

WHERE THERE BE DRAGONS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
NAROPA UNIVERSITY PRESENT

## HIMALAYAN STUDIES SEMESTER COURSE SYLLABUS

1. REGIONAL SEMINAR: DIVERSITY IN THE HIMALAYAS
2. CONTEMPLATIVE INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND LEADERSHIP
3. INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT
4. NEPALI LANGUAGE, LEVEL ONE



# WHERE THERE BE DRAGONS

HIMALAYAN STUDIES  
SEMESTER COURSE SYLLABUS

## **REGIONAL SEMINAR: DIVERSITY IN THE HIMALAYAS**

12 WEEKS, 6 HRS/WK, 72 HRS CONTACT TIME PLUS RESEARCH





## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course presents an overview of one of the most ethnically diverse regions of the world. Through selected academic readings, guest lectures, field trips, research method assignments, a village ethnography study, classroom discussions and a service project, students explore the myriad ethnicities and religious traditions that constitute the region and the development issues that they face. Social inequality is looked at from the perspective of the environment, public health, education, human rights, caste, history and the status of women. Students are introduced to the religious traditions that make up the Himalayan region to further understand and appreciate their philosophies and values and how they have evolved and influenced other systems of belief. Students are provided with an extensive introduction to Hinduism and to Mahayana Buddhism, in particular to the Tibetan tradition. As part of the latter, students participate in a ten-day meditation retreat. They are also briefly introduced to the tradition of Shamanism.

## LEARNING GOALS & OUTCOMES

1. Students will understand the historical, cultural, social and political contexts of the region.
2. Students will understand and practice various methods of research.
3. Students will manage and facilitate group discussions and community collaboration events.
4. Students will develop critical thinking and analytical skills.
5. Students will connect, relate and integrate their analysis to their own personal experience and sense of self.
6. Students will understand others in terms of their context, withholding judgment of others and instead using difference as a means for contemplating self.

## METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Course time includes instructor and guest lecturers, community interactions and field visits, student discussions and reflection activities, reading and writing assignments.

## COURSE BOOKS & FILMS

Course Reader and supplements

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation in Course Activities: Participation is the largest qualitative and subjective aspect of this course and weights heavily on final grading. Evaluating student participation will incorporate both a personal evaluation and instructor evaluation and be held to the criteria of the course's learning goals and outcomes.
2. Co-Facilitation: Students must take initiative in coordinating and co-facilitating at least one formal lesson.
3. Quizzes: Quizzes are meant to give a medium for critical dialog and inquiry, not for reciting information. Students will have between 3 and 5 quizzes on specific themes during the course.
4. Journal Entries: Students are required to write 3 short essays that will be posted on the Dragons' E-Bulletin. Students are also required to keep a journal. They will have focused reflective assignments that will be evaluated by instructors. Some journal entries will be posted on the Dragons' E-Bulletin. Journal entries can be creative and include photographs, artifacts, drawings, question lists (good for generating discussion), music and other mixed-media elements. The aim is for these to be concise while also allowing space for students to present their comprehension of a reading, theme or issue.
5. Final Project – hard-copy product and verbal: The final project is the culmination of a student's learning on this course and is a powerful, inspiring and engaging educational experience. It summarizes learning on particular topics and is designed to demonstrate a broad, multi-disciplinary understanding of the theme(s) being presented. It is meant to be a fun, creative opportunity for students to synthesize the learning they experienced during the course. Together with instructors (and other students, when necessary), students will identify one or more course themes on which to prepare a final project, to be presented to the entire program and to additional invitees, if appropriate and possible. The hard-copy product can take a variety of forms, from a traditional essay to a photo narrative or video documentary. Students are encouraged to use artistic strengths and to find a medium that is dynamic and flexible with the rugged nature of the trip. The presentation is 20-30 minutes and includes time for questions from the audience.

## EVALUATION MATRIX

No.	Evaluation Area	Percentage
1	Participation in all lectures, field studies, and course activities, including weekly meetings with instructors to discuss the weekly themes, readings and lectures, using learning plan and formative evaluation.	30%
2	Co-Facilitation	10%
3	Regional Seminar quizzes	10%
4	Journal entries and E-Bulletin posts	20%
5	Final Project – hard-copy product and verbal	30%

## COURSE OUTLINE

### PRE-COURSE

#### Learning Objectives

- o Begin engaging critically with issues pertinent to modern Nepal

#### Required Reading – Section II of the Himalayan Studies Reader – History and Politics

#### Activity: 1000-word essay

After reading Section II in the Himalayan Studies Reader, select and share your thoughts on one of the following themes. Focus on historical details and thoughtful social and political commentary.

