

Study Abroad India: Documentary Production and Cultural Studies

Film 3202 (code 43813) (4 hours; 3 credits), International Documentary Production

TVRA 4849 (code 3513) Undergraduate Study Abroad India

TVRA 7749x (code 3421) Graduate Study Abroad India

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This 21 day course will offer a meaningful combination of lectures, field trips, production work and sightseeing. Students will learn about South Indian cultures, religions, history and cinema, with excursions to major cultural, historical and religious sights.

Hyderabad's Ramoji Film City and Mahendra Ecole Central will provide the setting for studying documentary production within a South Indian context. Through a series of classroom lectures and screenings students will receive a comprehensive introduction to South Indian cinema, with an emphasis on documentary. CUNY students will work collaboratively with Mahendra Ecole Central students on the preproduction, production and post production of short documentary projects.

The production component of the course will involve on-going collaboration between CUNY students and Mahendra Ecole Centrale/Ramoji Film City students. This will include: tech sessions, writing assignments, group exercises, research and development of a documentary topic, and the production and post production of that documentary. Students with little or no background in documentary production will learn some of the basic technical skills required to operate digital cameras, sound equipment, as well as how to structure a short documentary. All students will be expected to participate as crew members. Those with a preference for non-technical crew positions will be able to work as: writers, script supervisors, production coordinators and assistants.

CUNY students will travel to the Dindigul District, including Madurai and Ambathurai. In the heart of South India's rural district, students will visit the Gandhigram Institutions to learn about street theater and the use of traditional creative formats as a way of providing village audiences' with information about health, environmental issues, and education.

Throughout this 21 day program, students will learn about the role culture, religion, and social structure play in media preproduction, production and post production. Students will learn the importance of cultural sensitivity when considering how we depict poverty and economic development. Since we will be based in both urban and rural regions of India, the concerns of urban and rural development will be integrated in all course material, field trips and lectures.

Course Objectives:

- Students will learn the fundamentals of documentary production including: research and development, production and post production.
- Students will collaborate with Indian media production students on all aspects of pre-production, production and post production. Students will learn the 4-C's: communicate, create, connect and collaborate.
- Students will reflect on their daily experiences through a final essay due at the end of the course.
- Students will gain an appreciation of the diversity of Indian cinemas, cultures and religions.
- Students will visit important historical sites in South India, including: Hyderabad, Madurai, Meenakshi Temple and the Gandhigram Institutions.
- Students will visit the Gandhigram Institute of Rural Health and Family Welfare, and learn about creative approaches to rural education and community outreach through digital media shows, street theater, and puppetry.
- Students will visit rural villages in the Dindigul District, and gain an understanding of urban vs. rural India.

Course syllabus and itinerary:

Pre-Departure Orientation Program: November 19th. Time: TBD
Brooklyn College West End Building, 2nd Floor, Room 230

Dec 30th:

Depart JFK

Dec 31

Arrive Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, South India

Jan 1

Welcome reception/ sightseeing Hyderabad and Ramoji Film City

Jan 2

Introductions and Welcome - Professors Hariharan and Danto

11:15 - 12:45 - Lecture: Indian Cinema and Its Unique Aesthetics - Professor Hariharan

12:45 - 1:45 - Lunch at Mahendra Ecole Central

1:45 - 3PM - Introduction to the Practical Aspects of Videography

3:15 - 5PM - Introduction to Sound Recording and Sound Mixing

Evening - Music/Dance Performance

Jan 3

9:30 - 11AM - Lecture: Indian Cinema and Reflections of Social Issues

11:15 - 12:45 - Introduction to Indian Documentary Films Through An Editors POV

12:45 - 1:45 - Lunch at Mahendra Ecole

1:45 - 3PM - Visit to Ramoji Film City and Studio

4PM - Screening of Indian film

Jan 4th

9:30AM - 11:AM - Lecture: Documentary Realism of Satyajit Ray
11:15 - 12:45 - Documentary topics - Professor A. Danto
12:45 - 1:45 - Lunch
1:45 - 5PM - Group meetings, Lecture on Crew Collaboration, Crew Assignments, and Interpersonal Challenges - Professor Danto and Professor Hariharan
Evening: Group meetings and planning for location visits

Jan 5th

9 - 1PM - Location scouting and pre-interviews
1 - 2 Lunch at Mahendra
2 - 5 Group meetings and script development - draft of script should be completed
Evening: Script review with faculty, script approvals, prep for shooting

Jan 6th

6AM - Crews meet at the academy and check out equipment
1-2PM - Return to the Mahendra Ecole for lunch
2-5PM - Continue production
6PM Return equipment

