

COURSE SYLLABUS



Directed Research The City, the River, the Sacred

IFSA course code: DIRR380

Suggested US semester credit hours: 3

Contact Hours: 150

Delivery Method: Face to Face

Course length: Semester

Overview

The Institute for Study Abroad offers students the opportunity to enroll in our Directed Research course and earn academic credits while acquiring valuable hands-on research experience in India. The Institute for Study Abroad Directed Research projects are designed to help you achieve three main goals.

First and foremost, the purpose of the Institute for Study Abroad directed research experience is to bring together the best of academic and experiential learning—allowing you to pursue an area of interest to you through your guided research project that is both feasible in the local context and relevant to your broader intellectual interests. We encourage you to develop your research aptitude find new levels of patience within yourself, and stretch your preconceived notions as you complete your research. These are skills that will serve you well in future, whether you are pursuing post-graduate study or finding a job.

Second, the Directed Research course is designed to help you discover the challenges of doing research abroad – and to help you overcome them. The city of Varanasi has much to offer to a curious researcher, but you will also encounter limitations of time, geography, language and resources. As any researcher will tell you, one of the most challenging parts of the process is narrowing your research question down from the very broad to the very feasible. The Institute for Study Abroad provides you with a choice of two research topics, based on your Field Component Intent Form and the research opportunities available in Varanasi. This will allow you to develop your focused and feasible research question.

Third, doing research in a different culture will help you improve your cross-cultural communication skills and challenge your preconceived notions. Over the course of your research, you may encounter perspectives that may be quite different from your own, adding valuable cross-cultural and culture-specific insights to your research. You may also be conducting your research in a different language, asking questions through an interpreter. When working in the field with an interpreter, you'll learn to communicate and achieve your objectives despite the language barrier.

Course Description

Students who choose to pursue directed research as their field component are paired with a faculty guide appropriate to their academic area of interest, provided with a choice of topics and are expected to produce a formal research paper. Research students have regular meetings with faculty guides in their subject area to discuss the formation and execution of their research plans.

Course Objectives

As students conduct directed research, they will learn:

- To define a research problem from the topics provided
- To organize and devise a research project keeping in mind cultural sensitivities

- ❑ To conduct research using appropriate and feasible methodologies, considering manpower, time, and resources resulting in valid and verifiable research outcomes
- ❑ To gather, organize and communicate data collected through fieldwork
- ❑ To write a research paper based on analysis of the collected data

Course Requirements

You will receive a letter grade upon completion of the course. This letter grade appears on your official transcript for the Institute for Study Abroad program.

Your grade will be based on the following:

Academic participation 15%

- Weekly Research Journal: 500 words
- Attendance and engagement at faculty guide meetings
- Attendance and engagement at presentations

Oral presentation 15%

- Presentation to peer group
- Viva Voce
- Question and answer session

Proposal 25%

- DR brief form
- Back ground and justification
- Review of Literature
- Hypothesis
- Research Questions
- Objectives
- Methods
- Expected outcome
- Timeline

Final paper 45%

- 15-18 pages
- Abstract
- Back ground and justification
- Review of Literature
- Hypothesis
- Research Questions
- Objectives
- Methods
- Analysis
- Lessons Learnt
- Limitations
- Results and Conclusions; Recommendations when applicable e.g.

Late papers will marked down one step (B- to C+, e.g.) for each day they are late.

Grading

The Institute for Study Abroad programs utilize the follow standard grading policy well-accepted by most US institutions.

Excellent	A	93-100%	Good	B+	87-89%	Acceptable	C+	77-79%
	A-	90-92%		B	83-86%		C	73-76%
				B-	80-82%		C-	70-72%
						Unsatisfactory	D+	67-69%
							D	63-66%
							D-	60-62%
						Failing	F	<60%

Class Meetings

Students will conduct their research under supervision of their assigned faculty guides. At the beginning of the semester class meetings, common for all Research students, will be held to define expectations, share suggestions about methodology and discuss the finer aspects of working with interpreters, conducting interviews, issues of privacy in the community and cultural sensitivities.

Supervision of Directed Research

You will receive close support and supervision from Institute for Study Abroad staff and faculty. Here is a brief summary of the roles of the people you work with over the course of your research:

Faculty Guide

Students are assigned to a faculty guide, who serves as subject area expert resource. Your Faculty guide offers guidance on research design and the development of your research proposal, data collection tools, oral presentation and academic paper, and evaluates your performance in the course.

Resident Director

Your Institute for Study Abroad Resident Director is a resource who makes sure that your research moves smoothly and can also help you contextualize your research experience within the cultural context.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I start preparing for my research now?

The best way to prepare for your directed research is to start reading! You will receive information about your directed research choice of topics at the beginning of the semester. Until then, we suggest reading broadly about Indian society, culture, and history and researching articles about the research topics you indicated in your Field Component Intent form.

Where can I find resources for my research ahead of time?