- o Democracy in Nepal
- o The Maoist Revolution
- o Ethnic Identity

### UNIT I: CULTURE AND IDENTITY

#### Competencies:

- Define Culture
- Define “Quality of Life”
  - o What does quality of life mean to you?
  - o What are the things that you have identified as necessary for living a high quality of life?
  - o Do you have a high quality of life?
  - o Why or why not?
- Investigate Nepali Ethnicity and the Caste system

#### Readings: Section III in Himalayan Studies Reader

- “What is Culture Anyway,” by John Jan Benstingl, Introduction to the Social Sciences

- "Creating a New Nepal: The Ethnic Dimension," East-West Center Washington
- "Caste and Ethnicity," US Library of Congress
- "Caste Based Discrimination in Nepal," by Krishna B. Bhattachan
- "Nation-Building, Multi-Ethnicity and the Hindu State," (Chapter 14) by Prayag Faj Sharma, Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom, The Netherlands, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997
- "Forgotten People: Thangmi," by Sara Sneiderman and Mark Turin, Studies in Nepali History and Society, Kathmandu, Mandala, 2006

**Activities:**

- Ethnic Group Presentation
- Group Discussion exploring culture and quality of life
- Lecture and Powerpoint by Sumitra Manandhar – "Caste and Ethnicity in Nepal"

## UNIT II: DEVELOPMENT: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DISPARITY

**Competencies:**

- Define Development
- Understand key socio-geographic characteristics of Nepal
- Articulate different worldviews and cultural histories of Nepal's major ethnic groups
- Understand some key reasons why Nepal remains such a poor and divided country
- Articulate major and competing theories on economic development and poverty alleviation
- Globalization in Nepal: when, where, how and why?

**Readings: Section IV in Himalayan Studies Reader**

- "Greater Voice for all Mountain People in the Himalayas," by Michael Kollmair, Policy Priorities for Sustainable Mountain Development, Kathmandu, ICIMOD, 2006
- "Nature of Demand for Water," by Dipak Gyawali, Rivers, Technology and Society – Learning the Lessons of Water Management in Nepal, Nepal, Himal 2003
- "The Cost of Living," by Arundhati Roy, Frontline, Vol. 17 – Issue 3, 2000
- Anil Chitrakar and Babu Raj Shrestha, The Tuki: Lighting up Nepal
- "Economic Strings – The Politics of Foreign Debt" by Nick Buxton, Chapter 5 Dignity and Defiance
- "In Defense of Globalization: "Chapter 5 – Poverty: Enhanced or Diminished?"
- Joseph E. Stiglitz, Globalization and its Discontents: "Chapter 1 – The Promise of Global Institutions" by Jagdish Bhagwati
- UN Millennium Development Goals
- US Dept. of State "Globalization"
- Student Selected Articles for weekly discussion

**Activities:**

- Two part "Introduction to Development" Lesson
- Student led Development discussions on select topics
- Three part lecture series by Anil Chitrakar

## UNIT IV: RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

### Competencies:

- Understand the different philosophical tenets of Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism
- Have an understanding of the primary Hindu deities and the historical/mythological figures of Hindu iconography
- Have a firm grasp of Buddhist terminology, principles and practices
- Have an understanding of the primary Buddhist deities and the historical/mythological figures of Buddhist iconography
- Appreciate the relationship between Hinduism and Buddhism, especially as it is expressed in the Newari community of the Kathmandu Valley
- Have an understanding of the role of the teacher, the student and monastic/ascetic life in the Buddhist and Hindu traditions

### Readings: Section VI in Himalayan Studies Reader

- Hinduism from Religions in Nepal  
“Hindus and Hinduism”  
“Basic Principles of Hinduism”  
“Some Features of Hinduism”  
“Religious Customs, Rituals and Festivals of Nepalese Hindus”  
“Hinduism in Nepal: Pros and Cons”
- Calasso, Roberto. Ka: Stories of the Mind and Gods of India “Chapter VI,” New York, Alfred A Knopf, Inc., 1998
- Saraswati, Swami Satyandanada. Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha “Introduction to Yoga,” Bihar, India, Yoga Publication Trust, 1996
- Khadro, Ven Sangye. Selections from “Introductory Course Readings and Materials” and How to Meditate. Root Institute.
- Rahula, Walpola. What the Buddha Taught “The Buddhist Attitude of Mind (chapter 1),” New York, Grove Press, 1974.
- The Heart Sutra
- Nhat Hanh, Thich. “Breathe! You Are Alive,” from Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life. Bantam Books 1992.
- Shakya Bajra Raj. “Characteristics of Buddhist Culture of Nepal Mandal,” Summary of presentation during the Conference on the Buddhist Heritage of Nepal Mandal in 1998.
- Raj Shakya, Bajra and Bajracharya, Shanta Harsa. “Newar Buddhist Culture: A Concept,” Summary of presentation during the Newar Buddhist Culture Preservation seminar in 1993