Jan 7

Production continued

Jan 8

Post Production

Jan 9

Post Production

Jan 10

Post Production/ Sightseeing

Jan11

Post Production

Jan 12

Final Screening and Reception

Jan13

Depart for Madurai, Tamil Nadu

Jan 14

Meenakshi Temple and the Old City, Monkey Temple Visit

Jan15

Pongal Village Visit/ Cultural Troupe Performance

Jan16

Gandhigram Institutions

Jan 17

Depart for Chennai
Evening sightseeing

Jan 18

Depart for New York PM

Jan 19

Arrive NYC

Grades and Assignments:

- Grades will be based on student participation in all class lectures, production work, and field trips.
- All students are required to attend required course lectures and all guided sightseeing tours.
- All students are required to participate in a documentary project and to reflect on their preproduction, production and post production experience in a final essay.
- Final Essay 40%
- Classroom Lectures 20%
- Documentary Production Work 40%

Required Reading:

Huyler, Stephen *MEETING GOD* Yale University Press

Rabiger, Michael *DIRECTING THE DOCUMENTARY* (photocopies to be distributed during second orientation program)

Recommended Reading:

Aitken, Ian *FILM AND REFORM: JOHN GRIERSON AND THE DOCUMENTARY FILM MOVEMENT*, London: Routledge, 1990.

Aufderheide, Patricia *THE CAMERA AS CONSCIENCE: HOW SOCIAL ISSUES INSPIRE MOVING DOCUMENTARIES* Chronicle of Higher Education v.45, n9, October 23, 1998.

Blank, Jonah. *ARROW OF THE BLUE-SKINNED GOD: RETRACING THE RAMAYANA THROUGH INDIA* (NY: Doubleday, 1992)

The writer Jonah Blank reports on his candid conversations with Indians from many walks of life, interweaving brief themes from the Ramayana epic which is well known and revered today. His itinerary follows locations of major episodes in the epic

Bumiller, Elisabeth. *MAY YOU BE THE MOTHER OF A HUNDRED SONS: A JOURNEY AMONG THE WOMEN OF INDIA* (NY: Ballantine, 1991)

Well worth reading prior to the trip. Elisabeth Bumiller is a journalist, frequently on CNN and other news shows as an invited commentator. This book is a fascinating and very thorough series of interviews with women throughout India. It is highly informative and will give you a strong understanding of the lives of women in India - in particular, the women of rural India.

Curran, Sheila, *DOCUMENTARY STORYTELLING FOR VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS*, Focal Press 2004 A good introductory textbook on the fundamentals of documentary story structure.

Narayan, R. K. *THE BACHELOR OF ARTS* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1980)
and/or see any of his additional novels set in the fictive south Indian
village of Malgudi, including *THE GUIDE*; *THE FINANCIAL EXPERT*; *PAINTER OF
SIGNS*; *MAN-EATER OF MALGUDI*; *THE DARK ROOM*.
In all of his Chekovian novels, Narayan's lively characters depict
traditional culture and values. All are fun to read.

Garcia, Carol Henderson. *CULTURE AND CUSTOMS OF INDIA*(Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002)

The author compares numerous aspects of life in India with those of Western countries. She also covers some topics that are particular to India, such as wearing saris and understanding the history of the caste system. While India is composed of hundreds of cultures and languages, Garcia addresses as broad a range as possible in a travel-sized book.

Kasbekar, Asha. *POP CULTURE INDIA!: MEDIA, ARTS, AND LIFESTYLE* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006)

Asha Kasbekar discusses what is popular in India today, along with its social and economic implications

Recommended films to see before leaving for India:

The Apu Trilogy directed by Satyajit Ray, 1959.
Includes 3 titles: Pather Panchali, Aparajito, The World of Apu

Gandhi directed by Richard Attenborough, 1982.
feature film c. 190 minutes
film details: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gandhi_%28film%29

The Namesake directed by Mira Nair, 2006.

Lagaan directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, 2001

Water directed by Deepa Mehta, 2006.

