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Study Abroad Office

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Nepal Study Abroad

Presents and Futures of Climate Change in Mustang, Nepal

Program Description

This four week summer abroad will take place in the Himalayas of Nepal, where it will examine the unfolding realities of climate crisis in the small village of Lubrak.

In Lubrak lives are transformed in the village as the village's river, swollen by unusually heavy monsoon rains and glacial melt, washes away fields and buries homes in layers of thick sediment. We will see how this slow disaster is tied to environmental justice, development, conservation, indigenous rights, and demographic and cultural changes.

What are the lived realities of climate change in places where people still depend on the land to live? How do people adapt? How is dramatic change shifting the ways that people live in and with the land? Do these changes perpetuate injustice, or reduce it? These are some of the primary questions we'll examine during the abroad. We'll do this through coursework which includes drawing (no previous experience needed) and examinations of environmental justice. At the same time, we'll explore the village, walk across its territory, and talk to its people—not just to learn about the difficulties facing the village, but also about how the community is already doing the work of making a new future.

This isn't just about Lubrak: knowing the realities of this change elsewhere can help us to ask how we can engage with climate change in our own society, now.

This program is open to all students and all majors.



Applications

(see Application Instructions on page 4 for more information)

Applications can be found on the Study Abroad website: [Application Process](#), or directly from this link: bit.ly/study-abroad-app-fall2023

Completed applications must be submitted to the Principia Study Abroad Office no later than **5:00 pm** on **Wednesday of Week 4, September 20, 2023**.

No late or incomplete applications will be accepted.

Program Staff

Dane Carlson is a landscape designer and researcher. His practice REALMS focuses on design for climate justice in the Nepali Himalaya. His work has been featured in Landscape Research Journal, the Journal of Landscape Architecture, Thresholds Journal, and other publications.

Dr. Nick Johnson is an assistant professor of Sustainability where he teaches from scientific and economic perspectives. His research is primarily in energy engineering and economics. During AY 2022-23, Nick worked as an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow in the Office of Policy at the US Department of Energy.

Jenna Fisher (RC) is a journalist and assistant professor of Mass Communications. She's traveled extensively throughout Asia including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, India, Pakistan and China. Growing up she spent summers in the Pennsylvania mountains at Crystal Lake Camps and holds a special place in her heart for mountains. She loves being outdoors and learning new things and going on adventures to new places.

Preliminary Program Itinerary

The program will run from approximately May 12 to June 8, 2024.

Part 1: Travel to Mustang. En route to the village, we'll travel briefly through the cities of Kathmandu and Pokhara.

Part 2: Lubrak village. Here, we'll focus on getting to know the village and the issues it's facing. This includes discussions with villagers, learning about ongoing flooding, and certainly lots of walking.

Part 3: Exploring around Lubrak. Beyond the village, we'll take several short trips to the high rangelands and adjacent valley of Muktinath. These trips will help us to understand how the village is connected to the larger territory.

Part 4: Travel home.

Academics

A total of **8** semester hours of credit will be earned with this program: 3 SH during Spring 2024, 4 SH during Summer 2024, and 1 SH during Fall 2024. Final grades for all courses will be determined by the program faculty.

SPRING SEMESTER 2024

SPST 285: Country Studies: Nepal and Mustang

SH: 3 Attribute: None

An examination of issues in Nepal and Mustang focused on discussion of 1) program-relevant issues and 2) preparation for being in the field. This course will first examine historical trajectories of change, patterns of emerging adaptation, and development agendas. Following an introduction to these broader narratives, the course will explore the specific nature of landscape in Mustang. This includes patterns of historical adaptation and settlement movement, agriculture and herding practices, and other topics. We will then zoom in to an in-depth examination of the specifics of climate crisis in a Himalayan village: Lubrak. The course will also prepare students for their time in Mustang through introductions to cultural norms, village life, language, program expectations, and hiking/trekking on and around the College campus. A hiking test will be included.

SUMMER BREAK 2024

ARTS 330: Studio Seminar: Drawing Complexity & Change

SH: 2 Attribute: None

A course focused on the use of representational tools to examine shifts across space and time using 2D media in the field. The central subject of inquiry examined through representation will be the complex, systematic, relational impacts of climate change on life in the villages of Mustang. Rather than production of "final" materials, this course emphasizes making open-ended, messy, in-progress work on site. Work will be drawn from student-led conversations with people on the ground, observations of landscape change, and knowledge drawn from literature.