### Activities:

- Religion vs. Spirituality Discussion
- Ten day Tibetan Buddhist Meditation retreat in the Gelugpa tradition
- Three day Ashram stay with a community of Shivites
- Hindu and Buddhist deity presentations
- Puja Participant Observation

## UNIT V: HUMAN RIGHTS/INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

### Competencies:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights: who follows it, who doesn't and why?
- Familiarity with at least one contemporary human rights issue in Nepal.

### Readings:

- Jeffrey Sachs *The End of Poverty*, "Chapter 18 – Our Generation's Challenge"
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (United Nation) FC
- Universal Truths (Amartya Sen) (Supplement) FC
- Muhammad Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, "A Preview of Creating a World Without Poverty"





# WHERE THERE BE DRAGONS

HIMALAYA SEMESTER  
COURSE SYLLABUS

**CONTEMPLATIVE INTERCULTURAL  
DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP:**

**EXPLORING HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS  
TO SELF, COMMUNITY AND  
THE NATURAL WORLD**

12 WEEKS, 6 HRS/WEEK, 72 CONTACT HOURS





## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The process of understanding self in relation to others in our globalized world is essential in the 21st century. The purpose of this course is to carefully examine who we are through the experience of living, learning and engaging in the Himalayan region. Through both guided and organic processes, students examine global citizenship, develop effective intercultural and interpersonal communication skills and explore the depths of their internal landscape in relationship to the outside world. From this wellspring of inner knowing, students discover their own authentic leadership capabilities and strengths as a responsible and curious citizen of the globe.

## LEARNING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Students completing this course will:

1. Identify, understand and connect with diverse worldviews and lifestyles.
2. Come to see oneself as interconnected within the global context and work to develop empathy and compassion.
3. Be able to identify one's wants, needs and emotions and express one's self authentically.
4. Have an ability to effectively communicate, give and receive feedback and manage conflict within the group context and local relationships.
5. Identify, value and embody one's leadership style.
6. Decide to become a leader.

## METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Class time will be broken into 70% participating in weekly discussions and experiential activities and 30% individual contemplative practices.

## COURSE BOOKS

Where There Be Dragons Core Reader and Workbook

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation in All Course Activities: Participation is the largest qualitative and subjective aspect of this course and weights heavily our final grading. Evaluating student participation will incorporate both a personal evaluation and instructor evaluation and be held to the criteria of the course's learning goals and outcomes.
2. Completion of All Assignments and Quizzes: Students are expected to complete all assigned readings, journal entries, reflective papers and quizzes. Some journal entries and reflective papers will be posted on the Dragons' E-Bulletin. The written assignments can be creative and include photographs, artifacts, drawings, question lists (good for generating discussion), music and other elements. The aim is for these to be concise while also allowing space for students to present their comprehension of a reading, theme or issue. All assignments are intended to provide a medium for critical dialog and inquiry, not for reciting information.
3. Leadership Activities: Each student is expected to participate in weekly leadership roles, to organize and manage a group excursion and to co-facilitate at least one formal lesson. All of these activities will be followed by a verbal self-evaluation, as well as verbal feedback from classmates.
4. Culminating Project: The final project is the culmination of a student's learning on this course and is a powerful, inspiring and engaging educational experience. They are meant to be a fun, creative opportunity for students to synthesize their learning. Together with instructors (and other students, when necessary), students will prepare a final 20-40 minute ritual or activity for the group for the final transference phase. This ritual will reflect the three core values of Global Citizenship, Awareness of Self and Leadership and demonstrate how their gained knowledge will be transferred home. An outline and description of the ritual will be the final entry of the student's course "field journal," which will be handed in for final assessment.
5. Self Evaluation: Students will sit with the instructor team at mid-course and at course end to self-evaluate their performance on the course.

