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**SOUTH INDIA TERM ABROAD (SITA) PROGRAM**  
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Student Handbook



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# Welcome to the South India Term Abroad (SITA) Program!

Since 1990, the SITA Program has offered the opportunity to observe and participate in the fascinating cultural environment of the southern state of Tamil Nadu, India. The city of Madurai, which bombards the senses with unfamiliar sights, sounds and smells, is the base for SITA Program classes and activities. Courses and extra-curricular activities provide you, the participant, with the background necessary to understand the history and belief systems that underlie everyday life in South India. Groundwork laid in classes, lectures, and discussions will lead to investigations outside the classroom, where the most important discoveries are made. Though course-work and the homestay experience are based in the city of Madurai, field trips within South India supplement the overall experience by providing broad exposure to the cultural complexity of the region.

This handbook is a compilation of letters, reports and suggestions offered by students and staff over the years, as well as an outline of SITA policies and procedures. In addition, we have consulted handbooks of other programs that operate in South India to create a comprehensive guide to assist you throughout your experience. It will lead you through the logistics of getting to India, discuss the responsibilities of being a SITA student, prepare you for living in India, and offer suggestions for the transition back to your home culture. While this handbook will provide you with useful information and suggestions, it also is important that you be proactive in planning and preparing for your upcoming semester or year. We recommend that you explore the many resources in this handbook, but also encourage you to find and share new sources with your fellow students and us.

The more time you spend researching India-and especially your particular topics of interest-the more insight you will have when you arrive. However, please keep in mind that there are many different perspectives, and while preconceived ideas and expectations are inevitable, it is easier to adjust yourself to the exciting and difficult challenges of life in India when you have as few expectations as possible. Ultimately you will learn about India through your own experiences, but there are some things you should know before you depart. This handbook is meant to be informative, but know that your own experience will no doubt be unique and different from experiences discussed in the following pages. Overall, be informed, be prepared, and most importantly, be open-minded!

Please do not hesitate to contact the SITA Program staff or your campus representative with questions, comments, or concerns.

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This publication does not constitute a contract between the participant and the SITA program. At the time of publication, reasonable effort was made to ensure factual accuracy of the information. SITA has the right to make changes without prior notice to the policies, procedures, rules, regulations and academic requirements stated herein

# **Part 1** **Predeparture Logistics**

**Predeparture Overview**

**Predeparture Checklist**

**Packing List**

**Advice from Alumni**



# Predeparture Overview

The first thing you must do to confirm your place in the program is to complete and return the included forms by the deadline stated in your acceptance letter. Please take this deadline very seriously, as SITA may release your place in the program to a wait-listed candidate if confirmation materials have not arrived by the required date.

Indeed, all deadlines that SITA sets for predeparture preparations should be conscientiously met. There are many arrangements to be made, and we need everyone's full cooperation to make the predeparture phase-and departure-as smooth and seamless as possible.

The materials required to hold your place in the program are:

- ❖ A \$500 nonrefundable deposit
- ❖ Conditions of Participation Form
- ❖ AIIIS Student Visa Form
- ❖ Medical Form
- ❖ Photocopy of your passport

Also included in this handbook are the Predeparture Checklist and Packing List. Dates and procedures may be subject to change from semester to semester, so though it is important that you refer to this checklist frequently, it is paramount that you regularly monitor SITA email communications and follow any instructions in them.

Communications regarding logistics will primarily be coming from the SITA executive director, who oversees the program as a whole and manages the admission and predeparture process (see SITA staff descriptions in "Part 2: Program Overview" of this handbook). But you'll also be hearing from the SITA resident director regarding academic preparations, and from SITA program assistants regarding cultural adjustment matters, tips from the student perspective, and life in Madurai. Though there is lots of information to be shared before your departure, we also don't want to overwhelm you, so please don't hesitate to ask us if there is anything you're curious about that we have not provided. You should direct all initial communications to the executive director, who will then forward it to the appropriate staff member.

This will be a busy and demanding time for you, with details to remember, deadlines to meet, and so much to think about and anticipate! But don't forget to relax and savor this period of preparation-we'll be prompting you throughout the process, so know that if you keep up with things as we're communicating them, the predeparture phase will be easy and enjoyable.

# Predeparture Checklist ✿

## To Return Within Two Weeks of Acceptance:

- \$500 Deposit
- Conditions of Participation Form (included with acceptance materials)
- Please review the following sections of the handbook to be sure you understand what you are accepting: Financial Matters, Safety, Health & Risk Management, Academic Affairs, Student Rights & Responsibilities, and SITA Rights & Responsibilities.
- AHS Visa Application (included with acceptance materials)
- Photocopy of your passport (must be valid for at least 6 months after the conclusion of the program)
- Medical Form (included with acceptance materials), having also discussed with your physician:
  - Necessary India-specific immunizations (set timeline) and medications
  - Options for malaria prophylaxis
  - Prescriptions you'll need to fill before departure

## To Complete One Month Before Departure:

- Apply for your Indian visa (instructions will be sent by the program)
- Arrange for transportation to and from the common departure point—make sure you will arrive at the meeting point no less than three hours before the group flight departs
- Review the Packing List and begin making any necessary purchases

## To Complete Two Weeks Before Departure:

- Collect your visa from the Indian consulate
- Send the following to SITA:
  - Domestic travel information
  - Indian visa information
- Make 3 photocopies of passport & Indian visa:
  - Pack one copy in your luggage
  - Leave one copy with your parent/guardian
  - Bring one copy to the airport to give to SITA
- Photocopy other important travel documents (leave with parent/guardian):
  - Immunization card
  - Credit cards, drivers license, state ID, etc.
  - Travel insurance information
- Fill prescriptions for medications and malaria prophylaxis
- Contact airline with seating and dietary preferences
- Practice packing
- Drink water, sleep and relax!

\* Deadlines are subject to change. Please refer to your acceptance letter and e-mail communications for semester-specific dates.

# Packing List

The program only allows you to bring one checked bag and one carry-on. We strongly recommend that the checked bag be a large backpack, and the carry-on be a smaller daypack or backpack. India's sidewalks are either non-existent or practically impassable, and you'll be climbing onto trains and buses and walking some distances (in dust and heat) with your packs, so they should be comfortable and manageable!

## ESSENTIAL

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### Clothing

#### Female:

2-3 Skirts—lightweight, loose/full cut, mid-calf or longer, fully opaque  
or with cotton under slip  
3-4 Blouses/Shirts—lightweight, loose, opaque, not sleeveless, cotton, hip-length  
Underwear/bras—modest, cotton

#### Male:

3-4 Pants—lightweight, durable, neat, perm-press or washable  
3-5 Shirts—lightweight, loose but well-fitting, neat, collar preferable  
Underwear—modest, cotton

#### Gender-neutral:

1 Pair Sturdy Sandals—for long walks and rainy weather (ex. Tevas or Chakos)  
1 Sweater/Flannel/Fleece  
1 Light Waterproof Jacket  
Sun hat/sunglasses—easy to pack/collapsible

### Pharmaceuticals/Toiletries

All medications you take regularly!!!  
Anti-malaria prophylaxis if recommended by your physician  
Mosquito repellent  
Sunscreen—high SPF, sun is intense  
Basic self-medication needs—antibiotic cream, Pepto-Bismol, yeast infection meds, aspirin or other pain reliever, etc  
Anti-bacterial waterless hand cleaner  
Feminine products

### Miscellaneous

Journal—you'll want to keep a daily journal both before your departure and throughout your time in India  
Camera, film, batteries  
Small flashlight  
Sturdy, liter water bottle with screw top  
Money belt/fanny pack  
Small photo album— with family, friends, campus life to show host family  
Travel alarm clock

## OPTIONAL

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### Clothing

#### Female:

1-2 Dresses —also opaque, mid-calf or longer, loose, covering shoulders  
1-2 Pants—lightweight cotton, loose, to be worn with a long top  
*You'll probably end up buying lots of Indian clothing and loving it, so don't over pack! This is mostly to get you started, and for when you need a break.*

#### Male:

1 Dress Pants  
1 Dress Shirt  
Inexpensive tailoring is easily available—you, too, will also probably end up getting clothes there and loving them!

#### Gender-neutral:

Jeans—exclusively for travel  
1 Pair Walking Shoes—for any hiking you think you might do  
1 Pair Flip-Flops—very cheap in India  
Swimsuit—modest, one-piece for women

### Pharmaceuticals/Toiletries

Contact lens materials—glasses are really much more convenient; electric lens cleaners not recommended  
Any particular products you can't live without  
Birth-control/condoms—we recommend you abstain in India, but want you to protect yourself  
Personal Mini-First Aid Kit

### Miscellaneous

Walkman/music  
Ziploc bags—you'll never realize how many uses these have  
Combination and luggage locks—for traveling, privacy  
Swiss army knife/Leatherman—don't pack in carry-on luggage!  
Inflatable travel pillow  
Games—Frisbee, cards, chess, etc.  
Musical Instrument—if you play one  
Hair bands/barrettes for long hair  
Electrical adapters for electronics or small electric appliances  
Empty, lightweight duffle bag for accumulated Indian gifts, clothes, etc.

## Things to Keep in Mind While Packing:

### Pack Light!

- ❖ Bring only one carry-on and one check-in.
- ❖ If you'd like, bring an empty duffle bag in your luggage for all the stuff you collect and buy (this also can be purchased in India).
- ❖ We strongly recommend that you leave your laptops and other electronics at home; but if you can't live without something electronic, make sure it is lightweight.

### Clothing

- ❖ Clothing should be clean and presentable, but also bring items you won't mind leaving behind if you run out of packing room, or if your clothing does not survive the vigorous laundry system in India.
- ❖ Bring 1-2 items for when you want a taste of home (i.e. a favorite college t-shirt, favorite baseball cap) or items you want extremely inexpensive copies made from.

### Pharmaceuticals/Toiletries

- ❖ Not everything is available in India, but most things you will NEED over the course of 4 months are available. For example, items such as shampoo, toothpaste, and soap are inexpensive and readily available.
- ❖ If you are very particular about a brand name, it is best you bring it because available products are often local varieties. If you are not particular about products, it is fun to try local varieties (i.e. sandal, herbal, ayurvedic).
- ❖ Unless you are very liberal with items such as mosquito repellent, hand sanitizer or sunscreen, one regular sized bottle will usually last an entire semester. If you do run out, the SITA Center usually has a box of surplus toiletries left by previous students. And there are local varieties available.

### Food

- ❖ Pack yourself a few treats such as bag of candy or favorite food to be saved for a rainy day, or to cook for your host family.
- ❖ If you do bring candy or food, make sure it is packaged well (i.e. original packaging plus Ziploc bags), not only for customs, but because Indian ants love American goodies.

### Gifts for Host Family and Others

In addition to packing items for your stay in Madurai, it is a good idea to bring several gifts for your family and for other important people you meet during the semester. These are some suggested gift ideas:

- ❖ Photo album with photos of your family and friends at home, college, daily life and activities, hometown, etc.-leave some spaces blank to fill with pictures of you and your host family together (Culture Note: Please be conservative with photos in terms of clothing, drinking, and/or boyfriend/girlfriend)
- ❖ Picture books/Calendars—especially from your area of the U.S.
- ❖ Drawing pens/crayons/coloring books/stickers—for your younger host brothers and sisters
- ❖ T-shirts—with college, hometown or state logo, rock group, etc. for kids and young men
- ❖ Other small college, hometown or state logo items
- ❖ Costume Jewelry—bright, gold-colored or colorful; inexpensive for female children, better quality for adults (for example, decorative, small, dressy-looking pin for sari shoulder-pleats)
- ❖ Decorative hair bands/barrettes—all women and female children wear their hair back with flowers
- ❖ Knick-knack items from your hometown/college—Many families have a display case for things like stuffed animals, snow globes, toy cars, ceramic figurines, etc.

### Miscellaneous

- ❖ Avoid bringing products with lots of packaging because what might be easy to recycle in the U.S. might end up on the street in your neighborhood in India.
- ❖ Lastly, when your bags are packed (assuming it isn't minutes before you leave for the airport) take a walk around your neighborhood with your luggage and pretend it is 95-105 degrees. Now do you really need everything in your bag?

# Advice from Alumni

This is a list of suggestions and recommendations that SITA alumni created and wanted to pass on to future SITA students. They thought these suggestions and reminders would be helpful for any new student coming to India, we are including them here in the hope they will constitute useful advice from the student perspective.

## What to Bring

### Food Items

- ❖ Drink mixes make the 4-5 liters of water a day taste better (i.e. Gatorade)
- ❖ Gum (sugar free)
- ❖ Recipes from home that you can cook for your family (note: no ovens available)
- ❖ 1-2 food items you think you might really miss (i.e. candy, spices, power bars)

### Clothing Items

- ❖ Sandals that can get dirty and slip on and off easily (also readily available in Madurai)
- ❖ Bring dark conservative underwear and bras. You will be washing all your own underwear and sometimes hanging it out to dry in a public area. Dark colors hide any stains or unwanted discoloration that comes from hand washing. What do you want your host family and the neighborhood to see?

### Toiletries

- ❖ Items not available or difficult to find: sunscreen, floss, deodorant, conditioner (although local women just use coconut oil), and tampons. However, regarding feminine products, sunscreen, mosquito repellent, and hand sanitizer—the SITA center has a huge supply left over from previous years, please do not bring large quantities of these items!
- ❖ To pack light, and for other reasons, we recommend an alternative to tampons, the Keeper, available at [www.thekeeper-store.com](http://www.thekeeper-store.com).

### Snail Mail

Inevitably, you will want more mail than you receive. Ask friends and family, especially your parents to prepare some letters for you to take with you. For example, a letter to open on the first night with your host family, a letter to open after an especially exhausting or difficult day, a letter to open when you aren't feeling well, etc. Snail mail is wonderful, but sometimes it just isn't there when you really need it.

### Miscellaneous Items

- ❖ Micro cassette recorder for interviews during Independent Study
- ❖ Pens in bulk to give away to street children
- ❖ Comfort item from home (i.e. photos of friends/family, small stuffed animal, favorite book, favorite CD)

### When You Arrive

- ❖ Time is very different in India. If someone says, "Just five minutes," that could easily mean "thirty minutes."
- ❖ Beggars: If you want to give something, carry biscuits/fruit to give to children and women. But know that they will still grab, pinch, or follow you at times.
- ❖ Be patient, whatever you are waiting for will eventually happen.
- ❖ A high level of curiosity does not mean people are being rude. Many people are sincerely interested in why you are here.
- ❖ It is normal to stare. And you can stare back.
- ❖ Balance your adaptation within the culture. Figure out what you can keep of your own identity while accepting new aspects of the culture. For example, just because you are wearing different clothes doesn't mean you are a different person, but you can bring things to remind you of home (i.e. bring photos from home, favorite t-shirt to wear outside of Madurai, stuffed animal).
- ❖ Even if it makes you feel uncomfortable at first...try it out. Ask yourself why it makes you uncomfortable, and if it is something you can do for a few months and adapt to (i.e. Muslim women cover their head when they eat, if living with a Muslim family, try it!).

## Communication

- ❖ Be aware of how you speak with Indians. You will have difficulty in understanding people at first due to their accent and they will have difficulty understanding your American English.
- ❖ Be aware of your tone of voice, emphasis, volume, and vocabulary. If someone is unable to understand you, change the structure of your sentence or use different vocabulary. Just because they don't understand doesn't mean they are not as intelligent, but they may not be fluent in English and are used to British English not American English.
- ❖ The same words can have different meanings (i.e. funny, dull, overwhelmed, napkin). Remember that the intelligence of the person is higher than the level of the conversation.
- ❖ Also, if they don't understand, speaking louder will not help.
- ❖ Your communication with Indians will change and develop over the course of the semester—watch the process. Your English will change.
- ❖ Always assume they know more English than they do and you can adjust if you need to.
- ❖ Appreciate the universal forms of communication. Nonverbal communication can say a lot (hand gestures, body language, tone of voice, facial expressions).
- ❖ Appreciate that English is widespread in India.
- ❖ Beware of interrupting people speaking Tamil. Just because you don't understand the conversation, doesn't mean it is the ideal moment to jump in.

## During the Semester

- ❖ When traveling in large groups, service will always take longer. Be patient. A large group, just like in the U.S. can easily overwhelm restaurant staff. It is always a good idea to order simple items, or order items to share and split the bill.
- ❖ Volume: be conscious of your noise level, especially when traveling in groups and in public places.
- ❖ Even rickshaws will get lost and need to ask for directions.
- ❖ Don't be afraid to ask directions when exploring the city.
- ❖ Bargaining: Be respectful, they are people too, and may need those 5 rupees more than you do.
- ❖ Even after three to four months of living in Madurai, we still do not know the subtle etiquette of interactions. In addition, just because we see certain types of interactions between servants and their employer for example, does not make it right for us to behave that way.
- ❖ Remember your privilege and background.
- ❖ Men are not all bad, but avoid large packs of men together.
- ❖ Photographs: People will ask you to be in their photos, think about your answer because SITA students are often taking photos of Indian people without permission.
- ❖ Professors: Be respectful. How would you treat a professor back at home? Be quiet and attentive in class. Maintain a more formal classroom etiquette—no feet on the desk, no slouching, no food/beverages etc.
- ❖ Ask questions and try to engage in conversation with your family or others you are with. Sometimes being quiet can be seen as rude.
- ❖ If someone asks if you are a virgin, always say, "yes" if you have never been married. Virginity implies you are not married yet.

