?

2. After the tour, answer the following reflection questions in small groups:
  - ▶ What did you learn about this particular religious community or tradition?
  - ▶ What did you see or hear that was similar to your own tradition? What was different?
  - ▶ What does this tradition teach about service to others and how does this particular community act that out? How is this similar to your tradition? How is it different?
3. At the conclusion of our visit we will gather to review the above questions as a large group. What expectations did you have going into the tour and how did those expectations actually coincide with what was observed?

## COURSE SCHEDULE

*This is a highly accelerated course; all readings should be completed prior to the first class session.*

### On-Campus Orientation Schedule

#### **Day 1:**

- ▶ Welcome, introductions, overview
- ▶ Paper due and discussed: My Current Impression of India
- ▶ What Americans Get Wrong About India: read links on Canvas
- ▶ What Americans Get Wrong About India: [watch video](#)
- ▶ India Matters: Toilet stories, an Overview: [watch video](#)

#### **Day 2:**

- ▶ Culture and Religion
- ▶ Hinduism 101

#### **Day 3:**

- ▶ Watch *Slumdog Millionaire*
- ▶ When viewing the film consider the culture and religion of India. Also observe the depiction of the environment and living conditions in the country.

#### **Day 4:**

- ▶ Reflection paper due: Did the movie show a favorable or unfavorable view of India? What impressions did it give of the culture and religions of India?
- ▶ Sustainability Discussion

#### **Day 5:**

- ▶ Develop Personal Learning Goals
- ▶ Copies of travel documents due

## India Trip Course Schedule

**Day 1:** Depart Greensboro

**Day 2:** Arrive in Delhi, Welcome Dinner

**Day 3:** Delhi City Tour

- ▶ India Gate
- ▶ Indira Gandhi Museum
- ▶ Qutub Minar
- ▶ Humayan's Tomb

**Day 4:** Business visits in Delhi

**Day 5:**

- ▶ Full day tour to Agra
- ▶ Visit to the world famous Taj Mahal

**Day 6:**

- ▶ Morning visit to Lotus Temple
- ▶ Afternoon business visit in Delhi

**Day 7:**

- ▶ Morning cultural visit to Hindu temple
- ▶ Afternoon Delhi local shopping expedition

**Day 8:**

- ▶ Morning guest lecture by social entrepreneur
- ▶ Afternoon business visit in Delhi

**Day 9:**

- ▶ Business visits in Delhi
- ▶ Nodia visit

**Day 10:**

- ▶ Morning visit to the Sarojini Nagar Market
- ▶ Afternoon free time in Delhi

**Day 11:** Return to Greensboro

***Days 12-20:***

- ▶ Work on final papers
- ▶ Work on presentations

***Day 21:***

- ▶ Final papers due
- ▶ Class presentations