## EVALUATION MATRIX

No.	Evaluation Area	Percentage
1.	Participation in all program components, activities and individual/course goal setting	30%
2.	Participation in weekly check-ins with advisor based on outlined individual and course goals (Mid-Course 5%, End-Course 5%)	15%
3.	Completion of all readings and assignments – journal entries, reflective papers, self assessments	25%
4.	Leader of the week, excursion leader, discussion co-facilitator (5% each)	15%
5.	Culminating Project	15%

## COURSE OUTLINE

### UNIT 1: PREPARATION AND SKILLS ACQUISITION PHASE – PRE-COURSE THROUGH WEEK 3

#### Readings

- *Why We Travel*, Pico Iyer
- *Body Ritual Among the Nacirema*, Horace Miner
- *Siddhartha*, Selections, Herman Hesse
- *The Wellspring of the Heart*, Jack Kornfield
- *The Values Americans Live By*, L. Robert Kohls
- *The Tao of Leadership*, John Heider

#### Assignments/Activities:

- Pre-course goal setting worksheet
- One reflection paper
- Weekly journal entries
- Group contract/articulated semester goals
- Scavenger Hunt with 30 minute group presentation
- Letter to Self (given back at end of semester)
- Workshop on the Hero's Quest and Self Directed Leadership
- Leader of the Week (Identification of individual and group goals)
- Workshop on Decision Making
- Ethnography workshop

### UNIT 2: EXPERIENCE AND PRACTICING PHASE – WEEK 4 TO WEEK 9

#### Readings:

- *To Hell with Good Intentions*, Ivan Illich

- *Nonviolent Communication: A language of Life*, Marshall Rosenberg

**Assignments/Activities:**

- Three reflective journal posts
- Weekly journal entries
- Mid-course self and program evaluation
- Co-Facilitate student led group excursion
- Co-Facilitate group discussion
- Participant Observation
- Community based learning experience
- Lecture series attendance
- Workshop on Non-Violent Communication
- One reflection paper

**UNIT 3: EXPEDITION AND TRANSFERENCE PHASE— WEEK 10 TO WEEK 13**

**Readings:**

- *Reflections on the Art of Living: A Joseph Campbell Companion*, Selections
- *On Giving*, Kahlil Gibran
- *Tao Mentoring*, Jerry Lynch

**Assignments/Activities:**

- Participation in Transference Workshops
- Final Reflection Paper
- Course end self and program evaluation
- Letter to Future Self (mailed at a later date!)
- Inform and implement Expedition & Transference Phases.
- Coordinate final ceremony



# WHERE THERE BE DRAGONS

CHINA SOUTH OF THE CLOUDS  
SEMESTER COURSE SYLLABUS

## **INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT**

6 WEEKS, 10 HRS/WEEK, 60 HRS CONTACT TIME







## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Independent Study Project (ISP) offers each student the opportunity to conduct in-depth study on a subject of his or her choice. Students will be matched with two ISP Advisors; a program instructor who has experience and knowledge relevant to the student's ISP topic as well as a member of the local community with whom the student will study or apprentice. An ISP may involve either an academic focus of inquiry, or learning a skill which would require an apprenticeship. Two examples have been provided to help illustrate what this might look like.

1: A student may choose to study traditional Tibetan Thangka painting, in which they would be paired with a local artist and teacher to learn in the traditional manner. In addition to learning the technique, this student would be expected to learn about the symbolism of the complex iconography of this art form. The final presentation might take the form of an exhibition of drawings or paintings from different stages of study and an explanation of the process and preparation of materials as well as the significance of the image or deity within the world of Tibetan Buddhism.

2: A student might research the experience of Tibetan refugees in Nepal. Through a translator, this student would conduct interviews with Tibetans who have fled from Tibet and others who were born in exile. They would also visit local Tibetan Refugee Reception Centers to speak with administrators, and read accounts of events in Tibet which gave rise to so many Tibetans deciding to escape into exile. This student might also spend time interviewing members of the local chapter of the Tibetan Youth Congress, or representatives of the Tibetan Government in Exile. The written report would likely include a historical account of the Chinese occupation of Tibet, the establishment of Tibetan settlements in exile, and the notable differences in their lives from those who continue to live in Tibet.

## LEARNING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Students completing this course will:

1. Get excited about a particular subject!
2. Be ready to engage in and connect with a local mentor.
3. Create an individual learning plan, including methods of research, timeline and goals.
4. Conduct research using appropriate research methods.
5. Have a strong working knowledge of and be able to present on the particular topic.

## METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Class time will be broken down into 55% local mentorship, 35% independent research and/or practice and 10% advisor mentorship.