## **Part 2** **Program Overview**

**South India**

**Temple City of Madurai**

**Operations**

**Program Staff**

**Arrival Orientation**

**Coursework**

**Independent Study**

**Expressive Culture**

**Semester Travel & Field Trips**

**Post-Program Travel**

**Year-Long Program**



## South India

Tamil Nadu and the three other states in southern India—Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala—are in many ways distinct from the rest of India. Their state languages, all members of the Dravidian language family, are unrelated to the languages of the north. Different climate and rainfall patterns have led to variations in farming methods and crops, in dietary staples and ways of cooking, and even in the cycle of rituals performed during the different seasons of the year. Dress styles also serve as distinguishing markers of a person's place of origin.

Historically, waves of invaders that swept from west to east across northern parts of the country, overpowering local rulers and introducing new religious and political ideologies, but these invaders had much less impact on the kingdoms of the south. The southern kingdoms fought among themselves over the land and resources of their region. Some were powerful and prosperous, trading over sea routes that stretched from Rome to Southeast and East Asia as early as the 3rd century B.C.E. One Tamil empire even encompassed Sri Lanka and part of Indonesia. Not until the advent of British colonial rule was the entire Indian subcontinent united as a geo-political entity. The southern states are very conscious and proud of their distinctive history.

Tamils are extremely proud of their linguistic and historical roots. Symbols of their unique past are found everywhere. Centuries-old temples and palaces built by Tamil kings dominate the landscape in many cities and towns. Literary works produced by a Tamil poets' academy, written on palm leaves, are among the oldest extant manuscripts of their kind in the world. Music and dance forms that originated in the area in the distant past continue to be practiced. Traditional cultural forms are proudly pointed out as indicating the historical depth and sophistication of Tamil culture.

## Madurai

At the center of much of this cultural development is Madurai, a temple town that is still widely regarded as representing the epitome of Tamil culture. A trade and commercial center of over a million people, Madurai feels like a small town, but is often described as a large village. There are some of the trappings of "Western" lifestyle—a few restaurants serving non-Indian food, cable television (offering the worst of American shows), refrigerators in increasing numbers, even video/DVD rental shops and an ever-growing computer industry. But cows still wander the streets, elephants make their rounds to collect money for temples, and streets and sidewalks are lined with vendors selling fruits, vegetables, flowers, toys and knick-knacks.

The large Meenakshi temple, with its towering gates located in the city center, was begun in 1250 C.E., and later expanded by a series of rulers. It continues to attract Hindu pilgrims from all over India, as well as Western scholars interested in South Indian goddess worship. This imposing structure, and all it represents, plays an important part in the lives of local people as well pilgrims. But even with a temple the size of several football fields, there are still thousands of neighborhood shrines in Madurai that have significant meaning for the area's residents. For Muslims there are a number of mosques, and churches for Christians, all of which participate in the ritual of blaring calls to prayer from loudspeakers mounted high above the streets. In addition to temples and shrines there are streets exclusively dedicated to jewelry stores, another street that sells only radios and tape decks, and others that sell everything from PVC piping to bangles. Exploring Madurai from the crowded markets to the quiet tree-lined American College or Lady Doak College campuses is best done on foot or bicycle, though buses enable movement between the various parts of town.

Madurai is considered the seat of Tamil culture and is probably the most traditional city of its size in all of India, but it is quickly changing. However, people who live in Madurai love and revel in its traditions, reputation, and experiences. Many students say they feel safer in Madurai than they do in any large American city. Crime is not a major problem in Madurai, but one must certainly be careful with a wallet, camera or any valuable item—especially when around the local monkeys!

## Operations

The SITA Center is located in a residential area of Madurai, adjacent to Lady Doak College (a women's college), a short bicycle ride from American College (mostly male), and 10 minutes by bus or 20 minutes on bicycle from the main part of town. Classes meet at the SITA Center in an air-conditioned room built for this purpose, as temperatures are likely to be in the mid- to upper-90s during the semester. The SITA Center may also serve as a residence for SITA staff or guests, and houses the program's administrative offices and library. Computer facilities at Lady Doak College are available for SITA students' use, and there are also several inexpensive cybercafes in the area. Students are provided individual lockers at the center for safekeeping of valuables, and the roof of the center is a space where students can relax in between classes.

## Program Staff

There are many people who make the SITA Program possible, and with whom you'll be collaborating closely throughout your affiliation with the program. Please familiarize yourself with SITA staff and their roles.

### In the United States:

- ❖ Executive Director: is responsible for the overall program operations; manages the admission and predeparture process, and oversees staff and faculty in India.

### In India:

- ❖ Resident Director: is a U.S.-based faculty member who is responsible for operations in India and works closely with students throughout the semester. The resident director teaches the ethnographic methods class, supervises the independent study projects, assists students in translating their experiences into an academic framework, and acts as an advisor-consultant in curricular matters and cultural adjustment issues.
- ❖ Program Coordinator: is the Indian staff member responsible for all travel and logistical arrangements for the program in India.
- ❖ Host Family Coordinator: is the Indian staff member responsible for host family placements, who acts as a liaison between families and students during the program and also manages administrative operations in Madurai.
- ❖ Program Assistants: are SITA alumni who act as peer advisors throughout the program, imparting predeparture cultural information and advice, helping students deal with cultural issues in India, and facilitating the well being of the students throughout the program.

## Arrival Orientation

The SITA Program commences in India with a week of cultural orientation, intensive Tamil language study, and lectures on ancient South Indian history, religious iconography and temple architecture at a secluded location outside of Madurai. The orientation sessions provide an overview of the semester, the host family experience, health and safety issues, program policies and procedures, and roles and responsibilities of students and staff. This is a time for you to learn, listen, ask questions, and get to know the other students and staff you will be with for the semester.

After the initial arrival orientation, the group travels together to Madurai. Students receive a brief orientation to the city and the SITA Center. If students haven't already been shopping for Indian clothes, there will be time for a shopping trip before meeting the host families at the welcome tea. Students move in with their host families, and classes begin immediately!

## Coursework

The coursework period covers approximately the first half of the program. Students take classes that introduce them to the culture, language, history, and social structure of South India and prepare them for their independent study project. Required courses are Tamil Language and Ethnographic Methods, the latter of which includes a discussion component led by the program assistants. Students then choose two of three possible electives: Socio-Political Issues, Hinduism: Art and Myth, and Modern Indian Fiction. Independent Study also is a required course, but it occurs in the final month of the program and will be addressed later in this section.

The SITA Program offers a total of 16 credits for successful completion of the program. The breakdown of credits is as follows:

❖ Tamil Language	3 credits
❖ Ethnographic Methods	4 credits
❖ Elective 1	3 credits
❖ Elective 2	3 credits
❖ Independent Study	3 credits

Please review the sample syllabi in the appendix for detailed information on courses. Though the exact title and specific readings may change, the basic thematic content remains constant from semester to semester.

## Independent Study

The final month of the program is devoted to independent study projects. Each student has an opportunity to focus on a topic of particular interest and explore it in detail. Independent study projects are designed and carried out in consultation with the resident director. Preparation starts at the beginning of the program with the Ethnographic Methods class, so initial proposals can be refined and advance groundwork begun during the coursework period. Four weeks of field research form the basis for the term paper, and the results of each student's independent study project are presented in a seminar that concludes the program. This final gathering and seminar also provides an opportunity for participants to share their experiences during the independent study time, and to reflect upon the program as a whole.

## Expressive Culture

In addition to regular coursework, students are required to take from ten to fifteen classes in an expressive culture during the semester. Past SITA students have taken classes in:

- ❖ BharataNatayam—South Indian classical dance
- ❖ Mirdungam—two-sided South Indian classical drum
- ❖ Tabla—two separate drums
- ❖ Violin—played in the South Indian style
- ❖ Flute—wooden variety
- ❖ Thanjor Painting—South Indian bright ornate Hindu paintings
- ❖ Kolam—ephemeral sand art
- ❖ Yoga—meditation and stretching
- ❖ Cilambum—Traditional Tamil martial arts

At the end of the semester, students are expected to give a brief performance at the farewell tea function or offer a display from their classes.

## Semester Travel & Field Trips

Every semester is crafted differently depending on the dates of the program, dates of important festivals, the weather, and the composition of the student group. Usually the coursework and independent study periods are separated by a long tour of the neighboring southern states, but again, each semester's calendar may vary. Below is a list of places past SITA groups have visited during the program that you may be visiting this semester. However, there is not time to visit all of these places each semester, so we recommend visiting remaining locations during post-program travel.

## Tamil Nadu

- ❖ Mahabalipuram is now only a small town, in the 7th to 8th centuries it was an important seaport and second capital of the Pallavas, and base for naval expeditions to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Magnificent monolith rock sculptures and temples remain as monuments to the artistic creativity of the period. A day trip is made to Kanchipuram, one of the seven holy cities of ancient India, and the capital of several ruling dynasties (Cholas, Pallavas, and Vijayanagara). Here are found a wealth of temples, built by successive rulers between the 6th and 16th centuries, and thousands of weavers producing some of the finest handloom silk in India.
- ❖ Pondicherry is a former French colony that still has a few pockets of French culture left, including the decorated police, the French consulate, a few French bakeries, and an occasional French film at the Alliance Francaise. Pondicherry also is home to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, founded in 1926 by Sri Aurobindo and a French woman known as The Mother. Less than 10 kilometers away is Auroville, an experiment in international living that was the idea of The Mother and was begun with great fanfare in 1968. Currently there are over 1500 residents trying to create a cooperative environmental and socially conscious community in rural India.
- ❖ Thanjavur, the former royal capital city ruled by the Cholas from 200-1400 C.E., has a massive 10th century temple and 16th century palace and art museum. From Thanjavur, it is easy to take several day-trips to Swamimalai, where India's finest icon makers use the lost wax method to cast sacred images for temples in India and abroad; Darasuram, a beautifully carved ancient temple; and Velankanni, the Basilica of Our Lady of Healing, located on the Bay of Bengal and visited by people from all faiths.
- ❖ Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, on the border between Karnataka & Tamil Nadu, is known for its elephant rides into the jungle, observation of wild animals and birds, and foot treks into parts of the sanctuary.
- ❖ Kanyakumari is at the very tip of the Indian subcontinent where the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea converge. Many pilgrims flock here to watch the sunrise and sunset over the oceans, bathe in the holy waters, and visit the temples.

## Karnataka

- ❖ Mysore is the former seat of the Maharajas of the princely state of Mysore (now Karnataka). An excursion to a superbly sculptured 13th century temple, the Star Temple; and a trip to massive 10th century sculpture, Sravana Belagola, a Jain pilgrimage site are all a part of the Mysore experience.
- ❖ Bylakuppe, another stop not far from Mysore, is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery and refugee center for displaced Tibetans, where evening debates and morning prayers can be observed.
- ❖ Hampi was the capital city of the powerful 14th to 16th century Vijayanagar kingdom, where hillsides are scattered with caves and ruins of the once mighty city.

## Kerala

- ❖ Cochin is a port city with colonial influences of Portuguese, Dutch and British, and an early (c. 70 C.E.) "Black" Jewish community.
- ❖ The Kerala backwaters must be explored by boat, taking you through lakes and canals, further illuminating the sharp contrasts between this lush, verdant state and the semi-arid Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Trivandrum is built on seven hills on the coast, maintaining traditional Keralan architecture while also facing growing pains of modernization such as traffic and increased air pollution. It hosts several museums, galleries, temples and gardens worthy of a visit.
- ❖ Thekkady/Kumily is a hill-station and wildlife sanctuary just across the Tamil Nadu border, about 4 hours from Madurai. There are boat trips, treks, spice tours and shopping in the cool climate of the hills.

## Post-Program Travel

At the semester's conclusion (around early December or May), students are free to return to the U.S. or to travel on their own in India or elsewhere in South Asia. While it is advisable to start thinking about post-program travel as early as possible, it is important to stay present in the experience you are having at the time. While planning future trips can be lots of fun, it can also be very time-consuming and distracting. Think about what you would like to do after the program, but remember where you are and what you are doing.

If you think you want to travel after the program, plan early to avoid frustration before you depart from the U.S.. Here are some recommendations for smooth post-program planning & travel:

- ❖ Book your return flight before you leave for India. It is possible from India, but can be a longer and more frustrating process.
- ❖ Identify others with similar post-program travel itineraries, budgets, timelines and interests early in the semester.
- ❖ Familiarize yourself with the Indian Railway Schedule & book tickets early.
- ❖ Bring your own The Lonely Planet: India.
- ❖ Confirm dates and restrictions of travel given your student visa.
- ❖ Type up your itinerary including dates of travel, modes of transport (names, numbers, departure/arrival information), lodging, and contact information.
- ❖ Make copies of your itinerary for the SITA Center and send a copy to your parents.

## Year-Long Program

Fall students also have the option to extend their stay for a second semester. Students who are interested in this option are asked to make this known as early as possible, but a commitment will not be required until early October. Students will be given a Second-Semester Intent form, where they are to outline their proposed program of study, and then submit it to their academic advisor and other relevant home school officials for approval.

The idea of the second-semester component is that exceptional students, having gone through the structured first-semester program, are now given the opportunity to pursue a course of individualized study specific to their interests, work one-on-one with their favorite professors, do an internship, and live independently. The second semester is intended for highly motivated and self-directed students who are comfortable operating with minimal supervision and living outside the context of a host family, and second-semester students often become informal peer-mentors to new spring students.

Instead of taking five courses as in the fall, students take four courses at four credits each. A recommended program of study would include:

- ❖ Advanced Tamil
- ❖ Internship with a local NGO supervised by a SITA faculty member
- ❖ Independent Study with the resident director
- ❖ Either the elective that the student did not take in the fall, or a tutorial of the student's choosing

Students are provided an apartment, a cook/housekeeper, bicycles for transportation, and an increased living stipend. The cost of the second-semester program is equal to the cost of the first semester, and all room and board expenses, program-related travel, in-country medical insurance, visa extension costs, return travel to the U.S., course materials, and tuition are included.

Though second-semester students are afforded much greater independence in and around Madurai, they are still expected to abide by all SITA policies and must obtain permission from the resident director to travel outside Madurai.



## **Part 3** Financial Matters

**Fees**

**Payment**

**Refund Policy**

**Stipend**

**Travel Medical Insurance**

**Tuition Insurance**

**Spending Money in India**



## Fees

The comprehensive fee for member school students is equivalent to one semester's tuition, room, and board at their home institution, with all scholarships and financial aid applying. Non-member school students are charged a comprehensive fee that is commensurate with member school tuitions, room, and board; federal financial aid is applicable for non-member school students, but granting of institutional aid is subject to the discretion of that student's home school.

The SITA program fee covers all program-related expenses during the period of enrollment. These items include but are not limited to:

- ❖ International airfare
- ❖ Room and board
- ❖ Program-related transportation expenses
- ❖ 6 course credits
- ❖ All course materials
- ❖ Travel medical insurance
- ❖ Living stipend
- ❖ AHS student visa authorization fee
- ❖ Expressive culture classes

In addition, the comprehensive fee supports overall program operations, providing:

- ❖ Low student/faculty ratio
- ❖ High level of staff support
- ❖ Contingency fund for national or international emergencies
- ❖ Program infrastructure and U.S. administration
- ❖ Local grants given to the Madurai community

Students are expected to cover expenses including but not limited to:

- ❖ Domestic travel to and from the common point of departure from the U.S.
- ❖ Passport and consular visa fee
- ❖ Pre-program medical expenses (e.g. inoculations, prescriptions and malaria prophylaxis)
- ❖ Expenses for school supplies
- ❖ Tips (unless directed otherwise)
- ❖ Telephone, fax, email and postage
- ❖ Gifts for host family
- ❖ Beverages that are not a customary part of meals
- ❖ Food outside of customary meals provided by the program
- ❖ Baggage or tuition insurance (optional)

## Payment

A \$500 deposit that is credited towards the student's program fee must be received before participation in a program can be confirmed. The deposit is nonrefundable and may not be transferred to another term, unless the program is cancelled due to extenuating circumstances.

Payment of the balance of the program fee for member school students will be transferred directly from the member school to the SITA Program. Payment of the balance of the program fee is due from non-member school students no later than July 15th for fall semester, or November 15th for spring semester. The program reserves the right to deny a student participation in the program, or to withhold granting of credit if payment is not received in full.

## Refund Policy

After acceptance to the program and receipt of the nonrefundable deposit, refunds in the event of withdrawal will be made according to the schedule below. Refunds will be calculated from the time SITA is notified by the student or by the last date of association with the program, whichever is later. The executive director will determine the total amount of any refund. After the refund amount has been determined, balances will be refunded or invoices issued for outstanding funds.

