



Materiality & Memory: Discerning Shamanistic, Hindu & Buddhist Traditions in the Kullu Valley (INDIA)

*Course ID: ARCH_(TBD)_
August 21-September 3rd, 2021*

FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTORS:

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OVERVIEW

This two-week field program is an offshoot of our larger Myth and Reality project, a research program that applies non-invasive archaeological and anthropological methods to understand the relationship between lived experience and mythology in the Kullu Valley. This research program focuses specifically on Kullu valley wooden temples: their design, motifs, and the myths, rituals and oral narratives that surround them.

The Kullu Valley lies in the heart of the Himalayas, in the hill state of Himachal Pradesh. It is rich in archaeological sites and cultural heritage. The valley is known as “*Kulantipitha*” or “End of the Habitable world” and is a place where numerous ancient Indian myths and beliefs have taken form. The wooden temples in the valley are built anew every seventy to eighty years as part of a tradition to provide the gods and goddesses a new home. In their reproduction, the sacred geometry and architectural attributes of temples are mostly held constant. Nonetheless, modest changes occur. Our project examines the ways that continuity as well as subtle innovations or changes to design and motifs shape collective memory and narrative.

Scholars have studied the Kullu valley and its stone and wooden temples using art historical approaches, but the application of our mixed-methods approach—much of which is rooted in anthropological archaeology—is new. In this two-week field school, participants will be trained in methods for evaluating early shamanistic, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions using material culture and memory. Students will explore deep underlying connections between oral narratives, the spaces where these narratives are performed, and the objects and buildings involved in memory making.

Memory is as much about remembering and including a past that suits the present social order as it is about excluding pasts that fail to do as much. Our investigation will consider how shamanistic, Buddhist, and Hindu narrative and memory relate to the dominant and marginalized communities of the Kullu valley in the past and present. Students will also be introduced to the minute, nuanced processes involved in the materialization of memory; the role of archaeological remains in the production of memory and the role of oral narratives in the production of a sense of space. We will explore how diverse myths, rituals, magic, beliefs, gods, divine beings, symbols, and taboos are transmitted to contemporary people who engage with ancient spaces, like wooden temples.

The study of woodworking crafts will serve as a lens onto the generational transmission of embodied knowledge and oral tradition. Instruction in wood crafting will be provided by a local craftsperson who is also a shaman and Hindu. Students will learn the principles of woodcarving, how and when to use specific tools, and craft-specific knowledge, both bodily and conceptual. Participants will witness how tangible and intangible knowledge get transmitted between individuals within a framework that defines the group and which allows its members to discern layers of influences. Students will be able to take their wood carvings home.

This field research does not involve archaeological survey or excavation. Rather, we study the contemporary and past using a combination of ethnographic, oral historical, and contemporary archaeological methods and data collection techniques.

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 2 semester credit units (equivalent to 3 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a private, highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see grading assessment and matrix). This field school provides a minimum of 80-90 direct instructional hours. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institution prior to attending this field school.

Transcripts: An official copy of transcripts will be mailed to the permanent address listed by students on their online application. One more transcript may be sent to the student home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvurkl>.

PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for participation in this field school. This is hands-on, experiential learning and students will study on-site how to conduct research. Archaeology involves physical work and exposure to the elements and thus, requires a measure of acceptance that this will not be the typical university learning environment. You will get sweaty, tired and have to work in the outdoors. Students are required to come equipped with sufficient excitement and adequate understanding that the archaeological endeavor requires real, hard work – in the sun, and on your feet.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The project aims to train students in ethnohistorical and ethnographic methods.

1. Ethnographic research where students will interview priests, shamans and locals of the area conversant in both English and Hindi languages: will help in understanding the historicity of the of sacred spaces based on memory and objects. It will also help document legends, stories and myths relating to sacred spaces. *How?* Observation of rituals and customs at temples and religious sanctuaries and interviews using video footage and voice recorders reflecting both on participating (*emic*) and nonparticipating (*etic*) methods.
2. Students will closely examine architecture, decorative motifs, compositions, ritual objects and sacred spaces, including people related to activities around the sacred. *How?* Visits to sites to focus on details, which will allow a better understanding of architectural elements and their chronological interplay within individual temple complexes. Wood carving will be offered for students to gain first-hand and authentic understanding of construction methods, challenges and manifestation of architectural and religious motifs. Students will get a chance to work on wood carving: will help in understanding the concept of *Chaîne opératoire*
3. To enable the proper understanding of (2) above, the students will learn basic principles of mapping and making ground plans of a few wooden temples. This will allow a better understanding of the relationship of people with space and will allow students show digitized maps to locals, and priests to get information on the functioning of the temple space based on memory and traditions. Mapping and drawing ground plans of the sacred spaces and temples will help facilitate an understanding of use of space. Students will learn how to interact with ethnoarchaeological and historical archaeological material.
4. Editing of video footage for the 5-minute short films to be made on smart phones using basic editing software: crucial for dissemination of knowledge in a world powered by social media.
5. Theory and methods in Ethnography and cultural transmission.
6. Basic Hindi conversation and writing

DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involve risk. Students interested in participating in IFR programs must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we do not take risk lightly. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location and programming prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it still complies with all our standards and policies, including those pertaining to student safety.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We encourage students to explore such insurance on their own as it may be purchased at affordable prices. insuremytrip.com or [Travelguard.com](http://travelguard.com) are possible sites where field school participants may explore travel cancellation insurance quotes and policies. If you do purchase such insurance, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition.

We do our best to follow a schedule of activities, methods training, and programming as outlined in this syllabus. However, this schedule can be easily disrupted by any number of unforeseen circumstances, including revised decisions by local permitting agencies, political unrest, and changes in the weather. While this schedule represents the best of the director(s) intentions, we—students and staff alike—need to be adaptable and tolerant of necessary alterations. This adaptability is an intrinsic part of all field research.

Students are required to come equipped with sufficient excitement and adequate understanding that fieldwork requires real, hard work – in the sun and on your feet. Students should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those you experience in your home, dorms or college town. This program operates at a typical Himalayan environment in India. The location of the Project is about 1200 meters above sea level in the first week to about 3200 meters above sea level. During the day, temperatures are between 50°-78°. In Kullu, it rains during the night, but it is advisable to have a raincoat. It is advisable to bring insect/mosquito repellent for the evenings. Shorts and tank tops should not be worn while visiting field sites; context-appropriate attire will be discussed by the instructors. Students may not enter temple precincts with material made of leather or wool. It is advisable that students do not go near or swim in the Beas river due to its strong currents. Please consult with your doctor for any concern.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the program director and staff.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Anthropological field methods such as ethnographic and ethnoarchaeological methods in particular will allow students to engage and relate with local people, which may help the students in understanding a culture so different from closer quarters.
- Fieldwork to understand the ethnographic manifestation of the significance of symbols in material culture. The experience is crucial as it allows one to classify and categorize qualitative information along with material evidence. Once the data is at hand, students are in a position to analyze collected data using different statistical methods to assess patterns. The qualitative to quantitative approach allows one to view emic categories from a non-partisan perspective.

- Understanding of the principles of sacred and secular architecture and sacred sanctuaries allows students to compare and contrast the differences or similarities between spaces in light of geographical, climatic, functional and customary principles.
- Engraving of ancient motifs found in wood using tools used by ancient craftspeople will allow identification of important symbols of Himalayan culture in this region, a study into their origin, evolution, style and the technological knowhow. An analysis of which helps in understanding what is important to the culture what is not, myths and legends behind use of certain motifs, decision making of engravers, and building categories and classifications crucial for understanding patterns.
- Using statistics for purposes of data analysis by converting qualitative into quantitative data helps in making proper categories for analysis.
- Editing video footage to make a short film using basic editing software such as windows moviemaker or iMovie. Being in a digital and world filled with social media, making a short film allows condensing layers of information using a visual medium and team building skills. Such information may be disseminated to friends and family making research more approachable.
- An understanding of community interaction with ancient sites in semi-urban areas allows students to summarize, report issues, build relationships, relate to issues and help locals in problem solving. Such training may help students in any career of choice in the future.
- Theories forming the basis of historical, landscape, anthropological archaeology and cultural transmission. While in the field, students get an excellent opportunity to employ field methods going from theory to method and back. Application of such theories, their application, and critique are essentials which help in structure and execution.
- Basic Hindi conversation and writing. By the end of the course, students will be able to speak important phrases in Hindi, read words in Hindi with ease, and feel much closer to the culture than they did in the beginning.

ASSESSMENT

Field work participation	40 points
Short film	20 points
Paper (to be submitted end of the month)	20 points
Digitization of ground plans	10 points
Wood engraving	10 points
Total points	100

TRAVEL, ROOM & BOARD, & SAFETY LOGISTICS

Disclaimer for 2021 Season. The logistics outlined below for this IFR field school were written according to the most current and accurate information available to IFR. We recognize that the best practices for preventing the transmission of the coronavirus may change in the coming months. The IFR will be revisiting program-specific plans periodically throughout the enrollment period and will update program details according to new developments, such as the presence and availability of a vaccine, new travel protocols, and updated local policies.