For specific research topics, search sites like Google Scholar, JSTOR.org, or Academia.edu for articles or eBooks related to your topic. Your home university library is also a great resource to search for background information. As you find articles, you can download the best ones to bring with you to India! The government of India also has a lot of demographic information available online – so check out their website <http://india.gov.in/>

Additionally, consider asking your study abroad advisor or academic advisor if they know graduate students who have been to India to do research who you can connect with. They may be willing to share bibliographies or let you read their research – providing a one of a kind resource and perspective!

Can you put me in contact with my advisor?

Since your advisor is currently working with another Institute for Study Abroad student – who's on the ground right now – we cannot put you in touch with them before you go. Your Student Services Manager can address any specific questions you might have pre-departure.

Can my professor at home by my faculty guide?

The Institute for Study Abroad provides local faculty guides who are experts in their field and who can meet with you in person. We believe that their insights and years of experience working in Varanasi are an important part of the research process. If you wish to stay in touch with your professors at home about your research, you are welcome to.

I'm required to research a very specific topic, can you guarantee this?

The more specific you are in your Field Component Intent form, the better chance we have of matching your research topics to your interest. However, we cannot guarantee that a specific topic will be possible within the local context. If your research topic is linked to your major or graduation requirements, please reach out to your Student Services Manager to discuss your situation.

Will I have access to databases or libraries?

You will have access to program center's collection of books. We suggest talking to your home school's librarian to ensure you can still access your library's databases while abroad.

Do I need IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval?

IRB approval is not required by the Institute for Study Abroad. If you plan to use the results of your research to publish or as part of a capstone or honors thesis project, you may find IRB approval helpful. We recommend checking with your advisor to see what they recommend.

I want to work directly with a high-risk population (such as HIV-positive individuals, sex workers, transgender individuals, or people with mental illness). Will you be able to help me do that?

Our ability to help students work with high-risk populations depends upon considerations of ethics, cultural sensitivity, access, and safety. The first principle of ethical research is do no harm. If your research would potentially be harmful to any participants, particularly those in a high-risk population, the Institute for Study Abroad would look at alternative modes of research that would align with your academic interest without causing harm. Please note that cultural sensitivities are different in India, and are taken into consideration in providing research topics. Finally, it simply may not be possible to access certain populations or to do so safely – and in that case the Institute for Study Abroad would look at alternative research topics.

I want to conduct research in a specific location (a village, the red light district, another city). Will you be able to help me do that?

Our ability to help students conduct research on the ground depends upon considerations of time, access, and safety. Since students are required to attend classes for four other courses while pursuing research during the semester, we want to maximize your time spent researching and minimize your time spent in transit. Given Varanasi's size, limited transportation options and traffic, you may still spend up to an hour commuting to your field of research – the average is 40 minutes. But the basic rule of thumb is that you should plan to do your research within Varanasi itself. As for specific neighborhoods in Varanasi, it all depends on accessibility and safety. Safety is our number one consideration. If it is not safe for you and your translator to be spending time there, then the Institute for Study Abroad would provide you with an alternative location.

How specific does my research proposal need to be?

As specific as possible, while keeping a very open mind. Sounds like an oxymoron, doesn't it? The more information you can provide about your research interests, academic background and research experience, the better the faculty guide will be able to provide a choice of research topics that aligns with those interests. However, given the local context, and considerations of ethics, cultural sensitivities, safety, accessibility, time and location mentioned above, these choices may look a little different than you expected.

What about the language barrier?

If target audience or other human resources you need to consult in the course of the research can't speak fluently in English, a local translator will accompany you.

Who takes care of travel expenses associated with directed research?

You will. If a translator is accompanying you, you'll cover their transportation costs as well. You should budget an amount ranging from \$ 3 to 8 per visit for transportation costs depending on the location you want to reach.

How do I manage my lunch or breakfast?

In case you will have to skip meals offered at the program center (breakfast and lunch) due to fieldwork engagements, you can take a packed meal. Its cost is out of pocket, not covered by the program. Alternatively you may want to explore nearby food joints.

Directed Research Topics

The Field Component Intent form is used to develop research topics pertinent to student academic interest. Faculty guides elaborate the research topics before students arrive in India.

Each student will be provided with two research topics. Students will select their directed research topic from the two provided and develop a primary research proposal.

The scope of the chosen topic is finalized in conjunction with the faculty guide. Directed research is conducted over the entire duration of the semester, in conjunction with other four courses that students are expected to attend. Students are required to pursue their research projects according to a time-line including 150 hours and maintain a time sheet. Students are also expected to maintain a journal of the research process, noting down their weekly activities and learnings.

Directed Research Deliverables

Proposal

Your proposal is a document of about 10 to 12 pages. The proposal is expected to follow the format provided enclosed in the course book. The proposal would be prepared based on the topic selected by the student through the options provided and be mentored through the process by their faculty guide and Directed Research Coordinator.

Research Paper

It is expected that students will analyze the data collected and express their data-based conclusions in the paper. The final paper should expand upon the proposal, not only in terms of research outcomes and lessons learned, but looking at the evidence based conclusions of their research.