The program fee is nonrefundable after the group departs for India. This is non-negotiable. Students might want to consider purchasing tuition insurance if they feel their successful completion of the program is in any doubt. If a student withdraws before departure for India, refunds will be granted according to the following schedule:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ❖ The day of the group's U. S. departure: | No refund  |
| ❖ Up to two weeks before departure:       | 50% refund of comprehensive fee minus deposit  |
| ❖ Up to one month before departure:       | 75% refund of comprehensive fee minus deposit  |
| ❖ 6 weeks before departure:               | 100% refund of comprehensive fee, minus deposit and any applicable airline penalties |

Note: In all cases, airline penalties are at the discretion of the carrier.

If a student believes individual circumstances warrant an exception to these procedures, a written request with supporting documentation should be sent to the executive director.

## Stipend

The SITA Program on-site staff will distribute a living stipend approximately once a month during the semester to cover expenses such as lunch, local transportation, basic living expenses, and other academic or program-related expenses.

## Travel Medical Insurance

All SITA students will be covered by the same travel medical insurance provided by the program. Please refer to the coverage information included in "Part 5: Health, Safety and Risk Management" and in the Appendix of this handbook. Students will be required to cover on-site medical expenses, and must keep the receipts and submit them to the insurance company for reimbursement. In the event of major medical expenses, the SITA Program will cover the initial expense but must be reimbursed in either of the following manners:

- ❖ In India, from the student, within 30 days of incurring the medical expense or the end of the program, whichever comes first.
- ❖ In the U.S., from the financial guardians, within 30 days of incurring the medical expense or the end of the program, whichever comes first.

The insurance provider will reimburse the student according to the terms of coverage. Beyond providing the coverage, the SITA Program is in no way responsible for any transactions between the student and the insurance provider, or for any expenses that are not covered by the insurance provider.

## Tuition Insurance

Several member schools offer tuition insurance to their students. You may want to look into the possibility of private tuition insurance. This would cover lost tuition if you have to withdraw from the program after the comprehensive fee becomes nonrefundable. Typically tuition insurance will cover study abroad, assuming tuition is paid directly to the home institution. However, if you are applying to the SITA Program from outside of the consortium, your institution's tuition insurance provider may not cover the SITA Program. Please contact your home institution for further information about tuition insurance.

# Spending Money in India

Here is a guideline for planning how much money to bring, how to carry money, and how students typically spend money:

- ❖ You will not need money for daily living expenses or program-related activities. All regular expenses for room, board, and travel are covered. In addition, students will be given a monthly allowance for basic living expenses.
- ❖ You will need money for expenses such as personal travel, clothes, gifts, souvenirs, and phone/fax/email costs. A very loose recommendation is about \$400 to 500 per semester, depending upon your personal spending habits.
- ❖ Bring additional funds for post-program travel, or travel in between semesters if you're staying for the full year. Such travel is fairly inexpensive in South Asia, except for air travel and luxury hotels. Budget travelers usually spend about \$15 to 20 per day in India.
- ❖ Traveler's checks are the safest and most reliable way to carry money. They can be cashed at some hotels, Money Exchange offices, and some banks (passport required). However, there is sometimes an additional fee charged for cashing traveler's checks.
- ❖ U.S. currency usually can be exchanged at the same places as traveler's checks (passport required). As everywhere, rates will vary.
- ❖ ATMs are becoming more common in India every year. Bring a bankcard associated with a Visa/MasterCard in your name, but do not depend on it exclusively. You must know the PIN number for each card. Inquire with the bank about international service charges & currency exchange fees for ATM use before departure. As in the U.S., the banking institution in India might charge additional fees for ATM use.
- ❖ Most credit cards are accepted in exclusive stores, hotels and restaurants.
- ❖ The best advice is to have several ways to access and use money. A combination of traveler's checks, a bankcard, a credit card, and U.S. currency is the safest, most reliable way to carry money in India.
- ❖ Be sure to have a money belt that you can wear under your clothes when traveling. This is indispensable! In Madurai you will be provided with safe storage for money and documents.



## **Part 4** **Academic Affairs**

**Performance Evaluation**

**Student Withdrawal Procedure**

**Academic Probation**

**Academic Dismissal**

**Grades**

**Transcripts**

**Academic Appeal Process**



## Performance Evaluation

Academic assessment is ongoing throughout the semester or year, through papers, presentations, exams, language use and proficiency, cultural adjustment, field trips and tours, and meetings with staff and faculty. SITA students are expected to take responsibility for their learning by setting goals and working towards them systematically. The importance of taking the initiative, setting goals, and achieving a high quality of academic performance is emphasized throughout the program.

Satisfactory academic performance is based on a student's ability to meet the requirements of each individual course and the student's ability to function within the program as a whole. Specific academic expectations and grading criteria for each course will be discussed at the beginning of the semester.

## Student Withdrawal Procedure

The SITA program does NOT permit students to withdraw from an individual course. Students will be given the option of taking two of three elective courses, but after the initial decision is made a student may not change courses. If a student wishes to withdraw from the program, the student must notify the resident director, who will ask the student to sign a withdrawal form. Upon notification, or last date of association with the program, whichever is later, the student will be considered withdrawn from the entire program. Once withdrawn, the student will not be permitted any further association with the program and will forgo any of the benefits that the program provides, including insurance coverage, visa sponsorship and host family accommodation. Students agree that when they withdraw or are withdrawn from the program, they will leave the program site and discontinue contact with the program. Students will be responsible for making their own return travel arrangements from the program site and covering all expenses henceforth.

Grades will be assigned and credit will be given for passing grades in courses completed on or before the date of withdrawal from the program, provided that course requirements are met before the student withdraws.

## Academic Probation

A student may be placed on academic probation, and will be notified of such in writing if s/he has:

- ❖ Received a letter of warning from the resident director indicating that the \* student is failing to work up to the standards or within the spirit of the program.
- ❖ Received an incomplete and has not satisfactorily outlined a course of action to meet any outstanding course requirements.
- ❖ Failed 33% or more of course requirements.
- ❖ Received a grade of "F" for any course.

The student is required to discuss his or her academic status with the resident director and make a plan to regain satisfactory status.

## Academic Dismissal

A student is subject to dismissal and is so notified in writing if, in the opinion of the resident director (and other academic program staff as necessary) s/he has:

- ❖ Failed to meet the conditions of any academic probation.
- ❖ Failed 50% or more of the program requirements.
- ❖ Demonstrated inadequate quality of participation.

In cases of dismissal, the resident director makes a recommendation to the executive director who will make the final decision. SITA's only obligation to a dismissed student is to confirm in writing the reasons for dismissal.

# Grades

Grades will be given in accordance with the system below.

Grade	Equivalent
A	4.0 or 94-100
A-	3.7 or 90-93
B+	3.3 or 87-89
B	3.0 or 84-86
B-	2.7 or 80-83
C+	2.3 or 77-79
C	2.0 or 74-76
C-	1.7 or 70-73
D+	1.3 or 67-69
D	1.0 or 64-66
F	0.0 or below 64
I	Incomplete
W	Withdrawal

Note: SITA does not award A+ grades

SITA awards letter grades to all students in order to give standard values to an assessment of work. Pass/Fail and Credit/No Credit are not typically options. Other than letter grades, only I and W can be submitted, as explained below.

## I = Incomplete Grade Policy

The expectation is that all course requirements are due on the dates set by instructors in the course syllabi unless prior arrangements are made. A grade of incomplete (I) is awarded only as a result of illness or other extenuating circumstances (such as family emergency), and must be arranged in writing with the resident director at least one week prior to the end of the semester or at the beginning of the evaluation period. At the time of grade submission, the resident director will provide the executive director with a report outlining the agreement made between the student and the resident director for the incomplete grade, not to exceed 60 days after the last day of the term. The resident director is responsible for the submission of a final grade to the executive director within 30 days of the completion of the requirements. If the executive director does not receive final grade within 90 days of the end of the program, the Incomplete will convert to an F.

## W = Withdrawal Grade Policy

If a student withdraws from the program for any reason while a course is in progress, and if enough work has not been performed to assign an adequately passable grade, the grade of W is assigned.

At the discretion of the resident director, a failing grade (F) may be assigned for the Independent Study Project for any student withdrawing without proper justification. Students seeking to withdraw during the independent study project period may only do so within the first 15 days of the independent study period to receive a grade of W. After that time the grade assignment will be F, except in extreme circumstances.

# Transcripts

Students should be advised that an official transcript might take up to 45 days after the program completion date to reach their home institution. Only one official transcript will be sent to the student's home institution, and will be addressed to the Office of the Registrar unless written instructions from the home school specify otherwise.

# Academic Appeal Process

Students have the right to exercise appeals consistent with SITA policies and procedures. Appeals for withdrawals must be made to the executive director within 48 hours of the initial decision. Appeals regarding academics must be made according to the following protocol:

## Phase One

A student seeking a grade change, or an appeal to an academic policy, must first file a written request for reconsideration within one month of the posting of the grade. The letter should be directed to the executive director via the resident director. Any and all relevant materials and information the student has to support the appeal must accompany the letter.

In considering the appeal, the executive director relies on the materials and information which have been submitted, consultation with appropriate in-country faculty and staff, evaluated work which may have remained in-country, the recommendation of the resident director, and any other documentation relevant to the specific grade(s) being appealed. Within one month of receipt of the appeal, the executive director will respond to the student with a letter explaining the decision reached. All materials submitted with the appeal will be returned to the student.

## Phase Two

Should the student want to proceed further, s/he must submit an appeal in writing via the executive director to the SITA Board with any and all relevant materials, documentation, and information appended, and within one month of the postmark on the letter from the executive director. The resident director is given the opportunity to submit any additional response to the student's appeal at this point. Upon receipt of the resident director's response, the executive director will forward all documents to the SITA Board. The board can request additional information from the resident director, executive director, and/or the student if it deems necessary.

The SITA Board will make every attempt to deal with the appeal expeditiously, however, it could take several months for a decision to be made after receiving the appeal.



## **Part 5 Health, Safety, and Risk Management**

### **Safety Statement**

#### **Staying Safe & Healthy**

Water

Avoiding Illness

Bicycle Use

Transportation

Moving Around at Night

Public Interaction

Student Health Insurance

Medical Forms

Medical Access & Support

Support for Psychological Issues

HIV: Policy and Precautions

Program Restrictions

#### **Travel**

Student Independent Travel

Host Family Travel

Post-Program Travel

#### **Sexual Harassment**

Preventing & Combating Sexual Harassment

SITA's Sexual Harassment Policy



# Safety Statement

Since 1990, the SITA program has sent nearly 200 students to India and maintained an excellent safety record. We believe this is primarily the result of students and staff acting responsibly towards themselves, each other, and the Madurai community at large. To ensure the continued well being of all generations of students and staff and the program itself, we require that students adhere to the following policies for the duration of their stay in India. Please read through this and make sure that you are clear about the parameters. Failure to comply with these policies and guidelines is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program and departure from India with no credit.

Because of the extreme diversity of the conditions found throughout India, our safety policies are, of necessity, highly specific and directly related to the local situation. In general, however, SITA relies on the following sources of information, assessing safety and future viability of the program:

- ❖ We monitor U.S. Government advisories and travel warnings, considering both those issued by in-country embassies and consulates, and those made by the U.S. State Department.
- ❖ We rely on the considerable in-situ knowledge and analysis of our on-site staff and cooperating institution colleagues with whom we have enduring relationships.
- ❖ We communicate with the U.S. Consulate warden in Madurai. The warden alerts the on-site program of announcements or warnings issued by the U.S. Consulate in Chennai. The warden is given student passport/visa information as back up in case of emergency.
- ❖ All students are registered with the U.S. Consulate in Chennai for the duration of the program. Students will receive direct email updates from the U.S. Consulate regarding announcements or warnings for the area.

While the above points focus on risk assessment, informing our decisions about whether and/or how to operate the program under potentially challenging or unstable circumstances, the SITA Program model has characteristics which have proven important over the years in minimizing safety risks, street crimes, accidents, exposure to political violence, and so on, once the students are in country.

- ❖ First, our arrival orientation period is a critical component of SITA, where the resident director, program assistants, and staff in India are in a position to educate students about potential safety risks and minimize these risks. Our staff provides further orientation briefings and reminders at key junctures throughout the program.
- ❖ Second, we rely on the homestay component of our program for significant additional community perspectives on local issues. Homestay family members furnish a personal source of reminders to our students about necessary and streetwise precautions.
- ❖ Third, the low student/staff ratio in the SITA program ensures a high level of oversight and communication regarding health and safety matters.

Total safety cannot, of course, be guaranteed in India, just as it cannot be in the United States. However, SITA is committed to take the necessary steps to maximize student safety at each step of the way.

# Staying Safe & Healthy

Students should read the following guidelines and suggestions carefully, and discuss precautions and preventative measures with their health care professionals before departure. Students must acknowledge that they have read and understood the contents of this document before they will be permitted to participate on the program. During orientation, students will receive an additional health briefing, and are expected to follow the recommendations and requirements set forth.

## Water

Follow these guidelines to maintain health:

### Filtered/Boiled/Bottled Water

Drink only boiled and/or filtered water or standard-brand bottled mineral water (check to see that the seal is unbroken). Do not drink beverages with ice because ice is most often made with un-boiled and unfiltered water. It is safe to drink hot tea, coffee, standard-brand cool drinks, fresh lime sodas, and boxed or bottled juices. Ask waiters to open the bottle in front of you. Milk must be boiled before you drink it. Host families, hotels, and tea stalls usually use only boiled milk.

### Hydration

Discovering new foods will be fun, but drinking 3 to 5 liters per day of clean water is the key to your health. In the heat of Madurai, dehydration is common but easy to avoid. All students should carry a 1-liter water bottle at all times. The SITA Center has water coolers and the host families are asked to provide boiled and/or filtered water for students. In addition, tender coconuts full of coconut water are an excellent source of natural electrolytes (essential minerals and salts lost during dehydration).

The number one reason students fall ill in India is dehydration. Dehydration weakens the immune system and the body becomes more susceptible to bacteria and viruses. The program doctor in Madurai recommends that an inactive person (e.g. in bed all day) drink at least 3 liters of water; a mildly active person (e.g. up and about but not exerting much energy) drink 4 liters of water; and an active person (e.g. walking, cycling, shopping in the sun etc.) drink at least 5 liters of water. These amounts seem excessive to many people but keeping your body well hydrated will keep your immune system stronger.

Besides keeping track of what you drink, a good way to monitor hydration is by frequency and quality of urination: you should be urinating every 2-3 hours, and it should be clear, odorless, and plentiful.

If you do become dehydrated (symptoms: thirst, headache, dizzy, tired, weak) and tender coconuts are not available, supplementary electrolytes are available at every medical shop. Alternatively, you can make your own by adding a spoonful of salt, a spoonful of sugar and lime/lemon juice to a liter of water.

### A New Technique

How you drink water is almost as important as the quality and quantity of water you drink. The first week will be spent learning many things including how to master the skill of drinking water in India, not only because it is an art but also because water is the key ingredient to staying healthy in such a hot climate. It is considered inappropriate to drink from a cup with your lips actually touching it. Because Indians consider saliva to be a pollutant, touching a surface with your own saliva is impure. This makes health sense, because many people will share one cup in India, and this way they don't have to worry about spreading germs. After mastering drinking cooler liquids like water and lime juice, the next challenge is hot tea and coffee. This technique is only required if you are sharing a glass or drinking from tumblers with a curved lip on top suited for this kind of drinking.

## Avoiding Illness

Switching from one type of food (American) to another (Indian) can often cause stomach upset. This is a normal reaction to new food, and a new environment because digestive bacteria must be replaced with the new South Indian variety and it takes time to adjust to the new bacteria. Most SITA students will have an upset stomach within the first month because of this change in bacteria. In addition, the germs in India are not necessarily worse than our germs, but they are different and we are not used to them.

Though most students feel healthier overall in India than in the U.S. because of all the exercise and good food, inevitably students will get sick at least once during the semester. Please notify the SITA staff immediately of any illness, or even if you're just feeling "under the

weather.” The program has a doctor that is familiar with SITA students and the illnesses that often affect Americans in India. The host families have been asked not to take students to their doctor, but to allow SITA to monitor and direct care of the students’ health needs.

It might be impossible to totally avoid illness, but there are some guidelines all travelers to India should follow to maintain health:

### **Food**

- ❖ Avoid uncooked/un-boiled vegetables and fruits that cannot be peeled (i.e. grapes) unless they are properly washed.
- ❖ Avoid peeled fruits that have been sitting out (i.e. pre-cut pineapple, papaya, watermelon).
- ❖ Do not drink sugar cane juice or dates sold in the open.
- ❖ Food sold by street vendors has been exposed to dust and flies, and some vendors may use old oil, so beware of anything deep-fried!
- ❖ Non-vegetarians may eat meat prepared by their host families (if they too are non-vegetarian), or inquire as to which restaurants serve safe meat dishes.
- ❖ The families have been advised about what foods students should and should not eat.