Born Into Brothels 2004.
A documentary film by Ross Kauffman and Zana Briski

Additional films:

1. Man of Aran, directed by Robert Flaherty

2. Land Without Bread,	directed by Luis Bunuel
3. Song of Ceylon,	directed by Basil Wright
4. All My Babies,	directed by George Stoney
5. The River	directed by Pare Lorentz
6. Titicut Follies,	directed by Fred Wiseman
7. High School	directed by Fred Wiseman
8. Waiting for Fidel	directed by Michael Rubbo
9. Sad Song of Yellow Skin	directed by Michael Rubbo
10. Have You Killed a Jap Today?	directed by U.S. Army
11. Chronicle of a Summer	directed by Jean Rouch
12. Drifters,	directed by John Grierson
13. Night Mail,	directed by Harry Watt
14. Power and the Land	directed by Joris Ivens
15. Window Water Baby Moving	directed by Stan Brakhage
16. Olympia I and II	directed by Leni Riefenstahl
17. Man With a Movie Camera,	directed by Dziga Vertov
18. Tarnation	directed by Michael Caoutte
19. Four Little Girls	directed by Spike Lee
20. The Civil War Series	directed by Ken Burns
21. Hoop Dreams	directed by Steve James
22. Bowling For Columbine	directed by Michael Moore
23. Farenheit 911	directed by Michael Moore
24. Best Boy	directed by Ira Wohl
25. 7 Up; 28 Up	directed by Michael Apted
26. Unzipped	directed by Douglas Keeve
27. Grey Gardens	directed by the Maysles Brothers
28. Land of the Deaf, To Be and To Have	directed by Nicholas Philibert

Web pages and links:

These links provide important background on cultural and artistic traditions, social customs and religious practices. Historical summaries and maps are also included for your reference.

Cultural and social customs

<http://www.destinationsindia.com/india/society-culture.html>

http://www.indianchild.com/caste_system_in_india.htm

http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761565041/Caste_social.html

http://encarta.msn.com/sidebar_631522211/customs_of_india.html

General history of India

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107629.html>

<http://www.geographia.com/india/india02.htm>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/country_profiles/1155813.stm

Independence movement

<http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/modern-history/indian-independence.html>

Gandhi

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/gandhi_mohandas.shtml

http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761575565_2/Gandhi.html

<http://www.nuvs.com/ashram/gallery/index.html>

Trailer of film "Gandhi"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVwCeGxTN-A>

Gandhi images and archival audio recording of speeches

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSWzFz-tGrM&feature=related>

Encyclopedia Britannica Documentary of Gandhi

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3377542120612100235&hl=en>

Nehru

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/nehru_jawaharlal.shtml

Ambedkar, leader of the dalit("untouchable") uplift movement

<http://www.answers.com/topic/bhimrao-ramji-ambedkar>

<http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/mmt/ambedkar/web/index.html>

Indian religions

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/history/history_1.shtml

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/history/history_2.shtml

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/history/history_3.shtml

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/history/history_4.shtml

Introduction to each major religion

<http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-religions/hinduism.html>

<http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-religions/buddhism.html>

<http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-religions/islam.html>

<http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-religions/sikhism.html>

<http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-religions/jainism.html>

Hindu worship practices

(click on "next" to see all pages, and see videos)

<http://www.asia.si.edu/pujaonline/puja/background.html>

<http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-pilgrimage/index.html>

Hindu gods and goddesses

<http://www.indiantemples.com/beliefs/daksha.htm>

<http://www.indiantemples.com/Ganga/ganga.html>

<http://www.hinduwebsite.com/siva/nataraja.asp>

http://www.indianchild.com/hindu_goddesses.htm

Hindu temples

http://www.indianchild.com/temples_in_india1.htm

http://www.indiantemples.com/Tamilnadu/tamilnatu_hist.html

<http://www.indiantemples.com/Tamilnadu/Madurai/madurai.htm>

Music and dance of South India

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/world/onyourstreet/thestreet/india/india_listen.shtml

http://www.musicindiaonline.com/music/carnatic_instrumental/

<http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-dance/classical/bharatnatyam.html>

<http://www.bharatonline.com/tamilnadu/music-dance.html>

Tamilnadu

<http://www.cs.utk.edu/~siddhart/tamilnadu/index.html>

Ayurveda

<http://www.holisticonline.com/ayurveda/ayv-basis.htm>

Cuisine

http://www.food-india.com/indianCuisine/1001_1050/1003_food_tour_india.htm

Women's issues and social services

http://www.indianchild.com/womens_health_india.htm

Facts and figures

<http://www.destinationsindia.com/india/fast-facts.html>

<http://www.destinationsindia.com/india/economy-infrastructure.html>

Maps and demographics

India (states): (click at bottom to view older map; PRINT OUT older map)

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/india/india-political-map.htm>

major languages: (scroll down to see map)

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/india/indianlanguages.htm>

religious places:

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/india/religious-places.htm>

literacy rates:

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/census2001/literacyrate.htm>

sex ratios:

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/census2001/sexratio/sexratio-india.htm>

population density:

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/census2001/population/population-india.htm>

<http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/IndianEtiquette.html>

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/india-country-profile.html>