An IFR field school is designed to provide positive, constructive experiences for communities, students, and researchers. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the following protocols have been developed based on the assumption that any participant in an IFR field school may be an asymptomatic carrier of SARS COVID-19. Our goal, with these protocols, is to reduce the possibility for COVID-19 transmission among participants, staff, and local community members. IFR depends on the complete and sustained commitment of all students to stay healthy and to help others stay healthy. On enrollment, students commit to comply with all aspects of the IFR COVID-19 avoidance policy as well as any/all policies specific to their respective IFR field school.

PRIOR TO TRAVEL

Students must arrange a test for current infection for COVID-19 through a RT-PCR test for themselves in their home location within 72 hours prior to arrival at the destination and upload proof of negative result to their IFR application portal.

After demonstrating they tested negative, students must take all precautions possible to ensure they remain COVID-19 free prior to and during travel to the field school. Students should plan to travel in the safest manner that they are able (e.g., avoid flights with long layovers and multiple connections). In addition, we require the following from all students: use of a face mask during travel to, from, and on airlines, ferries, trains, busses, and the like; regular washing of hands; and, in so far as possible, maintain social distancing of 6 feet / 2 meters in airports and other spaces.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Students attending this program can come on a 2-week student visa. Once admitted to the program, the IFR will send students a formal invitation letter. This letter must be submitted with the Student Visa Application. The visa process may take two weeks to 4 weeks to process.

Indian Student Visa may be obtained in the United States through Cox & Kings Global Services (in.ckgs.us), the Government of India official visa contractor. The site is challenging and data is updated as you go through the application process. Please be patient and follow the steps in the order presented on the page, from top to bottom.

U.S. citizens of Pakistani or Bangladeshi descent are subject to administrative processing and should expect additional delays when applying for Indian visas.

On reaching the field school site, the student has to register with the local Foreign registration office (The field Directors will facilitate the office visit).

Citizens of other countries are asked to check the embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

We suggest you hold off purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancelation of a field school. The IFR typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to program beginning and make Go/No Go decisions by then. Such time frame still allows the purchase deeply

discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss if airline ticket costs if we decide to cancel a program.

This program is based in Jonga, India. Students traveling from the United States should purchase a ticket to New Delhi which is about a one-hour flight (or a 12-hour drive) from Kullu (Bhuntar). On arrival in New Delhi, students are permitted to travel to Kullu via a one-hour direct flight from IGI Domestic Airport, New Delhi, to Bhuntar, Kullu

Please arrive at the Kullu-Manali airport (KUU) on **August 21, 2021**. Program staff will meet arriving students at the airport. Students will then be driven to the housing facilities located at Jong Village, Katrain, approximately a 45-minute drive. Please wait at the airport until a project member comes for you. We will have separate cars and two students per car. The windows will be kept open, and students will wear face masks at all times.

Currently owing to COVID-related quarantine measures tourist visas have been suspended. The government has made strict rules due to the mutated UK strain of COVID. Please keep visiting the Indian embassy website for updated rules <https://www.indianembassyusa.gov.in/extra?id=77>

We expect the current circumstances will change as the vaccination program progresses and travel opens up. We are hopeful that by April the country will open to international travel in all respects. Our field school is in August, so we are very hopeful for a stress-free season.

- All travelers currently permitted to travel to India have to fill a self-declaration form on the online portal (www.newdelhiairport.in) at least 72 hours before scheduled travel or physically after arrival at the respective health counters.
- Travelers can request for exemption from institutional quarantine by submitting a negative RT-PCR test. This test should have been conducted 72 hours prior to undertaking the journey and should be uploaded to the portal above for consideration.
- All those with negative PCR test shall undertake to self-monitor their health and will be exempted from quarantine.
- Students will be required to take a COVID-19 RT-PCR (or other) test on arrival at the first port of entry if they arrive without COVID-19 RT-PCR tests. The cost for the test at the airport is about \$100 USD .
- On arrival in New Delhi, students will have to go to the Himachal Pradesh State medical counter to register themselves and get stamped for exemption from quarantine on the basis of a negative report.
- If an arriving passenger is found to be COVID positive, they will be sent to 14 days institutional quarantine. The student will call the Director using the local call facility available at the Institutional Quarantine Center.
- Contact information for the Director and program staff will be shared during the pre-travel program orientation.
- It is recommended that the students only come by flight or cab and not by bus where the risk of contracting COVID may be high.
- Students and staff will travel from the field camp to the field site on a daily basis in separate vehicles. We will have 7-seater SUV's and will have 4 students in each vehicle. Occupants will wear facemasks at all times. Staff will be in the vehicle behind.
- If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, call, text or email the project director immediately. A local emergency cell phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