### **Hygiene**

- ❖ Shower one to two times a day.
- ❖ Wash your hands frequently, especially before and after meals, and after using the bathroom.
- ❖ Wash your feet when returning home.
- ❖ Clean and use antibiotic cream for any cuts, scraps, or open wounds to protect against infection.
- ❖ Keep nails short and wash under your nails frequently.

### **Bicycle Use**

Students will be given bicycles for use while in Madurai. SITA staff will provide each student with a helmet and strongly encourages the use of helmets at all times. Staff will also instruct students in safety precautions on Indian roads. Students should heed these precautions at all times and follow these basic rules of the road:

- ❖ Stay on the left side of the road.
- ❖ Yield to larger vehicles.
- ❖ Obey traffic lights & traffic police.
- ❖ Use your bell to communicate passing, turning, merging, crossing an intersection etc.
- ❖ Pass to the right.
- ❖ Use a light at night.

### **Transportation**

Most host family houses are no more than a 20-minute cycle ride from the SITA Center. Becoming comfortable on your bicycle can save time and money. However, longer distances require the bus, which is a comprehensive system and very inexpensive. Similarly, rickshaws will get you anywhere in the city but are much more expensive. Technically, there should be no bargaining, but until the rickshaws get working meters, it is best to agree on a fare before you get it in. Also, if a rickshaw has a working meter, insist that they use it. Avoid taking rickshaws at night into areas with which you are unfamiliar or make sure someone you know knows the driver of the vehicle.

### **Moving Around at Night**

Host families expect students to return home around 6 p.m., or by dark. If you plan to be out later than this, inform your host family preferably that same morning to facilitate their plans, especially regarding cooking. For their sake, and for the student’s own safety, students should avoid moving around much later than 9 p.m. on any occasion. After dark, students should move around only in well-known areas and preferably in groups or with SITA staff.

## Public Interactions

SITA students should not be afraid of moving freely in Madurai, however, there are some general precautions and safety tips all travelers to India should follow:

- ❖ Do not display money on the street. You should only carry money necessary for daily expenses, say a few hundred rupees, in your pocket or a small change purse that is easy to access.
- ❖ As in the U.S., when you are traveling in an unfamiliar, crowded place, hang on to your purse, camera, or bag rather than letting it dangle from your shoulder.
- ❖ People will approach you on the streets simply to say “hello” and “which country coming from?” The majority of everyone you meet has only the most innocent of intentions (and don't realize they are the 534th person to ask you that question), but it is always important to be watchful and aware.
- ❖ Around major tourist attractions and in heavily congested areas, there will be men inviting tourists to their shops, or to take a “private tour” of a monument that is “not open to the public.” These offers may be sincere and genuine, but many are not. Avoid accepting such offers from strangers.
- ❖ Avoid food and drinks from strangers.

## Student Health Insurance

SITA will provide students with travel medical insurance as specified in the predeparture materials. All students are automatically covered by this insurance for the period of their enrollment on the program, and students should read these policies carefully and arrange for any supplemental coverage desired. The insurance identification card contains a summary of coverage and students should carry it at all times. Although SITA can make no representation as to the availability or level of proficiency of medical care in all circumstances, in the event of an accident or illness we will attempt to ensure that appropriate care is provided. Financial responsibility for medical treatment of preexisting conditions rests solely with the student.

Please note that students are responsible for paying on-site medical expenses and filing claims with the insurance company. The insurance company will then reimburse the student. Beyond providing the insurance, SITA is not responsible for any transactions between the student and the insurance provider. Please see “Part 3: Financial Matters” in this handbook for more information regarding the financial aspects of major medical care.

You will find a summary of benefits provided by the insurance SITA provides in the Appendix of this handbook. SITA purchases both the Basic and Optional Extra Protection Plan for its students. Please contact CISI directly for any specific questions regarding terms and coverage.

## Medical Forms

All students must submit a complete SITA medical form by the stated deadline. Failure to do so may jeopardize participation in the program. Failure to disclose complete and accurate information on the medical form can result in dismissal from the program. SITA does not accept medical forms completed by a relative.

This medical form (located with other predeparture forms in this handbook) is designed to help SITA staff determine whether or not there are any health issues that may put the student at risk in India, and to provide a thorough medical background to on-site physicians should major medical care become necessary. The information contained in the medical form is not used in the admissions process. However, our staff must review the form to ensure that the student is medically fit to participate in the program, as unfortunately, not all physical and psychological conditions can be accommodated by the program's infrastructure and operations in India.

We normally require that all students participating on SITA show medical and psychological stability for no less than six months prior to the group's departure date. This includes any prescription medications.

## Medical Access and Support

During the first days in Madurai, the program staff will inform students about where the program doctors are located and which medical facilities to visit. During the first week, the program assistants will meet with each student individually to discuss their medical history, current medications, malaria prophylaxis, and medical concerns, and to take their weight. This information is treated with strict confidentiality but is necessary in case of an onsite medical emergency.

If a student is not feeling well, s/he should immediately inform a program assistant. The program assistants keep an ongoing medical record for each student and therefore can help track persistent problems. This includes everything from a common cold to fevers and other associated symptoms. As standard procedure, the program assistants will accompany students to their first doctor's appointment. If follow-up appointments are needed, students will not be accompanied, unless a student is physically unable to travel alone or feels s/he needs a medical advocate. After a doctor's appointment, students should brief the program assistant about the diagnosis, treatment plan and prescriptions for the medical records. While it is students' responsibility to take care of their health and well-being, the program staff must be kept informed so they can be effective medical advocates for the student should the need arise.

The SITA Program requests that students do NOT self-medicate. For example, students often bring medication from the U.S. to treat traveler's diarrhea. While some of these medications are useful if you are traveling and do not have access to a doctor, it is always best to seek the advice of a medical professional before taking prescription drugs. In many cases, simply resting and letting it pass is the best medicine, but for more serious symptoms, there are specific medicines to take which may be better than a generic antibiotic. The SITA staff has experience with the most common ailments that Americans suffer in India, so we ask that you inform staff before treating yourself.

## Support for Psychological Issues

SITA cannot guarantee adequate psychological care in Madurai. Trained psychiatrists and/or psychologists are available in Madurai for emergency assessment situations only. We recognize that strenuous demands of cultural adaptation and the challenges of the program may have adverse effects on students who are recovering from or receive regular treatment for mental health problems. Our screening process is designed to identify such potential risks, and to avoid recurrences of psychological problems.

## HIV: Policy and Precautions

The policy of SITA with respect to HIV infection and AIDS:

- ❖ It is not a U.S. legal requirement and, for reasons of privacy, we do not normally require students or host family members to submit to HIV or AIDS testing, or to disclose their status.
- ❖ Medical information concerning our students, including HIV status, is confidential and is to be disclosed only with the written consent of the student, or otherwise in accordance with applicable laws.

Due to the rising incidence and threat of HIV infections and AIDS, a series of simple rules have been developed to prevent the spread of these and other serious infectious diseases. The precautions, if followed, will protect you from acquiring these infections.

- ❖ Avoid all unprotected sexual contact. Remember that condoms are not 100% effective. Also avoid tattooing, body piercing, or handling used medical needles. In addition, common household items such as razors, toothbrushes, personal scissors, tweezers, etc., can be contaminated with blood, and therefore should never be shared.
- ❖ Avoid exposure to potentially HIV-containing fluid, primarily blood, but also semen, vaginal secretions, mother's milk, and any other body fluid that contains blood; e.g. bloody vomit, feces, saliva or urine.
- ❖ These precautions are universal, i.e., they must be observed at all times in all parts of the world, regardless of the perceived risk of HIV in a given individual or population.
- ❖ If you require an injection or blood draw, it is your right and responsibility to make sure the needles are properly packaged before use and being disposed of properly after use.
- ❖ Following these precautions also minimizes exposure to Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C, which are other common blood-borne viral infections.

## Program Restrictions

Certain activities are prohibited for a variety of reasons, including: potential tragic consequences for the individual concerned, potential disruption of the SITA program, non-insurability, or U.S. State Department or other authoritative warnings. Participation in these activities is not permitted, and is grounds for dismissal. These include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Hitch-hiking  
No student may hitch hike during one's stay in India.
- ❖ Swimming  
The resident director must give approval for the swimming site and the parameters of the swimming situation. Swimming without a SITA staff member present is possible when the site is known and has been discussed with the resident director, but must not be done alone. Diving is not allowed.
- ❖ Climbing  
Rock, cliff, or tree climbing is not allowed without a professional climber on hand to teach the skill.
- ❖ Boating  
Boating is allowed only when it is a planned activity approved by the resident director.
- ❖ Power Tools  
Students may not use chain saws, weed cutters, or tools with whirling blades.

SITA staff reserve the right to interrupt any situation that they feel is potentially dangerous, or to prohibit any activity based on case-specific circumstances.

## Travel

### Student Independent Travel

Independent travel during the program is limited and restricted. Most independent travel will only be possible during the independent study period at the end of the semester, once a student has sufficient experience traveling in India. Students may not travel during the program without prior written consent from SITA. Permission from the resident director must be granted at all times, and students should seek approval at least five days in advance of proposed departure. Students must provide their dates, mode and timings of travel, the address and phone numbers of lodging, the names of people accompanying them and the activities they plan to do. The resident director reserves the right to veto any travel plans. Students should inform their host families well in advance.

### Host Family Travel

Throughout the semester students may have the opportunity to travel with their host families. Such travel is permitted only when it does not prevent a student from attending class or participating in any required group activity. As with independent travel, permission from the resident director should be sought at least five days in advance of departure. Students must provide their dates, mode and timings of travel, the address and phone numbers of lodging, the names of people accompanying them and the activities they plan to do. Again, the resident director reserves the right to veto any travel plans.

In addition, if a student's family has invited another to spend the night, or a student needs a temporary place to stay; the resident director must be informed, and reserves the right to veto such plans and make alternate arrangements for those students in need of a temporary housing situation.

### Post-Program Travel

Students traveling independently after the program assume total responsibility for their actions and safety. The period of enrollment for students begins the day of the group's arrival in country and concludes the day of the scheduled group departure for return to the U.S. The SITA Program and its employees assume no liability for individuals once they are separated from the program.

# Sexual Harassment

## Preventing & Combating Sexual Harassment

[Adapted for SITA from an internal document of the American Institute for Indian Studies (AIIS)]

SITA students coming from colleges and universities in the United States will find that people may perceive them and their presence in India in multiple, diverse, and sometimes conflicting ways. SITA presents the information in this section in order to provide resources for handling complex interpersonal negotiations that may include unwanted sexual attention.

Both male and female students will find useful information here. SITA students move between two cultures and move within differing groups within each culture, and may often find it hard to know what inferences are being drawn from their behavior, or which norms and cultural cues are structuring an interaction in a cross-cultural situation. Furthermore, the norms and cues themselves are constantly changing. The more students can learn about these inferences and cues, the more effectively and comfortably they will be able to deal with the situations they encounter.

In addition to the information included in this section, SITA will be going over these issues during orientation, and SITA staff members are happy to discuss any questions or concerns about sexual harassment that may arise. Please refer to SITA's Sexual Harassment Policy for a clear outline of SITA's stance on this important issue and steps to take should you encounter it.

### Suggestions for Preventing and Combating Sexual Harassment

The AIIS Professional Conduct Review Task Force and helpful members of the AIIS Board of Trustees, with the intent of warning others to avoid such experiences and suggesting ways to fight back when one is put in such a position, collected the materials that inform this section. These materials were drawn from scholarly studies, journals, and conversations with people who had experienced or witnessed the anger and/or humiliation that resulted from certain kinds of behavior. The suggestions below summarize conversations with many people—from different regions of India, within and outside its women's groups and feminist organizations, from different classes and communities, and from many parts of the United States. The two factors that unify these people are (1) that they are familiar with both American and Indian society, and (2) that they are committed to preventing sexual harassment.

Although most sexual harassment is directed against women, it is crucial for both men and women to read this manual carefully. Some male students have told us that they see no reason to review our materials on sexual harassment. On the contrary, male students from American institutions find that they need to be sensitive to the ways in which they interact with girls and women in the Indian families and professional arenas within which they carry out their research. For example, a male in the United States might make eye contact and joke with a teenage girl in the United States in a way that might cause consternation in many religiously orthodox households in India. If students are unaware of how threatening informal behavior in such families could be, they risk offending their hosts and, naturally, weakening relationships conducive to enhancing their experience and carrying out their research.

Since students from the United States are often (uninvited) guests in another culture, attention to the propriety of one's actions is crucial. Because these suggestions may involve some behavior modification on the part of students, it is essential to indicate that the purpose of the suggestions compiled here is not to legislate or constrain the dress, action, and speech of students. Rather, the goal is to provide information students may need in order to understand how certain kinds of behavior may be received, and sometimes misinterpreted, in Indian culture by some members of that culture. Once such cultural information is provided, each individual must decide how to act in light of that information. Furthermore, once students have settled into the community, they often find it possible to negotiate more flexibility in how they speak, dress or behave.

The suggestions given below are short-term ways of coping with sexual harassment. They are not meant to substitute for broader efforts to educate people about and eradicate sexual harassment. SITA has taken an active role in educating its own staff about the negative effects of sexual harassment and has developed procedures to rectify the situation promptly if sexual harassment should occur in its offices or classrooms.

### Participation in the Public Sphere

Certain kinds of behavior may be considered normal in many academic and/or professional situations in the USA, and in many cosmopolitan parts of India. In other parts of India, however, especially in more traditional environments such as Madurai, such behavior might be seen as inviting unwelcome sexual attention. This kind of attention can interfere with integrating into the community and

carrying out one's research. Most people, for example, recommend that female students not smoke in public, especially not in the company of males or by sharing the same cigarette. SITA has codified this recommendation as a rule of conduct while students are in Madurai. The same goes for consumption of alcohol. Likewise, male students should try to avoid being the cause for Indian women to end up in places, situations, or sections of town, at times of day that might gain them disrepute. Furthermore, male students should ensure that their behavior towards women is not misunderstood. These guidelines need not be hard and fast rules (depending upon region and class), but one should be aware of, and whenever possible avoid transgressing, the norms of people with whom one is dealing.

One general suggestion for a female SITA student is that, wherever she goes, she should find women from a variety of social strata, as well as from a variety of local religious and social groups, and ask them how they deal with sexual harassment. She should find which forms of everyday resistance to sexual harassment are culturally effective in the places she is frequenting. She should consult women and men in families with which she has developed trust and also find out about nearby women's groups to get support and information. A male SITA student should consult men and women in families with whom he has close relations to understand what kind of behavior would be appropriate in the presence of young women in the household and workplace.

### **Clothing**

It is important for a female SITA student to pay careful attention to underlying codes structuring the prevalent mode of female dress in the area where she is residing or traveling. As a serious student of South Asian culture, she should know that certain forms of dress do not serve her well in the Indian context. If she wears short skirts, halter tops, shorts, or low-cut blouses, it is likely that some people will perceive her as a tourist or "hippie," rather than as a young scholar committed to the study of Indian culture. Unless she seeks this kind of attention, she will want to avoid such clothing. Both the women queried in different parts of India and the women from the United States who had spent some time in India were unanimous about this point: both inside and outside of domestic spaces, clothing is a powerful indicator of how you intend to present yourself to others. Some Indian men we consulted noted that they felt uncomfortable when encountering American women wearing clothing that covered less of the woman's body than does clothing worn by Indian professional women. Some of these men said that skimpy American clothing creates a sexually charged environment that obstructs professional interaction.

One way for a woman to minimize her chances of becoming the target of unwanted attention is to cover her legs, buttocks, and chest fully. The ways she can do this are many. Some women wear a sari, a salwar-kameez, or the "half-sari" worn by younger girls. Others wear loose-fitting Western-style clothes. Many students find that the more they adopt the local style of dress for women of their age and class, the less they tend to stand out and receive unwanted attention on buses and trains. Some students wear certain clothing in the neighborhood where they reside, but adopt other clothing when they are traveling alone on trains or buses in other parts of India.

Certain kinds of clothing will identify students with a particular religious or social group within the wider community. Therefore students will want to be aware of the implications of their choice of clothing. In any given area, dress styles may differ according to religious affiliation (Hindu, Muslim, or Christian, for example) or social status (landowner's wife versus sweeper, for example). Sometimes Western clothes (jeans, tight slacks) serve to denote foreignness, class position, and wealth. Even women in more Westernized parts of India will sometimes experience more harassment if they wear Western clothes instead of Indian ones.

Some of our students have reported that responses to female students may vary according to the ethnic background of the student. For example, students of Indian origin may often find themselves more visible than other groups of women if they break dress codes. They are often perceived as "looking Indian" but "acting Western." On the other hand, students of Indian origin who dress appropriately are often able to conduct research about questions that would not be freely discussed with people dressed as and considered to be Westerners.