DR Abstract

An abstract succinctly describes all major aspects of your academic paper and research in 300 words. Your abstract should cover your objective; method used (in brief), findings and conclusion.

Journal

You are expected to keep a weekly research journal, and submit it to your faculty guide every week, preferably before the weekly interaction with the faculty guide. This allows him/her to follow your progress and help address any problems that you might be encountering. The work journal should be 500 words per week.

This is to be an analytical journal. This means recording your activities/experiences, and then adding your thoughts, reflections, interpretations and analyses of your activities/experiences. Part of the emphasis should be on cross-cultural experiences. If you have done research previously, what differences do you observe between your current experience and the past? What similarities do you see? What is difficult or challenging about those differences, and what do you think you can learn from them? You may find that journaling is an effective way to record, reflect and draw new insights from your experiences in the research component.

Your journal should serve as a record of your activities, observations and interpretations. There should be an entry for each time that you do research. Each entry should begin with a description of what you did that day. You should use your work journal to record your daily research activities, as

well as your observations of what is happening around you. What are your reflections on what you observe? How does it differ from what you are accustomed to? In what ways does it represent differing approaches and values? That is, how do you interpret your experiences?

Suggestions for Journal Keeping

Anyone who regularly keeps a journal will tell you that it is crucial that you make entries as close as possible to the time of the events you are describing. This is true for research note-taking as well: if you are in a situation where you cannot take notes on the spot, find yourself a quiet corner as quickly as possible and note down everything you can remember. If time is pressing, writing down headings helps you recall what you heard. You can write a full account later in the day. The reason for stressing this point is that journal entries and research notes written later are much different from those written at the time: you begin to edit, to have second thoughts, to elaborate and rationalize – all freshness is lost. Thus, in the case of your research journal, you should take notes while out in the field if possible, but in any case be sure to write your day's entry that evening.

Presentation

Students are expected to give a power point presentation, which will summarize key aspects (i.e. significance of their research, data collection experiences, findings of the research, reflections on learning from the field) of the final research paper followed by question answer sessions. The presentation is expected to last for about 15 minutes and question answer session for 10 minutes.

Viva Voce

Each student will undergo an individual viva voce – one on one oral examination - based on their work done and submitted in order to comprehend the student's capacity to think beyond their work and examine scope for fine development of research skills and insights. The viva will be conducted by the Faculty Guide.

Attendance and Participation

It is required that students will regularly work at their research project in order to complete their work in the scheduled time period. While doing fieldwork behavior that is culturally accepted and sensitive is expected. Attendance at review sessions with Faculty Guides will be considered throughout and punctuality noted and evaluated.

Academic Integrity

Any academic endeavor must be based upon a foundation of honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by principles of academic integrity and must be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work while studying abroad. Any academic work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student's original work. Any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty, will subject a student to disciplinary action.

IFSA-Butler takes academic integrity very seriously. Students must not accept outside assistance without permission from the instructor. Additionally, students must document all sources according to the instructions of the professor. Should your instructor suspect you of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty, you may receive a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action may result. The incident will be reported to the IFSA-Butler resident director as well as your home institution.

Time Sheet Guidelines

- Total expected hours are 150. All hours must be recorded and verified with the location of your work, duration of work and signature of a contact person (with name and title).
- If your time sheet is not signed, the reason needs to be noted in place of the signature. Do not sign your time sheet yourself!
- Your time sheets will be checked every week at your weekly meeting, and turned in with your final paper.
- You may include travel time, journaling, and writing for your total hours, in addition to time spent in your organization or in the field. For the purposes of your hours, 1 hour/weekly for journaling is the maximum. The quality of your work should reflect the time logged.

Final Presentation Guidelines

Presentation Time: 15 minutes

(A staff member will keep time and alert you when you have 2 minutes left to wrap-up.)

Q&A Time: 10 minutes, following presentation.

Evaluated by: Your faculty guide

Presentation Format:

Slide 1: Title

Slide 2: Background and Justification

- What does the audience need to know to understand your research topic?
- Why was this research conducted?

Slide 3: Organization information where applicable

- Which organization did you work with to complete your research?
- How does your research tie in with their mission and work?
- How did they help you in your research?

Slide 4: Hypothesis, Research Questions and Objectives

- What questions did you ask in your research?
- What did you hope to learn?

Slide 5: Target Population

- Who did you talk to? How were they selected?
- How many people did you talk to?

Slide 6: Methods

- How did you go about your research?
- Did you use qualitative or quantitative tools?

Slide 7: Analysis and results

- What did your results show?
- Did you prove/disprove your hypothesis or answer your research question?
- Feel free to use tables, graphs, or diagrams to represent your findings

Slide 8: Conclusions and recommendations

- What were your major research outcomes?
- What did you anticipate vs. what did you actually find?

Slide 9: Lessons Learnt

- What have you learned from your data analysis?
- What have you learned about doing research in another culture/country?

Slide 10: Limitations

- What challenges did you face?