LOCAL PROTOCOLS, REGULATIONS, & EXPECTATIONS

- Currently, in view of the mutated UK version of COVID, foreigners entering the country, passengers are subjected to the COVID RT-PCR test on arrival if they arrive without a test. If a passenger tests positive, they are sent to a self-paid COVID facility (Hotel) for a period of 7-14 days based on the symptoms.
- Each passenger has to download “*Arogya Setu*”, an app for contact tracing when they land in India.
- Students must wear facemasks at all times during this program. It is also imperative that students abide by all social distancing protocols.
- During this field school, students will work in temples. The temples aren’t much frequented by people, but there will be opportunities when students get to interact with members of the local community. The students will conduct ethnographic interviews while maintaining a minimum of 6 feet from other people at all times.

Interaction with the local community must be limited to situations where everyone can maintain the required 6-foot/2-meter physical distance, wear masks, and ideally be outside.

All students are to wear facemasks and carry sanitizers at all times. Students will be subjected to thermal temperature scanners and be sanitized with the sprayer each time they enter the property/housing facilities (see below) from the field to ensure a COVID-free environment.

FACE MASKS / FACE COVERINGS

All students, faculty and staff are expected to wear face coverings. Face masks, along with social distancing, are among the most effective ways of minimizing the spread of the coronavirus.

The objective of wearing a mask is to capture potentially infectious droplets from the wearer. Therefore:

- Masks or respirators that are equipped with an "exhalation valve" are not permitted, unless covered by another mask.
- Neck fleeces (gaiter masks) are considered the least effective form of facemasks and are not permitted. (The material found in gaiters tend to break down larger droplets into smaller particles that are more easily carried away in the air.)
- Folded bandanas and knitted masks are ineffective and are not permitted.
- Masks must be worn so as to cover both the mouth and nose. If your mask becomes loose, it can be tightened by twisting the ear loops.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The housing facilities are comfortable. The location is nestled in Jonga, a beautiful village set against the backdrop of the Dhauladhar and Pirpanjal mountain ranges in the Himalayas. The property is bounded by Himalayan cedar and fruit trees. Students will be housed in spacious cottages, where each cottage can accommodate 2 individuals. The cottages are large enough, most having separate sections to allow social distancing. The cottages are situated on a hill with an enclosed peripheral wall away from the community.

Each cottage has internet connectivity, television, a kitchen with a burner, a tea facility, bottled water, a refrigerator, and solar powered hot water. The beds are comfortable, and bedding/linens will be provided. The classroom is a traditional Himalayan-style structure built with Himalayan cedar and a splendid view. The classroom also houses a vast library to support students research, as well as a printer and internet

service. The field school will ensure regular cleaning of the housing facility at least twice a day to ensure safety and cleanliness.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner on workdays will be served in the common dining area at designated hours. The dining chairs will be spaced out following COVID Protocol. Utensils will be disposable allowing less contact and contamination. The cooks are equipped to cook a variety of food options both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, local and international cuisine and can easily accommodate vegans or lactose intolerant meals. The cooks would need to know dietary restrictions and preferences beforehand to accommodate diets. Beef is the only item which will **not be** provided.

Tuesdays being days off, students may order reasonably priced food at the facility. Laundry services are available at nominal cost. The local market and cafes are located at walking distance with beautiful hikes and trails nearby.

MANAGING COVID-19 CASES & OUTBREAKS

- In the event that a member of the project presents with mild COVID symptoms, they will be relocated to a separate cottage for a 10-14 day quarantine. Quarantines towards the end of our program can still be accommodated, but the cost for keeping students for extra days will be incurred by the student.
- If project participants present with more serious symptoms, they will be transported to the nearest intensive care unit (ICU), about 20 kilometers (a 30-minute drive) away.
- In India, the local health workers move from village to village disseminating information on health concerns, quarantine facilities and an app that allows contact tracing. All students have to have the “Arogya Setu” contact tracing app activated on arrival to India. The village grassroot level Panchayat works very closely with us; hence communication is open at all times.
- Laundry services are available for a nominal sum. Services will be available to each student on specific days so as to minimize mixing of laundry. Laundry for people exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms will be processed separately.
- In the event that COVID cases increase in the community, the field school director will cancel all in-person interviewing and establish alternate interview method (e.g., video calls).
- The field school is equipped to adapt to a crisis within the housing facility relating to COVID with ease. If a student exhibits COVID symptoms, they will be isolated to a separate cottage which is situated on the property away from other students. All other cottages are also situated far from each other.
- The field school has a sanitizing machine, or a mechanical pump and nozzle that sprays sanitizer on the body and belongings in order to disinfect them. The sanitizing machine has the same contents as a typical hand sanitizer and is mandated by the government.