Awareness of the messages that jewelry and hairstyle can send is crucial. A chain or tali around a woman's neck is usually a good idea, as are bangles and/or a watch on her wrists. In many parts of India, these are signs that a woman is modest and worthy of respect, so a woman will be less likely to experience harassment if so attired. In South India, women with long hair should bind it in some way (braid, bun), because loose hair often sends specific cultural messages, usually ones that are undesirable (e.g., that the woman is sexually promiscuous, that she is angry, etc.).

Some students, both married and unmarried, have worn rings on their wedding-ring finger, or have put red powder in the part of their hair to signify that they are married and hence "protected." This practice often saves a woman from unwanted attention. Nonetheless, care must be taken about the time and place in which this method is used, if one is unmarried. It seems relatively safe when you are in transit (for example, in a long-distance train or at some research site that you will visit only once and for a short peri-

od of time). Keep in mind, however, that if one adopts these signs and is not married, this can lead to specific kinds of expectations among the people with whom one interacts on an everyday basis. They may find such a practice inappropriate or even insulting to their culture. It is not recommended to take this extreme measure in Madurai, but students might consider it for independent travel.

### **Travel**

A number of SITA students travel independently after the program. It is not common in India, especially outside of urban areas, for women (and sometimes not men) to travel alone. If you are a woman traveling on your own, you may find you need to engage in activities at places and times where it is not customary for women to be traveling alone. Therefore, a large number of suggestions for traveling are given below, in order to make the process of travel safer and more pleasant for women. It is usually wise to arrive before dark if you are going to a new place or have not yet arranged for a place to stay. If you need to travel after dark, you may want find someone you trust to accompany you.

If you are a male student, you should always pay attention to the impact that your behavior may have on those sitting near you while traveling. If a male student travels with a female, it is considered inappropriate for him to display acts of public affection (touching, holding hands, kissing) when among groups of people. Such behavior would be seen as indicating the "bad character" of the woman with whom he is traveling. The man can also make life easier for the female student by setting up seating, whenever possible, so that she is not next to an unknown man. For example, in a row of seats, she could sit next to the window and have the male companion between her and a stranger. Again, be aware of the fears of elder family members. They might feel uncomfortable if a male took a seat next to their daughter.

### **Trains**

There are several options to keep in mind when traveling by train. First, many women students buy train tickets to travel in the ladies' compartment. This second-class seating (or berth) puts the woman in a part of the train that is limited entirely to women and children. Some students have found this is a pleasant way to travel, although the women's compartment can sometimes be more crowded or noisy (because of the many children) than other parts of the train. Second-class air-conditioned is generally a safe, comfortable way for women to travel alone, if the train is a corridor train with berths along the side, not separate compartments (not always the case on trains in South India). If a woman who prefers to travel first-class arrives at the train and discovers that her compartment (coupe) is full of men, an option is for her to find the conductor and politely ask to be moved to a coupe with women or a family. This is considered a perfectly reasonable request. It is usually a good idea for a woman to get an upper berth, instead of a lower one, if possible, in order to be inaccessible to unwanted attention during the night.

When traveling on an overnight train, one should wear clothing that keeps one's body covered. One is sleeping in a public space, rather than a private one, so a salwar-kameez, for example, is often both practical and appropriate for a woman. Also if a man looks or acts overly "friendly," it is probably better for a woman student to move or at least not respond to his overtures, keeping in mind that this kind of "friendliness" is not one which he would be likely to adopt toward an Indian woman. It is always appropriate for a woman to request that a man stop uncomfortable or inappropriate behavior, because this shows her to be a moral human being and implies that he is not acting in a morally appropriate way. If a woman finds that a man is constantly staring at her, she can use her dupatta or the end of her sari to drape her head and cut off eye contact.

### **Buses**

There are many different kinds of buses, both public and private, local and long-distance. In some parts of South India, one part of the bus is reserved for women. This "ladies' section" is often the left side of the bus as you face forward. In many rural parts of South India, the front of the bus will be reserved for women. There is less chance of a woman getting jostled by a man, either intentionally or unintentionally, if she is in the women's part of the bus. It is not recommended that a woman student sit on the men's side, since that kind of action can be perceived as giving the message that she is not protected by the regular norms of behavior.

If a woman student gets a seat on the women's side of the bus and a man who is not related to her by marriage or kinship sits down next to her, she should request that he move, especially when another woman is standing nearby. It is well within one's customary rights to tell the man politely that this is the ladies' side and ask him to give up his seat for one of the women standing nearby. When asked politely, most men will respond quickly to such a request because they know that the ladies' side of the bus is reserved for women, and the student's comment tells them that she knows this too.

If a male student travels on such a divided bus, it is crucial that he sit on the men's side. He and a female companion (assumed to be his wife) could sit together on the men's side in a two-seat row, with him on the outside. Also, male students should take extra care

not to graze against the bodies of women standing on the bus, as such an act is considered far more offensive than it would be in the United States.

In most parts of India, however, neither city buses nor long-distance buses have special sections for women, so it is important for a woman student to try to sit or stand near other women whenever possible. Most of the instances of harassment experienced by female students occur on these undivided buses, especially when they are very crowded. Most Indian women try to avoid grazing against the bodies of men; as such an action is sometimes taken as an invitation to sexual attention (although in certain kinds of crowded situations one does not have much choice about where one stands). If one has any control over the times of day that one travels, one may want to try to avoid the rush hours.

Some women who ride the buses in urban areas (usually in the north) to and from work each day carry safety pins in their handbags. If they feel a man's hand in a place where it does not belong, they first comment out loud about the situation, thus inviting reprimand of him by other travelers. If this fails to work, they do not hesitate to use their safety pin in defense. It might be helpful to know that foreigners are not the only ones to experience these intrusive acts. Given how crowded buses sometimes can be, some amount of accidental jarring or bodily contact may be unavoidable, but repeated actions need not be ignored. Many students do not know at first that they can resist such attacks. Indian women in these situations often respond as soon as inappropriate behavior begins, rather than waiting until it gets out of hand. It is considered appropriate to do so in a polite but firm way.

### **Rickshaws and Taxis**

Many students use auto rickshaws or cycle rickshaws for traveling short distances. In getting into a rickshaw, it is important to act as though one knows where one is going and what is the shortest route to that place. For major cities such as Delhi and Bangalore, maps and detailed street atlases are available. If you are traveling to someone's residence, ask her or him for specific directions when coming from a generally known landmark (cinema, hospital, government building, temple). Generally, it is useful to speak to drivers of rickshaws and taxis in the local language, to indicate that you know your way around the area.

Some women consider cycle-rickshaws a good form of transportation because they cannot travel fast, and so it is unlikely that the driver would do something undesirable: it would be quite simple for the passenger to jump out. One researcher made a useful suggestion about traveling in an auto rickshaw. If the driver stops in order to pick up one of his buddies, especially at night, it is perfectly reasonable to tell the driver not to do so and to threaten to leave his rickshaw if he refuses. If a man and a woman are traveling in the same rickshaw to different places, it is wise to drop the woman off first and then drop off the man.

Here is a helpful procedure for female students traveling home alone at night by rickshaw or taxi. Have someone accompany you to the rickshaw or taxi stand. Make an explicitly public act of writing down the license plate or car number and give it to the person with you before getting into the vehicle. You can also loudly tell the person that you will call when you arrive home. Drivers in taxis that have a central office reached by phone often know that a passenger can lodge a complaint if their behavior is offensive. Also, several Indian professional women who regularly have to work late caution against offers of rides from single or married male colleagues whom one does not know well. It is always better to travel with another woman. As in any urban area, a woman student waiting at a bus stop late at night should never engage in conversation with the drivers of cars who may pull up and offer her a ride.

### **Independent Living for Second-Semester Students**

Most SITA students (who stay only for one semester) live with host families, so the following discussion of independent living may not apply, but second-semester students should be aware that their new living situation does not exempt them from scrutiny or norms of appropriate conduct. It is atypical for a woman in India to live alone, regardless of her class or status. It is even more unconventional for a single woman to entertain male visitors in her private residence. Such behavior will often be interpreted in sexual terms, even if the male is just a friend. What happens often is that the neighbors begin to gossip, and the landlord is then implicated for renting rooms to a woman of "dubious moral character." If the landlord feels that his honor has been tainted, it may affect the way he treats his tenant. So, if possible, a woman student should share an apartment with some other woman or rent a room from a family. Male students who want to visit a woman living alone would do best to visit her in the company of another woman, if possible.

Female students sometimes encounter harassment by landlords from whom they have rented flats (apartments). In several cases, the landlord started out by being "friendly," that is, coming to the student's flat when she was alone, and staying to chat. Gradually, in some cases, such visits became more and more intrusive. If one combats such behavior as soon as it begins, there is less chance for misunderstanding. A woman student can politely keep the landlord at the doorway rather than inviting him inside, and tell him she does not let male company enter when she is alone. If the landlord has to supervise repairs in a woman student's flat, she can arrange to be elsewhere while a workman and the landlord are there, or she can arrange to have a friend stay with her in the flat during that time.

In the case of second-semester SITA students whose housing is arranged by the program, females are seen as having a respectable “guardian” and thus may be less likely to be perceived as a vulnerable target. Still it is nonetheless important to be aware of the possible situations and strategies for preventing or handling them.

### **Host Family**

This will be addressed extensively during orientation, and norms for conduct are also provided in the “Host Family” section of this manual. Generally, the rules for proper dress and behavior elsewhere in society apply to host families. Female students should dress modestly around the house, refrain from physical contact with older male members of the family, and seek primary relationships with female members of the family. Male students likewise should not be overly familiar with older daughters in the household and should refrain from any physical contact with female members of the family. Overall, students should observe how family members relate to one another and attempt to follow that family's norms of behavior, but also remember that, though you are on the one hand to be treated as a family member, you are always to some extent a guest. If a student experiences anything in the host family context that makes her or him feel uncomfortable in any way, s/he should bring it immediately to the attention of the resident director. Sometimes it is just a matter of cultural misunderstandings that simply need to be explained, but SITA staff members should be informed of any questionable behavior in order to be able to make that determination.

### **Social Settings**

SITA has some specific suggestions for initiating social relationships. It is always best for the student (male or female) to begin a relationship in a formal way. One rule of thumb is useful. Instead of offering one's hand upon first introducing oneself, one should place one's hands together in a namaskara greeting or make the equivalent Muslim form of greeting. Sometimes when female students offer a handshake, a male may see it as a sexual overture. Male students should also adopt an Indian form of greeting when first introducing themselves to women. In a context where men and women do not generally touch each other in public, a seemingly innocent gesture can be misinterpreted in ways that might lead to unpleasant attention.

It is customary to use a proper title when addressing one's elders: Professor, Doctor, Sir, or Madam. A student should not adopt a tone of intimacy or use a pet name or shortened form of the elder's name. Similarly, when students give their own names, they should give their full name.

Students should not suggest or accept any offers to drink liquor or smoke cigarettes. Although such behavior might be acceptable in the United States or in urban India, it is associated with sexual “looseness” in traditional Indian culture, and in Madurai is prohibited for SITA students (please refer to the section on rules for student conduct).

Reserve on the part of the woman student usually results in respect. Attention to the propriety of certain actions on the part of the male student usually results in appreciation. These rules of thumb will not, of course, be applicable in every situation. For example, if a student is dealing with men or women who are highly Westernized and well known to the program, the student may find she or he can be more informal with them. But it never hurts to begin with formal behavior and then, if it proves to be unnecessary, become more informal later.

Attention to cultural norms is also important when a male student visits an Indian family if there are young women in the household. He should be aware of the norms that often govern their behavior and pay attention to his actions so that he does not damage their “reputation” in any way. For a male to flirt, be overly familiar with, joke with, or touch daughters in a household may be interpreted as highly offensive behavior.

### **Options for Combating Sexual Harassment**

Despite all the precautions students take and despite the culturally sensitive behavior to which they confine themselves, sometimes it does not help. Women who are being extremely careful about not sending mixed signals may still find themselves harassed. Young women students (especially those with light skin and/or blonde hair) should not think that they have been harassed only because they have not followed the above guidelines properly. Just as thievery occurs despite elaborate precautions that people take, sexual harassment may occur despite all efforts.

There are several ways in which people interviewed suggested dealing with sexual harassment. Two of the best ways are outlined below. Each of these strategies forces the harasser to stop treating the woman student as an object and to recognize her as a human being worthy of respectful treatment.

The first option, illustrated in the example of the women's side of the bus discussed above, is for a woman student to educate herself about, and pay attention to, the norms for respectful treatment of women. Then she should insist that men not depart from the

norms simply because she is a foreign visitor. As in the United States, many women in India do not expect or put up with sexual harassment: a SITA student needs not either. Invoke the rules by saying something to the effect, "Is this proper behavior for a trustworthy man?" or "Wouldn't you feel upset if some one subjected your daughter to such treatment?"

A second strategy is for a woman to complain to a trustworthy and influential person or group of people who could help her to embarrass the person harassing her. For example, if a woman student is traveling alone on a long bus ride and someone begins to touch her, she can first openly tell him to leave her alone, then comment that he knows that his behavior is wrong, and finally appeal to an authoritative older woman sitting nearby. The backing of such a person will usually win public opinion to her side. Similarly, if there is trouble in her own neighborhood, she can ask an influential and respected person to tell those who bother her that she is like family to him or her and must be treated with respect.

### **What You Can Do to Help the SITA Prevent and Combat Sexual Harassment**

This discussion's major goal is to make both male and female students aware that these issues may come up, and to provide a variety of ways to think about them. We hope that reading this handbook will arm students with ways to prevent and combat sexual harassment and to deal with problematic situations. It is crucial that women realize that they can have some control over their own lives, instead of letting sexual harassment intimidate them or make them feel like victims.

We ask both male and female students to take an active role in this SITA effort. Please feel free to suggest or recommend any additional materials that you think would enhance our treatment of this important issue.

If a student experiences sexual harassment by an SITA staff member or officer, or an academic guide, landlord, translator, or host family member linked to SITA, we ask the student to bring it to the immediate attention to the executive or resident director of SITA.

## **SITA'S Sexual Harassment Policy**

### **Definitions of Harassment**

Harassment is a form of discrimination and is defined as verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or handicap, or veteran's status or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that: (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work, educational or living environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or (iii) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or educational opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on SITA program premises.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example: (i) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic evaluation; (ii) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used for the basis for employment or educational decisions affecting that individual; or (iii) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work, educational or living environment.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include, but are not limited to: conditioning a promotion, pay raise, or course grade upon the receipt of sexual favors; unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

## **Policy**

The SITA Program strives to provide a professional and academic climate for staff, faculty, and students that is free from all forms of harassment, discrimination, exploitation, or intimidation. Every member of the SITA community should be aware that the program is strongly opposed to harassment, including sexual harassment, and that such behavior is illegal under U.S. federal, state, and local laws. Such conduct is unacceptable in the work, educational, and living environment, including any work/educational-related setting outside the program campus, e.g., during field trips, meetings, and school-related social events. The SITA Program prohibits harassment and is committed to taking appropriate action to prevent, correct, and if necessary, take disciplinary action against behavior that violates this policy, including but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination, or dismissal.

## **Abiding by U.S. Laws and Regulations**

Staff, faculty, and students who are not from the United States must abide by U.S. sexual harassment laws and regulations while members of the SITA Program.

## **Sexual Assault**

Sexual assault may fall by definition within the scope of sexual harassment and may be subject to criminal prosecution by law enforcement authorities, to whom it must be referred by the SITA Program. Such conduct must be addressed by SITA in conjunction with an external criminal proceeding.

Sexual assault is defined as any sexual act that is perpetrated without consent of the victim. The type of force employed may involve physical violence, coercion, or the threat of harm of any person. A victim is considered unable to consent, and therefore, sexually assaulted if he/she is: (i) mentally incapacitated or physically helpless due to drugs or intoxicants; (ii) cognitively impaired; (iii) unaware of the sexual act taking place; (iv) under the age of 16 years, except where the persons are married and the act is consensual, or under 18 years of age when the accused: (a) is a parent or entrusted by law to care for the victim; (b) uses a position of authority over the victim to persuade him/her to submit.

Examples of acts defined as sexual assault by state law and SITA policy include forcible rape by an acquaintance or stranger, incest, sexual abuse of minors, as well as sexual assaults that do not involve intercourse.

## **Dual Relationships**

Consensual sexual relationships between faculty or administrators and students are inappropriate and will not be tolerated on the SITA Program. Such relationships can create conflicts of interest and can compromise the integrity, trust, supervision or evaluation of academic or working relationships.

The SITA Program prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports.

## **Reporting an Incident of Harassment, Discrimination or Retaliation**

The SITA Program encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals may decide, however, to first address the offender directly without going through formal procedures. If for any reasons an individual does not wish to address the offender directly, or if such action does not successfully end the offensive conduct, the individual should notify one of the individuals listed below.

