

India - Service Learning: Cultures of Tibet & India

June 22 – July 9, 2017, 3 credits (Summer 2017)

The City: Dharamsala, India

Home to the Dalai Lama, a vibrant Indian community, and several thousand Tibetan refugees, the misty highlands of Dharamsala are a stark contrast to the buzzing cities found elsewhere in India. Dharamsala's mountainside perch among the clouds gives this rural locale a moving and mysterial quality. In Dharamsala, you will find two very distinct neighborhoods: Lower Dharamsala and Upper Dharamsala. As the seat of the Tibetan government in exile and the Tibetan community, Upper Dharamsala enjoys more access to resources and services than Lower Dharamsala. In Lower Dharamsala, you will find an Indian community that gets little to no attention from international aid organizations and because of this, lacks some of the most basic social services. You'll work in the lower section alongside organizations whose efforts support children's education and women's rights – a powerful mission in one of the world's most awe-inspiring, historically significant settings.

Our Service Learning Experience:

We will partner with Cross Cultural Solutions, a service organization focused on sustainable volunteering and partnering with the communities they serve. CCS will work with our group to help find suitable volunteer placements working with children, older adults or others in Dharamsala. Depending on your major or career interest, you could gain service learning experience in education, healthcare, social services, women's issues, environmental sustainability and more. During the week, we will spend our mornings working at our volunteer sites. In the afternoons, CCS will plan cultural activities for us, touring the area, learning about Indian and Tibetan cultures, dance and language lessons, cooking classes and more. We live with other volunteers at the CCS house, while they take care of our meals, transportation, security and other needs. On the weekend, we will set out on our own group excursions to visit Tibetan and Hindu shrines and temples in the area or trek through the highlands.



The Course:

The course provides a structured cross-cultural and service learning experience, including pre-departure cultural orientation, in-country immersion experience and culminating project. The theme of the course focuses on service work in refugee communities: how social services are created, maintained and utilized; how cultural groups assimilate yet maintain cultural identities; how poverty impacts the most vulnerable members of society (women, children and older adults); and how service learning can enhance the social justice work of others. This program will have the added benefit of **Global Education Network (GEN)** participation. Kirkwood has invited our GEN partners from Australia, Singapore and Canada to join in the pre-departure and in-country service experience. You will have the opportunity to interact and learn with students from these 3 countries – an amazing multi-cultural learning experience!

Faculty Contact:

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"Being able to study abroad has helped me see the world through a new perspective.

-Kirkwood, service-learning student, 2016

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Tentative Program Itinerary:
 We will have 7 pre-departure meetings every few weeks, beginning in March and ending just prior to our departure in June.

- **Thursday, June 22:** Depart for India (overnight flight +1 day)
- **Saturday, June 24** Arrive in Dharamsala, India
- **Sunday, June 25** Orientation
- **Monday, June 26 – Friday, June 30:** Week 1 of service projects and cultural excursions
- **Friday, June 30 (afternoon) to Sunday – July 2:** Group cultural excursion (not covered by program fees)
- **Monday, July 3 – Friday, July 7 :** Week 2 of service projects and cultural excursions
- **Saturday, July 8:** Return to USA



Estimated Program Fee: \$4,700
\$1,500 Global Advantage Scholarship available!



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| <u>Includes:</u> | <u>Does not include:</u> |
| Airfare | Tuition – 3 summer credits |
| Housing | Passport Fee |
| Most Meals | Personal Expenses |
| Health Insurance | |
| Many Cultural Excursions | |
| Most In-Country Transit | |

Info Session:
 Wednesday, October 5: 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm: Room 205 (Iowa City) Linn 1152 (Cedar Rapids)

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