SUS 280: Topics in Sustainability: Climate Justice

SH: 2 Attribute: None

Environmental justice is a framework for analyzing and addressing the inequalities in environmental conditions amongst communities of different race, ethnicity, national origin, culture, education level, and economic class. Environmental justice is both a mode of scholarship and a social movement. This course explores the history of environmental justice in Nepal and elsewhere, the ideas and theories of environmental justice scholarship, and the application of these concepts in Nepal and Mustang to issues of water and air quality, climate change, indigenous and low-caste community rights, and access to resources.

FALL SEMESTER 2024

SPST 281: Reentry Seminar: Nepal - Facing Climate Change

SH: 1 Attribute: None

This course, building on the group's experience in Mustang, will challenge students to determine how to use their experience understanding and problematizing the realities of climate change across different contexts—particularly the American Midwest. A semester-long journal will provide a medium through which to reflect on how this experience translates across space and time. Students will share their experiences to the College through a community presentation.

Selection

Selection will take place during fall semester, 2023. Each applicant will be interviewed by the program faculty and RC. Equal consideration will be given to all applications submitted by the application due date. See the [Study Abroad Student Selection & Eligibility Criteria](#) for additional student eligibility criteria.

The Principia Abroad Office will notify each applicant at the end of Week 8, fall semester 2023, regarding the decision on his/her application. Those eligible but not accepted in the initial selection process may be placed on a waiting list.

Participation in this program could be denied any accepted student whose grades put her or him on academic warning or academic probation. Students may also be removed from the program if not in good standing with regard to the *Principia Conduct Standards* or the [Study Abroad Student Code of Conduct](#).

Cost

The cost of this abroad program will be the same as tuition for 4 semester hours, \$300 a week for room and board (\$1,200 for this break program), airfare up to \$1,500, and a \$150 study abroad fee.

The following expenses will be **INCLUDED** in the program: all accommodations and meals (room and board) and transportation; academic instruction and lectures; admission to scheduled sites, museums, and cultural activities planned as part of the program; student travel insurance; and administrative fees.

Costs **NOT INCLUDED**: Domestic US and international airfares up to \$1,500; \$150 fee; personal expenses; optional activities not planned as part of the program; and any other expense not specifically noted as included in the program cost.

Please see the “Financial Aid and Responsibility” section to the right to see what is included in your PrinBill, how financial aid is applied, and when payment is due.

Study Abroad Grant*

Students who receive **only Principia need-based aid** are eligible for an additional Study Abroad Grant to help with expenses not covered by financial aid and scholarships. (Merit scholarships do not count as need-based aid.) These costs may include flights, room and board, administrative fee, and opportunity costs. Preference is given to students who demonstrate financial need, are first-time study abroad participants, and have a minimum 3.0 GPA.

Vaccination & Health Information

Uncertainties with international travel include the possibility of airlines, the U.S. government, foreign governments, and/or in-country partner program providers requiring COVID-19 or other vaccinations. Information or evidence about participants’ status with regard to vaccinations may be required by these entities. Program participants may be subject to these requirements, and need to be aware of them. Failure to comply with these requirements may mean inability to travel or participate in the study abroad program.

In order to manage the uncertainties of international travel safely and effectively, the Study Abroad Office will collect required vaccination and other relevant health information from all participating program faculty, staff, and students. At this time, people entering Nepal must show proof of COVID vaccination or a negative test. (See [Nepal Entry Requirements](#).)

For more information regarding health and safety for Principia Study Abroad programs, visit our website: [Health & Safety Resources](#)

Eligibility and Prerequisites

The program directors seek students who have a sincere interest in climate crisis and environmental justice, and are self-motivated learners who can adapt successfully to different learning environments. Students should be prepared for rigorous hiking activity.

Preference will also be given to students with a 2.0 GPA or higher. This program is open to all enrolled students in good academic and social standing. Applications are welcomed from students majoring in any discipline.

Students must meet the [Study Abroad Student Selection & Eligibility Criteria](#) to apply for and remain on this program.