- ❖ Executive director
- ❖ Resident director
- ❖ Host family coordinator
- ❖ Program coordinator
- ❖ Program assistants
- ❖ Board member
- ❖ Home campus administrators

All complaints will be investigated thoroughly, and appropriate actions will be taken. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.



## **Part 6 Student Rights & Responsibilities**

**Expectations of Student Conduct**

**Non-Negotiable Prohibited Actions**

**Guidelines for Behavior**

**Attendance & Participation**

**Peer Relations**

**Housing**

**Support for Special Needs**

**Sexual Behavior & Relationships**

**Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Student Issues**

**Sanctions for Violations of SITA Policies and Procedures**

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## **Student Rights & Responsibilities**

One of SITA's goals is to promote cross-cultural understanding between American college students and the South Indian community through a commitment to learning and respect for one another. SITA students become a member of a host family, the SITA academic community, and an extended community in and around Madurai, all of whom value mutual understanding and continual exchange between cultures. However, this can only be realized if individuals honor the rights and privileges of all community members and take responsibility for their own actions.

Furthermore, the exceptional access to South Indian culture that SITA students are given is a direct result of the respect that the SITA Program enjoys in the Madurai community, which is in turn a function of the actions and behavior of students who have gone before. The guidelines for student conduct are thus designed both with the students' health and safety, as well program integrity in mind. Please remain mindful of the reasoning behind these policies and expectations, and please do not hesitate to approach a SITA staff member with any questions regarding them.

## **Expectations of Student Conduct**

Students are required to comply both with the policies and procedures of SITA, and with any that their home institution stipulates for their time abroad. In addition, program-specific ground rules may be introduced during the orientation period and throughout the semester, or on a case-specific basis. The behavior of SITA participants must be above reproach at all times. It is the responsibility of the participant act in ways that are considerate of the values and norms of the host communities, as well as the well being of fellow group members and program staff.

## **Non-negotiable Prohibited Actions**

The following are absolutely non-negotiable prohibited actions. Students who violate these policies are subject to immediate dismissal from the program and may face possible criminal or civil liability.

### **Consumption, Purchase, Sale, Distribution, Manufacture or Possession of Drugs**

Drugs-namely, the substances assigned illegal status in the United States-are also illegal in India. Their consumption, purchase, sale, distribution and possession are severely punished under the Indian penal code, by which foreign nationals must also abide. The SITA Program has a no-tolerance policy with respect to the consumption, purchase, sale, distribution, manufacturing or possession of illegal substances on the part of students or staff, whether in Madurai or anywhere in India. Convincing indication of these activities will entail immediate and unconditional dismissal from SITA with no academic credit granted.

### **Consumption or Purchase of Alcohol in Madurai**

Generally speaking, Indian culture does not allow for social drinking. The consumption of alcohol is often associated with drunkenness and inappropriate behavior. In the conservative society of Madurai, those who drink may be looked down upon. This can place one in bad situations, and also affects the overall reputation that the SITA program must uphold for its ongoing success. Consequently, the program has a no-tolerance policy with respect to the consumption of alcohol in any place or at any time in Madurai. While on the Long Tour, the moderate drinking of alcohol obtained from legal "permit rooms" is tolerated. By "moderate" it is understood that your drinking should not affect your behavior in such a way as to impinge upon your safety, or that of the group. Furthermore, it should not affect your active participation in any group activities at the scheduled times.

### **Public smoking in Madurai**

Like drinking, smoking is generally associated with impure or inappropriate behavior, and we require that SITA students confine smoking to the SITA Center roof. Furthermore, a law was recently passed in Tamil Nadu outlawing smoking in public. Though you will no doubt see Indians ignoring this law, it is our responsibility as guests in this country to respect it.

## Operation of Motor Vehicles

In keeping with standard study abroad and Peace Corps practices, SITA students may not drive any motorized vehicle at any time in India. Students may travel in public transportation, including buses, rickshaws, licensed taxis, etc. With respect to private motorized vehicles, students may ride only with licensed and insured drivers.

### The following is a nonexhaustive list of additional prohibited actions:

- ❖ Violation of safety practices or negligence that might cause injury or death to any person on site or at an event sponsored by SITA.
- ❖ Harassment of any kind, including but not limited to: creating excessive noise, disturbing the peace, or sexual inappropriateness.
- ❖ Deliberate damage or theft of SITA property, or the property of those associated with SITA, including other participants or the host community.
- ❖ Unauthorized entry or use of program facilities, including host facilities such as host universities, hotels or offices.
- ❖ Possession or use, including but not limited to, the threat of use of a weapon or other hazardous materials, such as a firearm, knife, explosive, or other object that could be considered a weapon while on the program.
- ❖ Violation of host country laws, including but not limited to alcohol and drug laws. Violation of local laws may result in fines, punishment, imprisonment or deportation, in addition to punitive actions by SITA.
- ❖ Failure to comply with the directions of SITA employees acting in the performance of their duties.
- ❖ Violation of SITA policies and procedures as established in the SITA Program Student Handbook, other program materials or verbal communications.
- ❖ Any conduct which jeopardizes SITA's ability to maintain a positive relationship with the host community or to continue to carry out its programs, including but not limited to culturally inappropriate behavior.\*

## Guidelines for Behavior

Choosing a homestay experience in South India is one of the most challenging study-abroad options possible. Not only are you dealing with striking cultural differences on levels of interpersonal interaction, diet, personal habits, and domestic dynamics, but you also are integrated into the family and the culture in such a way that requires you to adapt to a profoundly different lifestyle than that of students in the States.

The SITA Program has created these guidelines to help give you an idea of what will be expected of you. By following these guidelines, not only will you enhance your experience by greater access into the culture, you will also continue to pave the way for other students to follow. It is the quality and behavior of our students that have earned SITA the trust and respect of the Madurai community, and that enable us to offer our students the most intimate access into South Indian culture. These guidelines are not enforced except in cases of egregious behavior, but we ask that you respect their spirit and intent, and observe them as ways to maximize your experience and maintain the integrity of the program and its standing in the community.

- ❖ Dress appropriately to Indian contexts. For women, Indian dress is best, but Western clothes should be opaque, loose-fitting, covering the shoulders, brushing the ankles, with a modest neckline. Hair, if long, is worn back. For men, no shorts, neat appearance, short hair. For both, try to minimize visible piercings (pierced nose for women is fine, even encouraged!) and tattoos.
- ❖ Behave appropriately to the Indian context, especially with members of the opposite sex. No touching in public or any displays of affection. With host families, no visiting alone with members of the opposite sex. This could seriously compromise a family's standing in the community and make problems for them.
- ❖ When deciding whether to discuss aspects of your personal life in the States that may not be understood or approved in Madurai culture, be sensitive to the needs and feelings of your host families.
- ❖ Ask a member of the SITA staff if you have any questions about cultural appropriateness!

## Attendance and Participation

Student contributions in every class and at every SITA-organized activity are a crucial aspect of the program and learning process. Therefore, SITA requires attendance and participation in all classes, program organized activities and trips. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities.

## Peer Relations

By definition, the SITA Program values and works to create a strong group environment to facilitate learning and the cross-cultural experience. Therefore, it is necessary that each student take responsibility to work out disagreements or conflicts that may arise with peers. If the students cannot satisfactorily resolve the issue themselves, they may bring the issue to the attention of the program assistants, who will first attempt to mediate the situation themselves, but if unsuccessful, will involve the resident director. Sexual harassment complaints will be handled in accordance with SITA's sexual harassment policies and procedures.

Beyond disagreements, conflicts, or inappropriate behavior, however, it is also the responsibility of each participant to work to create a strong, healthy, and positive group environment. Pettiness, gossip, or formation of cliques can damage otherwise productive group dynamics and adversely affect everyone's experience in India. Especially because SITA is such a group-based program, we ask that you be mindful of conducting yourself with the interest of the group and the program in mind, and refrain from creating any dynamics that may adversely affect the group's healthy and positive climate.

## Housing

All SITA participants will be living with host families in Madurai. Students must respect the rules and guidelines of their host family. Students should inform the host family coordinator if any conflicts arise during the homestay. If a conflict arises, efforts will first be made to resolve the issue. However, if the issue is not one that can be resolved, an alternative placement will be made. Any damage to the property or environment, disruptive activities, or willful disregard of the rules and practices of a host family or other housing situation may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

## Support for Special Needs

Students with special needs should contact the SITA U.S. office immediately so that it may be determined whether or not those needs can be met in India, Madurai, and the host family context. SITA staff will attempt to meet the needs of students with physical and/or learning disabilities. However, not all needs can be met due to the resources and facilities available in India. A request for the accommodation of any special needs, with accompanying disability-related documentation, must be submitted to the SITA office within 15 days of the admission offer.

## Sexual Behavior and Relationships

Of great concern regarding sexual relationships today, and especially in India, is safety and the use of effective protection against life-threatening diseases. Due to the cultural taboos concerning sex and sexual behaviors in India, STDs, and especially AIDS, are on the rise. Unfortunately many people do not know they have it and will never be tested.

SITA students must be aware that both verbal and nonverbal communication, including dress can communicate specific sexual expectations in India. The subtleties of acceptable sexual behavior in the Madurai community are unknown to outsiders, and students' assumptions about what is acceptable will be challenged. Students need to become sensitive to these differences and educate themselves on appropriate behavior. SITA offers extensive orientation on appropriate sexual behavior that students are expected to observe throughout the semester.

Due to these cultural rules and stigma attached to sex in South Indian society, as well as group dynamics, we strongly advise SITA participants not to engage in sexual relationships either with Indians or with other participants while on the SITA Program.

# Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Student Issues

Sexual orientation and sexual identity are typically not discussed in the communities students will have contact with while on the program. While in Madurai, you may need to consider these issues differently than you do in your home community or school. Discussion of any sexual behavior or act is viewed as inappropriate and therefore should be avoided. However, for more information about GLBT issues abroad see the resource section at the back of the handbook, or feel free to discuss these questions with a member of the U.S. staff.

## Sanctions for Violations of SITA Policies & Procedures

Violations of the policies outlined in this handbook or other published SITA documents may bring one or more of the following sanctions:

### Official Warning

A written warning is given to the individual that s/he has violated SITA policy, and that any additional violations may result in more serious disciplinary action during the stated period of reprimand. A copy of this statement will be kept on file for the stated period of the reprimand.

### Disciplinary Probation

Probation is a period of time during which a student's actions and behavior are subject to close examination. Any offense committed during this time period can result in further sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the program. While on probation a student may be denied permission to participate on certain program activities. A copy of the statement will be kept on file for the period of the probation and will become part of the student's SITA file.

### Dismissal

In addition to violations of the policies SITA reserves the right to dismiss any student for the following reasons:

- ❖ Failure to participate fully in all program components.
- ❖ Failure to observe SITA policies or procedures.
- ❖ Failure to disclose material information requested by SITA (e.g. emergency contact information, health information).
- ❖ Health issues that interfere with effective program participation.
- ❖ Conduct that is, in the judgment of the resident director, improper or offensive to the host community; detrimental to the health and safety of the student or other members of the program, or inappropriate for the program specifically or the study abroad context in general.
- ❖ A student who leaves the scheduled program at any time without prior authorization from SITA will not be allowed to return and will be considered withdrawn.
- ❖ In the case of dismissal, see the refund policy in "Part 3: Financial Matters" in this handbook.

## Statement on Ethics

In the course of field study and living with a host family, complex relationships, misunderstandings, and conflicts are generated. The responsibility of students is to anticipate such difficulties to the best of their ability and to resolve them in ways that are compatible with the principles stated here. If a student feels such a resolution is impossible or is unsure how to proceed, s/he should consult the resident director as soon as possible. Failure to consult on cases that in the opinion of SITA could clearly have been anticipated can result in disciplinary action.

Students must respect, protect and promote the rights and the welfare of all those affected by their work. The following general principles and guidelines are fundamental to ethical field study:

## **Responsibility to People Whose Lives and Cultures are Studied**

Students' first responsibility is to those whose lives and cultures they study. Should conflicts of interest arise, the interest of these people takes precedence over other considerations, including the success of the research or independent study project. For if the study has negative repercussions for any members of the target culture, the project cannot be called a success. Students must do everything in their power to protect the dignity and privacy of the people with whom they conduct fieldwork.

The rights, interest, safety, and sensitivities of those who entrust information to students must be safeguarded. The right of those providing information to students either to remain anonymous, or to receive recognition, is to be respected and defended. It is the responsibility of students to make every effort to determine the preferences of those providing information and to comply with their wishes. It should be made clear to anyone providing information that despite the students' best intentions and efforts, anonymity may be compromised or recognition fail to materialize. Students should not reveal the identity of groups or persons whose anonymity is protected through the use of pseudonyms.

Students must be candid from the outset in the communities where they work that they are students. The aim of the independent study project should be clearly communicated to those among whom they work. Students must acknowledge the help and services they receive. They must recognize their obligation to reciprocate in culturally appropriate ways. Students must take into account and where relevant and to the best of their ability-make explicit the extent to which their own personal and cultural values affect their field study.

To the best of their ability, students have an obligation to assess both the positive and negative consequences of their field study. They should inform individuals and groups likely to be affected of any possible consequences relevant to them that they anticipate.

Students must not represent as their own work, either in speaking or writing, materials or ideas directly taken from other sources. They must give full credit in speaking or writing to all those who have contributed to their work (see Code of Academic Integrity below).

## **Responsibility to Hosts**

Students should be honest and candid in all dealings with their own institutions and with their host institutions. They should ascertain that they would not be required to compromise either their responsibilities or ethics as a condition of permission to engage in field study. They will return copies of their independent study project paper to SITA, and to the community that hosted them at the discretion of SITA and other sponsoring institutions.

## **Failure to Comply**

When SITA feels that a student has violated this statement of ethics, the student will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

# SITA Program Code of Academic Integrity

Students are expected to abide by the SITA Program Code of Academic Integrity, as outlined below:

## Preamble

The SITA Program believes academic honesty to be central to the mission of the program; and we commit ourselves to high standards of academic integrity. Commitment to academic honesty upholds the mutual respect and moral integrity that the program values and nurtures. To this end, we have established the SITA Program Code of Academic Integrity.

## Article I: The Authority of the Code of Academic Integrity

The Code of Academic Integrity shall have jurisdiction over current students enrolled in the SITA Program and all academic work that they conduct therein.

Conflicts or questions about the Code of Academic Integrity should be forwarded to the executive director of the SITA Program. The SITA Board, or the executive director as its designee, shall be the final interpreter of the Code of Academic Integrity.

## Article II: Basic Considerations

### Section 1: Definition of Academic Dishonesty

(a) Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.

(b) Common examples of academically dishonest behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Cheating—intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise; copying from another student's examination; submitting work for an in-class examination that has been prepared in advance; representing material prepared by another as one's own work; submitting the same work in more than one course without prior permission of both instructors; violating rules governing administration of examinations; or violating any rules relating to academic conduct of a course or program.
- 2) Fabrication—intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any data, information, or citation in an academic exercise.
- 3) Plagiarism—intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; or failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.
- 4) Falsification and forgery of academic documents—knowingly making a false statement, concealing material information, or forging an official's signature on any academic document or record.
- 5) Facilitating academic dishonesty—intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

### Section 2: Reportage

a) It is the moral responsibility but not the sanctioned obligation (unless otherwise provided herein) of each member of the SITA Program to respond to suspected acts of academic dishonesty by:

- 1) Consulting the individual(s) thought to be involved and encouraging them to report it themselves, and/or
- 2) Reporting it to the instructor involved, and/or
- 3) Reporting it to the executive director.

(b) Reporting oneself after committing academic dishonesty is strongly encouraged and may be considered in determining sanctions.

### Section 3: Assignments and Examinations

(a) Instructors are solely responsible for establishing academic assignments and methods of examination.

(b) Instructors are encouraged to provide to students clear explanations of their expectations regarding the completion of assignments and examinations, including permissible collaboration.

(c) Instructors are encouraged to choose assignments and methods of examination believed to promote academic honesty. Examples of these include careful proctoring of examinations and the constant creation of fresh exams. Collaborative projects and

unproctored examinations do not violate the promotion of academic integrity. When assigning collaborative projects or using unproctored examinations, the instructor should explicitly state the expectations of performance for all participants.

#### **Section 4: Case Procedures**

(a) Charges involving violations of the Code of Academic Integrity may be initiated by faculty, students, or administrators. Any charges should be made as expeditiously as is reasonably possible (normally within twelve working days) from the discovery of the alleged infraction. Charges may be initiated as follows.