## COURSE BOOKS

To Be Determined by Student and Faculty Advisor.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation in Course Activities: Participation is the largest qualitative and subjective aspect of this course and weights heavily on final grading. Evaluating student participation will incorporate both a personal evaluation and faculty evaluation and be held to the criteria of the course's learning goals and outcomes.
2. Written Paper: The entire progression of completing the final written paper contributes to the final paper grade. This includes submitting a proposal, paper outline, rough draft with peer edits, and the final paper. The final paper should be 7-10 pages if it is not researched based. If researched based, paper length is 12-15 pages.
3. Oral Presentation: Depending upon the nature of ISP, presentations should be a minimum of 30minutes. Presentations should introduce your ISP experience, methods used and your learning outcomes. Presentations should model experiential methods, fully engaging your audience.

## EVALUATION MATRIX

No.	Evaluation Area	Percentage
1.	Participation in meetings with ISP mentor and ISP work (min. 10 hrs/wk)	40%
2.	Written paper: proposal, paper outline, rough draft, and final paper	40%
3.	Oral presentation	20%

# COURSE OUTLINE

## UNIT 1: IDENTIFYING YOUR TOPIC OF INTEREST

### Competency:

- Identify and articulate research topic and thesis statement

### Assignment:

- ISP Shopping – visit a few mentors in your interest area
- Begin one-on-one internship with your mentor
- Complete ISP proposal

## UNIT 2: FIELD WORK

### Competencies:

- Culturally sensitive engagement in a learning environment with a local mentor

### Readings:

- Self identified readings that support research topic
- Advisor identified readings that support research topic

### Assignment:

- Working a minimum of 10 hours/week with mentor toward articulated research goals
- Keeping accurate record of ISP hours

## UNIT 3: RESEARCH METHOD ASSIGNMENTS

### Competencies:

- Engage with local community members to gather information pertinent to ISP topic of study

### Readings:

- Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide – Module 2 Participant Observation
- A Guide to Field Research – Semi-Structured Interview

**Assignments:**

- Participant Observation
- Semi-Structure Interview
- Photographic/Auditory Journal

**UNIT 4: WORKING WITH ISP ADVISOR – FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT****Competencies:**

- Communication - self assessment and ISP advisor assessment

**Assignments:**

- Keeping weekly log of ISP activity and hours
- Meeting for a minimum of 1 hour a week with ISP advisor to address details of project
- Outline of Final Paper – Week 4
- Rough Draft of Final Paper – Week 5
- Outline of Final 30-minute Presentation – Week 5

**UNIT 5: FINAL PAPER & 30-MINUTE PRESENTATION-SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT****Competencies:**

- Writing Skills demonstrated in a 7-10 page paper
- Oral Skills demonstrated in a 30 minute presentation

**Assignments:**

- Final 7-10 page paper
- Final 30 minute oral presentation



# WHERE THERE BE DRAGONS

HIMALAYA SEMESTER  
COURSE SYLLABUS

## NEPALI LANGUAGE, LEVEL ONE

8 WEEKS, 12 HRS/WEEK, 96 HRS CONTACT TIME





## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide a foundation in conversational Nepali for students with no previous knowledge of the language. Language proficiency is an essential aspect of the program and daily language classes with a Nepali instructor ensure that students are provided with the language skills needed to engage more deeply with the communities in which they are living and learning. With a principal focus on conversational Nepali and practical language skills, the language lessons presented throughout the semester also include grammar, vocabulary development, and the history of the language. Students also gain a basic understanding and utility of the Nepali script (Devanagari script). Students are tested regularly and a written and/or oral exam is required at the conclusion of the course.

## LEARNING GOALS & OUTCOMES

Students completing this course will:

1. Become competent with the Devanagari script – able to read and write basic text
2. Be able to converse effectively in rudimentary Nepali, showing a sound understanding of the grammatical structure of the language as well as a good working vocabulary.
3. Be able to use Nepali confidently to order food, ask and give directions, count, bargain for and purchase goods, tell time, discuss family, hobbies, likes and dislikes, book hotel rooms and arrange transportation.
4. Understand the history and linguistic development of Nepali language

## METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Class time will be broken into 60% classroom instruction, 30% experiential activities and 10% homework.

## EVALUATION MATRIX

Students will be expected to attend all classes given by instructors, to actively participate in devinagari script classes, complete a series of experiential activities that will involve practicing language skills in real-life situations in the local community, complete daily homework assignments, and complete a written and/or oral mid-course and final course exam.

No.	Evaluation Area	Percentage
1.	Participation in classes and activities in the local community	40%
2.	Homework assignments and weekly quizzes	15%
3.	Mid-Course Oral and Written Exam	20%
4.	Final Oral and Written Examination	25%