Financial Aid & Responsibility

Students who will be eligible to receive financial aid for the 2023-2024 academic year will have their loans, scholarships, and grants automatically applied toward **tuition only** (4SH). Your PrinBill will also include room and board (\$1,200) and the Study Abroad fee (\$150), but **no financial aid will be applied toward these costs.** *See *Study Abroad Grant* for additional funding opportunity.

Payments for past and current tuition, room, and board must be up-to-date, or a satisfactory payment schedule must be arranged with the Student Billing Representative, in order for a student to be allowed to participate in this program.

If accepted, students will be required to sign a financial commitment agreement stating that if they withdraw from this program, either voluntarily or involuntarily, after **Wednesday, November 22, 2023**, they agree to pay to Principia a penalty fee of the amount equal to the non-recoverable expenses incurred by their withdrawal plus Principia Abroad administrative fees. Even if all prepaid expenses are recovered, a minimum \$500 fee may be levied.

The program cost, less any applicable financial aid, will be billed to each participant’s Principia account, and payment will be due by **April 26, 2024**.

Study Abroad Application Instructions

- Applications can be found on the Study Abroad website: [Application Process](#), or directly from this link: bit.ly/study-abroad-app-fall2023
- To authenticate the Google Form application submission, you **must use your Principia email address**.
- **DUE DATE:** Your study abroad application, as well as the online signature forms from your resident counselor and academic advisor, **MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 5:00 pm on Wednesday, September 20 (Week 4)**.
No late applications will be accepted!
- The application has **9 sections**, and you must complete each section before moving to the next.
 1. **Personal Information:** The first section includes basic **personal information** including PO1 number, date of birth, citizenship, email, phone number, address, emergency contact(s), declared/expected major and minor, and expected graduation date.
 2. **References:** The second section includes **listing two references**, their emails and phone numbers. One is your personal/character reference and the other is for group learning.
 3. **Academic Advisor Meeting:** The third section confirms that you **met with your academic advisor** to discuss this study abroad program and that it does not conflict with any graduation requirements. You will send your academic advisor this signature page to confirm the meeting: bit.ly/studyabroad-advisor-signature
 4. **Resident Counselor Meeting:** The next section confirms that you **met with your resident counselor** to discuss your ability to demonstrate emotional maturity, personal responsibility, and commitment to adapt to different living and learning conditions. You will send your RC the signature form to confirm this meeting: bit.ly/studyabroad-rc-signature
 5. **Additional Questions:** The next section includes **additional questions** including previous international travel and previous abroads for which you have applied and been accepted or not accepted.
 6. **Essay Questions:**
 - a) During the abroad, you will spend a lot of time working, living, and interacting with individuals who are different from you in various ways. What qualities do you think are the most important for successfully working across differences and why? How well do you think you demonstrate these qualities? Please provide examples.
 - b) By virtue of immersing yourself in a new and different culture and context, you are likely to find yourself outside of your comfort zone at times during the abroad. Please discuss a challenging experience you have had or situation you have been in and how you handled it.
 - c) Getting the most out of this program educationally will require you to take responsibility for your own learning and to be willing to try new things. Discuss your willingness to be a self-motivated and adventurous learner.
 - d) Spiritual engagement is part of our abroad programs. How do you see yourself engaging with spirituality on this study abroad?

The last three sections include signing off on your understanding of the following topics:

7. **Financial Responsibility** – including commitment and withdrawal deadlines. **If applying for Study Abroad Grant, additional questions will be asked in this section to explain specific funding need.*
 8. **Academic & Social Responsibility** – including that you have read the [Study Abroad Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Study Abroad Student Selection & Eligibility Criteria](#).
 9. **Statement of Expectations** – including abiding by the standards set forth in the previous documents, Principia's standards, additional standards stipulated by the program faculty or international laws and custom, and expectation that you will fully participate in all aspects of the program.
- Again, the application and two online signature forms must be received by **5:00 pm on Wednesday, Sept. 20 (Week 4)**. Please be in touch with Study Abroad Program Manager Allison Terry with any questions – allison.terry@principia.edu or 618-374-5215 – or stop by School of Government, Suite 160 (SOG 160).