- 1) A student may initiate a charge of academic dishonesty against another student by referring the case to the faculty member involved and/or to the resident director. If the case is brought directly to the resident director, then s/he shall promptly notify the instructor of the involved course.
- 2) When a charge of academic dishonesty is initiated, the student's home school will be contacted to find out whether the student has ever been found guilty of a charge of academic dishonesty.
  - i) In first offense cases, the instructor shall either act directly, in consultation with the resident director, or refer the case to the executive director and board. An instructor who acts directly must present the student with specific charges and a proposed sanction. Sanctions will be determined in accordance with the guidelines below.
  - ii) If the faculty member acts directly then the accused student shall have the right to appeal directly to the executive director and the board, should he or she disagree with the validity of the charge or the appropriateness of the sanction.
  - iii) Second offenses shall go directly to the executive director and board.
  - iv) If a faculty member is made aware of a violation, which the faculty member determines not to be substantive, the faculty member shall notify the complaining student promptly.
  - v) All actions, on any level, shall be recorded with the executive director and home school administration. This includes cases handled directly by instructors.
- 3) Deliberation of the charge shall occur in two stages: the establishment of guilt and the recommendation of sanction. To find a respondent guilty, the instructor, resident director, executive director, and board chair must be in agreement. If the respondent is found guilty, a sanction will be recommended. The instructor or resident director can recommend a sanction other than expulsion. A sanction of expulsion can only be recommended by a unanimous vote among the instructor, resident director, executive director, and board chair.

(b) The determination of guilt or innocence, and if the former, the recommended sanction, will be communicated to the student's home school.

(c) These proceedings should be concluded as expeditiously as possible, no more than four weeks after the report of the violation. However, failure to do so shall not constitute improper procedure under the code.

#### **Section 5: Sanctions**

(a) The recommended minimum sanction in first offense cases shall be failure of the assignment in question. The recommended minimum sanction in repeat violation cases shall be failure of the course. For more serious offenses sanction may be expulsion from the program. Other sanctions may be appropriate for particular cases.

(b) Only the executive director and board chair may determine sanctions of expulsion as a result of academic dishonesty.

(c) Attempts to commit acts prohibited by this code may be punished to the same extent as completed violations.

(d) All sanctions except failure of the assignment in question shall be marked on the respondent's program record with the phrase "Academic Dishonesty."

#### **Section 6: Appeals**

Appeals only shall be based on new evidence or evidence of bias. After a decision has been confirmed by the executive director, either party may file, within three working days, an intention to appeal to the board at large. A petition of appeal must be filed within five working days of the declaration of intention. Appeals will be reviewed by the board at large. The board will then make a decision on the appeal, based on the petition and the reports of the instructor, resident director, and executive director.

Participation in the SITA Program implies the student's full acknowledgement of and consent to this Code of Academic Integrity.



## **Part 7 SITA Program Rights & Responsibilities**

**Equal Educational Opportunities**

**Privacy of Educational Records: FERPA**

**Confidentiality Policy**

**Public Right to Information**

**Program Changes**

**Communication**

**Visitors During Program**

**Modifications**



# Equal Educational Opportunities

SITA and its member schools, in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability or handicap, or veteran's status.

## Privacy of Educational Records: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as Amended (FERPA) Overview

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, is a Federal law. The act was designed to protect the privacy of educational records, establish the rights of students to inspect and review their educational records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading data through informal or formal hearings.

FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. They are:

- ❖ The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the SITA Program receives a request for access. Students should submit to the executive director written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The executive director will make arrangements to provide those materials to the student.
- ❖ The right to request an amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Students may ask SITA to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the SITA executive director for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. FERPA was not intended to provide a process to question substantive judgments that are correctly recorded. The rights of challenge are not intended to allow students to contest, for example, a grade in a course because they felt a higher grade should have been assigned. If SITA decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, SITA will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the students when notified of the right to a hearing.
- ❖ The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. Specific exceptions include:
  1. School Officials with legitimate educational interest. "School Official" means:
    - a) A person employed by the School,
    - b) A person, company or agency with whom the School has contracted for service, or
    - c) A student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee

"Legitimate educational interest" means an educationally related purpose, which has a directly identifiable relationship to the student involved, and is consistent with the purposes for which the information is maintained. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if, in the judgment of the data custodian responsible for requested information, the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

2. An official of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, upon the request of such officials.
3. Parent of a dependent student as defined by the Internal Revenue Service. A "parent" is a parent guardian, or someone acting as parent who meets the IRS standard. Undergraduates are assumed to be dependents of the parent(s) they list on application materials unless they prove otherwise. Divorced or separated parents will be provided equal access unless the program is provided with evidence of a court order, state law, or legally binding document that specifically revokes those rights.
4. Appropriate parties in the connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health and/or safety of the students or other individuals.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by SITA to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605

- ❖ The SITA Program may release directory information without prior written consent. Directory information is limited to: name, address, telephone numbers, email address, dates of attendance and classes, field of study and certification, certificates, diplomas and degrees conferred including dates, honors and awards, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended, and participation in officially recognized activities, practicum location and organization, research topics, enrollment status, and anticipated graduation date.
- ❖ Directory information shall be released freely unless the student files a written request to withhold disclosure of information with the executive director prior to the start of the program. Admitted SITA students must file a written request with the executive director that will block the release of directory information in response to inquiries made to the institution by the public after the receipt of the request. The block will remain in effect until the executive director receives a written statement from the student releasing the hold on directory information.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

SITA's responsibility regarding confidentiality is to protect the rights of the individual student and to ensure the institution's ability to make appropriate decisions regarding programmatic and student life issues. Because SITA programs are holistic in nature, staff and program members are concerned about all aspects of a student's life while on the program. From time to time, staff members and program contacts may need to confer with each other regarding health, academic or personal issues, community living, group dynamics, cross-cultural issues and judicial matters. In order to protect students' rights and best serve the SITA community, the following guidelines have been established:

Conversations, records, and referrals are kept confidential. However, confidentiality may be breached when a staff member considers that the student is in clear or imminent danger to him or herself or to others, hospitalization occurs, the situation threatens to disrupt the normal operation of the program, information is regulated under U.S. or local law, or information is otherwise required to be disclosed by law or SITA policy.

## **Public Right to Information**

As soon as feasible after an incident which seriously disrupts student life on the program, the resident director or other staff member may notify the student group regarding an incident or actions being taken in one of several ways: through a designated person, a group meeting, or written memos. Incidents that may involve the greater community or public interest may be made public, when necessary, through on-site staff and/or in collaboration with the executive director.

## **Program Changes**

SITA will attempt to maintain its program as described in its publications, however, SITA reserves the right to alter the program at any time for any reason, with or without notice, and shall not be responsible for any expenses or losses resulting from such changes.

## **Communication**

Communication with U.S.-based family and friends from Madurai can be slow and difficult but is increasingly available via the Internet and phone booths. In the event of an illness, crime or emergency while on the program, students should contact the resident director or other appropriate staff member with all relevant details immediately. Parents, relatives and friends of the students needing to urgently contact a student while on the program should do so through the executive director in the United States, who can contact the on-site program staff. Students should not give phone numbers of host families, the resident director, or other program staff to family and friends at home without specific permission of the people involved. In an emergency, SITA needs to have the ability to rapidly communicate with staff on site, and phones need to remain clear for this purpose.

## **Visitors During the Program**

SITA often hosts visitors from member schools and other institutions in Madurai during the term to monitor progress and evaluate program components. Aside from special cases, SITA does NOT allow visitors (family and friends) during the term, due to the rigorous nature of the program and the disruption that such visits cause in program flow and group dynamics. Students should be sure that friends and relatives are aware of this policy, and that any plans for visits are scheduled after the formal conclusion of the program. SITA may at its sole discretion grant or refuse permission for any visits during the program.

## **Modifications**

The SITA Program may modify, supplement and/or replace, without notice, any of its policies, procedures and/or fees.



## **Part 8 ஸ்திரீ பரோபாஸா Host Family & Community Relations**

**Hospitality**

**Food**

**Social Rules of Respect**

**Clothing**

**Pollution & Purity**

**Communication**

**Economic Disparity**

**Relax!**



## Host Family & Community Relations

No handbook or orientation can prepare a student for every social interaction in India, however there are several important social rules of respect and cultural norms that should be followed when interacting with Indians. SITA students often find that they are able to develop closer relationships with their family and other Indians in the community if they follow these suggestions and guidelines. Please take time to go through this section and become familiar with some of the new social rules and customs Americans often encounter in Madurai. The first few weeks in India foreigners often suffer from a wonderful case of sensory overload, and much like practicing the Tamil script, the more preparation that is done before departure, the easier the transition will be. However, in addition to becoming familiar with South Indian culture and customs, it is essential to be familiar with the adaptation process and culture shock (see "Part 9: Cultural Adaptation and Culture Shock"). The process of reacting to and dealing with being placed in a different cultural environment is just as important as the specifics of a new culture. Please revisit both sections throughout the semester.

Each family has its own customs, rituals and rules. Some families will observe every rule mentioned in this handbook and others will prepare Western food occasionally, have a Western toilet, and think it's ridiculous to drink without touching your lips to the glass, etc. But through time students will discover which rules their family adheres to and which ones they do not think are necessary or even think are silly. BUT, the host family will not be the only people who will be seeing and judging SITA students and, more importantly, the family may never tell the student about what offends them—even when asked. This is not to make students nervous about the homestay, but all students must realize its fragility as well as its importance. There is no need to be overly self-conscious, or keep one's individual identity hidden. Each host family wants to love each student no matter what. The SITA Program asks that each student look, listen and try to be sensitive to the mindsets and desires of these people.

## Hospitality

The key component to the SITA Program is the homestay experience. These families have graciously opened their homes and hearts to American students in the hopes of sharing their culture and way of life, and also of learning about American culture. This is a unique and special privilege to be able to live so closely with the local people. It is normal to be nervous about meeting the host family members for the first time and they are also nervous about meeting their student, but, after the initial introduction, the host family can be a great center of relief while trying to assimilate into other aspects of the foreign environment and living away from U.S.-based family and friends. While students are often treated as guests at first and experience a level of hospitality unknown to most Americans, it is crucial that students try to move beyond that role and into the role of a family member.

## Housing

While in Madurai, SITA students live with middle-class host families whose homes are within bicycling distance, an easy walk, or bus ride, from the SITA Center. Private rooms are often provided; some students will have a private attached bathroom. Each room will have a bed, storage for clothing/personal belongings and a ceiling fan. All families have TVs and many have DVD players. Most kitchens are equipped with refrigerators and some even have microwaves. Ovens are not common in India. Computers are not a given in individual households, although they are more common every day. Some families will have a private car or their own motor scooter or motorcycle while others will depend on public transportation.

## Privacy & Independence

"Private" and "privacy" have different meanings in India from what most Americans are used to. Personal and social information is regularly shared; people are extremely curious about what is going on around them. The family provides the core around which individual interests are structured. What at first seems like an "intrusion" into one's personal affairs is usually an expression of interest, care and concern. It's hard for Americans to understand—and often generates some degree of early psychological stress for SITA students—but this is a very common feature of social and family life in South India. For example, while most students will have a private room, new host families in particular may find it unusual that a student requests alone time, or closes the door to study because the host family doesn't want the student to feel lonely.

For example, one host family could not bear the idea of letting its new American host daughter sleep alone the first night. The student's private room was quickly turned into a dorm room, with all the host sisters sleeping together to welcome the student into their family! On the other extreme, another student was overjoyed and thrilled when her family finally invited her to sleep with the entire family on the floor in the living room instead of giving her a private room to sleep in. Indian culture does not generally see solitude as a desirable thing, so students often find it more difficult to spend time alone, but it is not impossible. Asking for quiet or alone time to study is not unreasonable although in families with children they will usually all sit and study together in one room. Students should feel free to request quiet/alone time, but also remember that the more time spent with the host family and friends, the more you will get out of the program.

Not only is there very little importance placed on personal space and privacy, but also it is nearly impossible to keep a secret in Madurai. With everything from purchasing saris to smoking in public, secrets do not exist in Madurai. For example, every semester there is a similar story of students going out shopping and when they returned to their host family's house, their family already knew the color of the sari they had purchased. Or a student will buy bangles or some other piece of jewelry, and, by way of an invisible but lightening-quick gossip line, their host parents inevitably hear about it before the student arrives home. Similar stories happen countless times involving everything from where students eat and how much students spend, to whom students are spending time with. Madurai is a relatively small town, but a very large village. Students will find that many people will know who they are, even though they may not know them. Ultimately, the choices you make in public are up to you, but in order to maintain a healthy host-family relationship and the integrity of the program, the SITA Program policy requires that everyone must abstain from drinking alcohol, and confine smoking to the SITA Center roof while in Madurai.

Lastly, students should expect to spend more time with their Indian family than they might be used to spending with their natural family. For example, students will need to be home every night, usually before sunset, and will be home much of the time on the weekends when not participating in SITA activities.

## **Food**

The primary rule of Indian hospitality involves food. Food will become a focal point of the host family experience as much time is spent either eating, talking about eating, or watching and participating in the cooking process. The difference in food will be one of the most obvious and pervasive changes you will live with in India.

### **Quantity**

As a primarily rice-based diet, the sheer amount of bulk needed to keep on top of your appetite is amazing. With the constant walking and/or biking, sightseeing, and interactions with newness all around, your bodies and minds will be put through an extraordinary workout, and, particularly as rice does not fill one up for very long, you are likely to have a very healthy appetite. Or, the sheer amount that you are being asked to eat by your eager-to-please host family will amaze you even more.

But not to worry—if it's absolutely necessary there are ways to tactfully call off the generous flow of food, and you will have plenty of time to learn tricks to fend off food. In order to avoid overeating, you can simply ask for smaller portions, eat what is on your plate, and if you want more they will happily serve you more. However, do not feel compelled to eat or drink anything you do not like. You can politely refuse in a friendly manner. Similarly, if you really like an item, let your host family know but beware of how much you emphasize your love for it because you don't want it to show up at every meal. However, it should be noted that it is considered rude to waste food, so be polite and honest, but conscientious as well.

### **South Indian Cuisine**

The food is hot, spicy, fresh, and delicious, as well as very different from the Indian food you may have encountered at Indian restaurants in the U.S., which specialize in Northern cuisine. Northern cuisine is wheat-based (i.e. chappattis, naan, roti) rather than rice-based (i.e. dosa, idli), and is heavier and richer, and often more mildly spiced. The Tamils pride themselves with having the best from both worlds, for they have mastered Northern-style cuisine and will whip up a chappati or two at random, while Northerners, they feel, are ignorant and inept at cooking Southern cuisine.

A traditional meal, or Thali in the south consists of several courses, all served with rice. There is a lentil/vegetable soup (sambar) and a pepper soup (rasam), one to three vegetable dishes, lentils (dahl), and curd/yogurt (thayir). Thalīs are served with condiments such as coconut, coriander, or tomato chutney, pickles (limes, mangos, chilies, garlic but not dill). In hotels (the Indian English word for restaurants) a meal is usually followed by a wonderful tumbler of Indian coffee or tea, which is made with steaming hot fresh milk and lots of sugar. Tamils have an amazing sweet tooth and they know 1001 ways to reconfigure straight sugar. The downside is that Indians have an increasing rate of diabetes, especially in younger children.

## Technique

The food not only tastes great, but learning how to eat “Indian style” is a lot of fun. All food is supposed to be eaten with your right hand while your left hand should be kept free. It is somewhat of an art to scoop up your food and pop it into your mouth on the first try, especially with rice, but practices begin during orientation. While your right hand is messy with food, you can use your clean left hand to pick up your glass to drink or serve yourself more food. Make sure you wash your hands before and after every meal. Because you are eating with your hand, and thus polluting it with your saliva, it is considered rude to eat food from other people's plates using your hand.

## Social Rules of Respect

### Addressing People

Generally it is important to always use the title of the person when speaking to them, for example, Dr. Arun, Mrs. Thangam, Prof. Nair, etc. When approaching someone on the streets say “Sir” and “Madam.” With host families and host parents it is best to ask them the first day what they would like to be called. Many will ask students to call them ammaa (mother) and appaa (father) but others prefer to be called by their first name. Older girls can be called akkaa, younger girls thangachi, older boys annan, and younger boys thambi. Addressing someone with brother or sister is especially useful if you want to signal to the opposite sex that they should treat you as they would their own brother or sister-it establishes a respectful distance.

### Body Language

In addition to the hands and feet, the eyes play a very important role in Tamil culture. Sustained eye contact with a member of the opposite sex signifies an intimate relationship with that person. For example, if a woman walks up to a strange man on the street, smiles and looks directly into his eyes and asks directions, he may think she is coming on to him. If a female student needs to ask directions, it is best to ask another woman (a man if you are a man). If there isn't one around, ask a local shopkeeper. Eye contact isn't forbidden, it is okay to look at the other person, but not in a sustained way. Reserve smiling for friends and family, but again there is no need to look mean.

There is little or no touching of adults of the opposite sex (even a friendly touch on the shoulder can be misinterpreted). However, touching the same-sex adults is considered natural in Tamil culture. It is common to see men holding hands and women sitting close with one another. This only signifies close friendship, not a homosexual relationship.

### House Guests

When people, especially ones owed respect (i.e. elders, teachers, professors, foreigners) enter the house it is customary to get up, greet them, offer them a seat and something to drink and eat. Again, when they leave it is polite to get up and accompany them to the door. After visiting a few host families houses students quickly learn how it is done.