COURSE SCHEDULE

All IFR field schools begin with safety orientation. This orientation includes proper behavior at the field area, proper clothing, local cultural sensitivities and sensibilities, potential fauna and flora hazards, review IFR harassment and discrimination policies and review of the student Code of Conduct.

Please note:

- This schedule is subject to change as we adapt to changes in the status of COVID.

- On certain field work days, students will be taken around different sites to get an idea of the landscape and culture of the region.
- Relevant pages of readings will be posted on drop box before the field school starts.

Day	8:00-8:30am	8:30am-1:30pm	2:00-4:00pm	4:00-6:00pm	6:30-7:00pm	7:00-8:00pm
August 21 st	Airport pickup			Orientation	Basic Hindi	Study/ work
22 nd	Breakfast	Geology of the Himalayas & field work	Lunch+Rest	History of Indian Archaeology & anthropology of religion in the Himalayas	Basic Hindi	Wood crafting
23 rd	Breakfast	<i>Site visit to see natural formations</i>	Lunch+Rest	Material culture and text & Cultural Transmission-	Basic Hindi	Wood crafting
24 th	Breakfast	Visit to Hindi temples in naggar	Lunch+Rest	Hindu Temple architecture & Hindu myths & legends . Buddhist iconography, myths and legends	Basic Hindi	Wood crafting
25 th		Visit to sites on the way	Lunch+Rest	Transmission of knowledge through scriptures, rituals and myths -	Basic Hindi	Wood crafting
26 th		Visit to sites on the way	Lunch & Rest	Lecture on flora and fauna Motifs & qualitative research	-	Wood crafting
27 th	<i>Day off</i>					
28 th	Breakfast	Field work	Lunch+Rest	Myths, ethnography & qualitative research	Basic Hindi	Wood crafting
29 th	Breakfast	Field work	Lunch+Rest	Shamanism, Himalayan architecture & qualitative research	Basic Hindi	Wood crafting
30 th	Breakfast	Field work	Lunch+Rest	Transmission of knowledge	Basic Hindi	Wood crafting
31 st	Breakfast	Field work	Lunch+Rest	Transmission of knowledge	Basic Hindi	Wood crafting
Sept 1 st	Breakfast	Field work	Ritual in local village with lunch and dinner			
Sept 2 nd	Breakfast	Field work	Lunch+Rest	Student presentations	Basic Hindi	Wood crafting
Sept 3 rd	Breakfast	Study/work	Lunch+Rest	Student presentations	<i>Farwell Dinner</i>	
Sept 4 th	Early morning drop offs at airport, Kullu					

EQUIPMENT LIST

Laptops and smartphone are important equipment for this field school. However, if you do not have one or both, please contact the field school directors so we can work out a solution. Lack of ownership of these items is not a hindrance for your participation in this field school.

1. Laptop with iMovie (for mac users) or Movie Maker (for window users)
2. Smartphones for voice recordings and video footage
3. Digital camera
4. SD card
5. Sunscreen
6. Non-leather shoes
7. Hat
8. Sunglasses
9. Insect repellent
10. download: Munsell viewer
11. Umbrellas & raincoats
12. Flipflops
13. Sleeping bags
14. Warm clothes
15. N95 masks
16. Sanitizers at all times

FACILITY NOTES

Laundry services are available at nominal cost. The local market is nearby.

REQUIRED READINGS

Bell, Catherine 1953

Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice.

Chakrabarti, Dilip 2001

India-An Archaeological History: Paleolithic beginnings to Early Historic Foundations. Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Clifford Geertz 1973

The Interpretation of cultures: selected essays.

Morris, Brian 1987

Anthropological Studies of Religion: An Introductory Text.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The readings listed below will be posted on-line for students to access in advance of the project, likely using Dropbox shared folder.

Berger, P 2012

Theory and ethnography in the modern anthropology of India. *Journal of Ethnographic theory* 2(2): 325-57

Bourdieu, P 1977

Outline of a Theory of Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jamwal, C.S., Wangu, A.K. 2012.

Geology and Mineral Resources of Himachal Pradesh. Miscellaneous Publication No. 30. Part XVII. Geology and Mineral Resources of India. Geological Survey of India.

Handa, O.C 2009

Himalayan Traditional Architecture. Rupa & Co, New Delhi

Handa, O.C 2015

Kullu, Its early History, Archaeology and Architecture. Pentagon Press, New Delhi

Patton, Laurie and Wendy Doniger 1996

Myth and Method. University of Virginia Press, 1996