When offering food or drink it is polite to refuse two times and accept on the third time. Therefore, if you refuse a third time, you really do not want anything. But out of politeness you can accept a quarter cup of tea or coffee. Similarly, hosts need to insist at least three times in offering something to drink or eat when a person visits. If a host wishes to be very polite they will serve tea/coffee even if the visitor has refused.

When invited for a meal, guests are often made to sit with the men and children while the women do the serving. To signal that you have eaten enough, place your hands over the leaf/plate or get up and wash your hands. As a side note, if a casual acquaintance (i.e. someone you meet on the train or in a shop) says, "You must come to dinner sometime," do not ask for his/her phone number and address. You are not expected to accept the invitation. If you invite someone out for a meal, coffee, film etc., it is often assumed that you are paying.

## **Gifts**

When gifts are given, they are usually not opened in front of the person who brought them, nor are they necessarily shared with the guest (even if they are food items). Appropriate gifts if you are visiting someone are flowers, fruits, sweets (for Brahmins and Jains—make sure the sweets are without eggs) or snacks (mixture, murukku, etc.). Do not be alarmed if the gifts you give are not opened in front of you.

## **Gender Relations**

In general, young men and women in Madurai do not "date" or even socialize much together except in large groups and usually in an academic setting. Of course many people, including most host families, are aware that "dating" exists in the U.S.—they have seen it on TV and in the movies—but it is misunderstood, stereotyped and widely viewed as just one more example of Westerners' loose morals. To disprove this stereotype and avoid any associated moral judgments, it is important to steer clear of close relationships with the opposite—sex while in India. Similar stereotypical red flags that are interpreted as representing Western decadence include long hair or jewelry on young males, immodest clothes on females, and any sort of body piercing or tattoos other than women's ear and nose rings.

Young unmarried people in India are often not viewed as adults in the eyes of Indian society. SITA students will be treated very kindly, but without the respect for age that you receive in America. Females without a chaperone should beware of being too friendly with males their age. It is definitely best to do things in groups and thereby prevent any possible gossip. Males should understand that what is seen as friendly behavior with women in the U.S. is generally seen as forward with women in India. Males should be cautious when speaking with women they do not know, and even hesitate to make eye contact with them. Women will be expected not to fraternize with men their age alone, even if that person is another SITA student, and even if it is on a crowded street in Madurai. Again, it is safer to do things in groups to avoid gossip. And remember that gossip does prevail!

For example, one host mother was quite upset when her host daughter had invited a male SITA student over to watch a movie. The host mom asked that the SITA staff talk to her student because she was very worried about what the neighbors might think of her and her family having a young man and woman alone in the apartment together.

However, there are always exceptions. One male student was surprised one morning at Meenakshiamman Temple when a young, college-educated woman, visiting the temple with her family, walked directly up to him and asked him where he came from, what he studied in Madurai, and what he thought about the culture. Normally, this would be considered very forward on her part, but perhaps from her perspective she knew he would not mind and wanted to show herself as educated in English.

## **Sleep-overs**

Students may have an invitation to spend the night at another's host-family house. The resident director must be informed of this in advance. Approval will be granted only in cases where the student has been invited by the host family, and not just by the fellow student residing in that household.

# Clothing

Both male and female students buy the majority of their wardrobe in India. If you do wear Western clothes they should be neat, NOT form-fitting or see-through, and shoulders and legs must be covered. Women should wear long slips with dresses or skirts, all of which should be ankle-length. Underwear and bra must be worn at all times. Sandals or chuppels are the main footwear. Rubber types, such as Tevas/Chakos are great to bring for the rainy season, but lightweight chuppels are sturdy, very available, and very inexpensive in India-and they'll look great with your new Indian clothing!

## Women

**Sari:** Traditionally South Indian women wear a sari composed of five to seven yards of a single piece of fabric. It is complex to wear, and there are many ways to tie a sari. The sari can be a bit constricting at first, but if you give it a chance, it is quite fun to wear and very practical. To wear a sari, one must wear a sari slip (a full length slip tied tightly at the waist with a drawstring), a choli blouse (a tight, short top with has hooks down the front), a necklace, bangles, earrings, a portu (the forehead dot), anklets, and preferably flowers in your hair (called poo in Tamil). Amazingly, even the jewelry is a vital part of getting dressed for Indian women.

For example, one student was sitting by the temple tank at Meenakshiamman temple and a group of older woman sat down next to her. She was not wearing a necklace or anklets and the women looked her up and down and asked if she was an orphan. She had a difficult time explaining to them that she wasn't an orphan but just did not wear jewelry. On her way home that day, she bought some anklets and a necklace. It is suggested that women bring some jewelry, preferably gold-looking high quality department store costume jewelry. Alternatively, similar costume jewelry is available and inexpensive in Madurai. Shopping for all of these items in Madurai with your host parents or siblings can be a lot of fun and a great way to interact with them and get to know Madurai.

**Salwaar Kameez:** Other than saris, women also wear the Northern style salwaar kameez. These are quite comfortable, with a long top hanging to your knees over loose pants. These are very nice for mobility and bike riding.

**Night Clothes:** At home you will wear a nightgown to sleep in, available at most clothing stores. The nightgown should reach down to the ankles so that the legs are not exposed, and be opaque-if not, wear a long slip underneath. While socializing with the family a bra is always necessary, and underwear must be worn at all times.

## Men

Clothing for men is much less exciting, as Indian men wear more Westernized clothing and there are of course fewer rules governing modesty and appropriateness. Clean khaki style long pants and a button down shirt tucked in are commonly seen on Tamil men. Respectable Tamil men typically do not wear sleeveless shirts, go bare-chested, or wear shorts.

**Veshdi:** Men still wear the traditional veshdis (wrap around skirt), with a button down shirt or long churidar top. The veshdi is more formal and often worn to temples, weddings, festivals etc. Traditionally, it comes in white or off-white with a colored gold border.

**Lunghis:** At home men often sport the more casual version of the veshdi called a lunghi. It comes in a variety of colors and plaids.

# Pollution and Purity

The concept of pollution and purity is ingrained into Indian culture. For example, the techniques of eating and drinking relate to ideas of cleanliness and defilement, or pollution and purity. This concept is present in many aspects of Indian culture and will be discussed throughout the semester at length. However, this section is an introduction to some of the customs students will encounter and need to be mindful of in regards to pollution and purity, especially within the host family setting.

## Human Body

- ❖ The left hand is considered less pure than the right, among other reasons, because it is the one you use when washing yourself after defecating.
- ❖ Use your right hand any time you give or receive things (such as money), shaking hands, patting someone on the back, etc.
- ❖ Feet are also considered impure.
- ❖ Avoid touching your feet in public.
- ❖ When sitting on the floor, for example, you should not point feet towards others nearby, or touch anyone with them.
- ❖ Shoes and sandals must be taken off before entering a house or temple. In some households you will notice mothers sending their children to wash their feet when they come in from playing. There may be some days you will want to do the same.
- ❖ Bodily secretions, such as nails, mucous, saliva, and hair are also considered unclean.
- ❖ Saliva should not touch common food items or implements that other people eat or use (i.e. do not lick the spoon in the chutney jar or share food from another person's plate).
- ❖ Spitting on the ground is impure.
- ❖ People will not lick stamps in India (glue sticks are handy).
- ❖ Handkerchiefs are for drying the hands (having washed them after a meal), not for blowing the nose into a handkerchief.
- ❖ Hair should be kept short and neat for men and tied back or braided for women.
- ❖ Facial hair is acceptable if it is well kept and trimmed.
- ❖ Fingernails and hair should not be trimmed in the presence of others, and especially not after sunset in some households.

## Household Space

- ❖ The purest areas of the house are the kitchen and the puja room. They should not be polluted with unclean things. In some Hindu households women will not enter these areas during menstruation. Strangers may not be allowed into these "sacred" areas.

## Clothing & Cleanliness

- ❖ Bathing & brushing teeth every morning before breakfast is a must.
- ❖ Wearing un-ironed or dirty clothes reflects badly on the student and the program, and is seen as polluting to the household. Host families will wear neatly pressed and clean clothes when they go out.
- ❖ Clothes should be washed after each use (this will make sense after you've been exposed to the heat and grime!)-many families have a servant who does the wash, and some have washing machines.
- ❖ Underwear and hankies are NOT to be given to others to be washed, either in hotels or in your host family-you must wash them yourself. Ask your family where you can wash and hang them to dry.

## Toilet Time

Speaking of pollution, preparing to go to India for the first time, all visitors are invariably anxious about how to go to the bathroom. Indian toilets will either be Eastern or Western style. Western toilets you already know. Eastern toilets consist of a hole with two foot holds on the sides. You place your feet on these holds and squat. Toilet paper is NOT used, both because it is considered polluting and because the sewage system cannot handle it.

### What do you use instead?

For both Eastern and Western toilets there is a source of water to facilitate your self-cleaning. The water source may be a large bucket or a tap, in both cases there will usually be a dipper (cup with handle). The fancier, more expensive hotels and wealthy homes have Western toilets, and some have a water hose with a spray nozzle (Indian version of a bidet). Most toilets either Eastern or Western will not have a flush system. Indian toilets require manual flushing. This involves pouring several buckets of water down the toilet.

The Indian method of washing is actually more hygienic and effective than the Western way of basically smearing feces on a piece of paper. This procedure may seem distasteful now, but after living in India, you will come to appreciate the practicality and cleanliness of such a practice. Many SITA students eventually become enthusiastic fans of the paper-free water method by the end of the program, and are even reluctant to start using toilet paper again. One student, much to her parent's disapproval, brought a dipper home. Start practicing the squatting and securing of clothes, and beware of what is in your pockets so nothing falls out!

Of course, showering may not be what you expect either. Many families do not have a shower head like we Americans are used to. Most people use a bucket and a dipper to shower with. This not only saves water, but also time. The water is usually cold, but more than welcome in the hot tropical climate of the South.

## **Menstruation**

Traditionally, and still today, menstruating women are considered polluting. This means that menstruating women would take a break from their daily chores for three days once a month. In joint families, this would usually mean all the women would be "on holiday" once a month and the men would have to take care of the household. The women would sit and eat separately from the rest of the household and were not able to attend special events, functions, or go to temple. This practice of seclusion continues in some homes, but many women no longer follow this tradition with the exception of not going to temple while menstruating. While many families may not ask American women to follow all of these rules, ask the host mother what she does and what she would like you to follow while living in their home.

Napkins and tampons are available in India, but do not flush tampons. It is advisable to wash out your tampons over the toilet and wrap them in plastic bag and paper; you will have to ask your host mother discreetly about how to dispose of tampons and napkins because menstrual blood is considered highly polluting. Many families burn all of their trash in front of their house, so we suggest you reduce garbage to a minimum. The program alumni also recommend an alternative to creating garbage, the Keeper (see "Advice from Alumni"). Thoroughly wash stained towels, bed sheets, and clothes by yourself before putting them in a washing machine or handing them to a servant for regular washing and ironing.

## **Communication**

Communication across cultures is a challenge, especially in a family setting. If you think about the amount of communication one person does in one day, it is mind-boggling. Even in a familiar setting there is room for misunderstandings and miscommunication—think of the miscommunication that can occur with your own friends and family, and you even speak the same language, are from the same culture, and have known each other for years! How much more, then, should be expected when you communicate with others from another cultural background and who speak another language. Many Indians, of course, and especially the host families, speak at least some English. And SITA students will learn basic Tamil. Between those two languages and learning about verbal and nonverbal communication cues, students can be very successful at communicating with their host family and community.

### **Nonverbal**

Contrary to popular belief, most communication happens without words—through facial expressions, bodily postures, hand gestures, dress, and eye contact. However, the same hand gesture might mean something different in another culture, or they might have totally different gestures that foreigners cannot identify. The most common example in India is the head wag. Many foreigners do not know how to interpret this movement of the head, as it does not have an equivalent in Western communication patterns. But similar to the Western head nod, it is a broad gesture that can indicate a person is listening, understands what is being said, a response of "yes," or acknowledgement and greeting. There are also many hand gestures that Americans are unfamiliar with, but students can be active participants in the communication process by observing how people are interacting with each other and asking questions.

### **Using English**

The Indian government declared Hindi to be the national language a few years ago, which incensed the already nationalistic Tamils who are extremely proud of their heritage. Many Tamils believe English should be the national language of India, and most of the educated people in Madurai speak English to some degree, including most host families. However, the English they have been taught

is British English and is their second, third, or fourth language. Therefore, they have difficulty understanding American slang, accents, and the speed at which native speakers speak. Students should speak slowly and clearly, staying mindful of sentence structure, use of slang, and volume. It is not necessary to talk down to people, use simple English, or speak louder. It sometimes helps to rephrase a sentence if the meaning is not conveyed the first time.

## **Speaking Tamil**

Western tourists have discovered Madurai, and there are several foreign academic programs based there, but Madurai is not inundated with foreigners. Westerners are still unusual enough to elicit stares and excited finger pointing from children as you walk down any given street, and the people are overwhelmingly friendly, welcoming and particularly excited about foreigners who study and speak Tamil. A foreigner studying Tamil is living proof of the importance of their language. SITA students will join the ranks of over 80 million Tamil speakers in the world.

One of the best ways to get to know Madurai and start to feel at home is to become comfortable with the language. Speaking just a few phrases of Tamil will surprise and stun the locals, and students find they are automatically treated differently than a tourist the minute they use Tamil in their daily interactions. At first glance, Tamil looks like a strange and difficult language to read, write, and speak. In fact, it has many features that make it quite easy. The most significant of these is that what you see is what you say; unlike English and most other languages, Tamil letters are almost always pronounced the same way, no matter what word they form. Once you master the writing system itself, you can easily pronounce the written words you see anywhere. (See the "Part 11: References & Resources")

## **Economic Disparity**

There is a stark difference in material status between Indians and Americans at all levels of society. The obvious inequality between India and America should not be downplayed. However it is important to remember that the homeless and unemployed population in any major American city is not too dissimilar from Indian cities. Poverty is more visible in India, but it also exists throughout the U.S.

Throughout the semester students will have ample opportunity to talk with peers and professors about this subject. Still, each student will have to resolve how to come to terms with these issues. Students should not be afraid of beggars or poverty, but neither should they be afraid to say no or just keep walking. Many SITA students and staff find themselves both giving assistance and refusing, depending on the circumstances. Some people decide to never give to an individual, but find an organization they would like to support. These decisions are for each individual to make, but will be discussed at length during the semester. It is advisable to ask the staff when and where it is appropriate to give to beggars. The best advice is to observe the situation, don't give right away, and after some time, decide how you want to react.

## **Relax!**

When you get to India, everything will fall into place. This handbook is meant to give students an idea of potential situations they might encounter, but ultimately the most important skills to bring to India are flexibility, open-mindedness and a sense of personal responsibility. There are innumerable differences, contrasts and contradictions in India, from the cows in the road to the brilliantly colored silks on people's bodies and kumkum on their foreheads, but the moment the differences become too much, try to see the similarities. SITA students may be living halfway around the world within a seemingly radically different cultural and social environment, but also remember that life in India it is a part of life being lived as it is everywhere-eating, sleeping, moving around, reading, talking about local events, shopping for clothes, buying sweets or cool drinks, and laughing with family and friends.

## **Part 9 Cultural Adaptation & Culture Shock**

### **Cross-Cultural Adaptation**

What is Culture?

Know Thyself

Know Thy Host Country

### **Culture Shock**

The Nature of Culture Shock

Four Phases of Culture Shock

Reactions to Culture Shock

Coping with the Trauma

Coexistence or Integration?

Prescription for Culture Shock

General Advice

A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

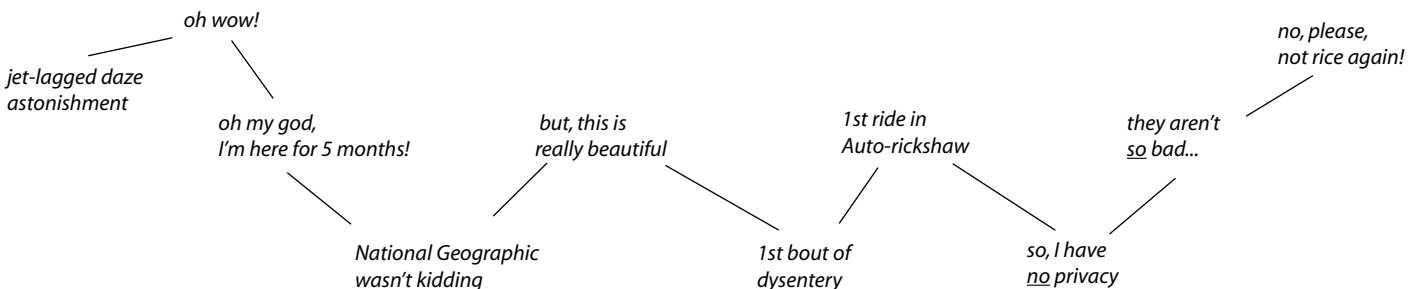


# Cultural Adaptation & Culture Shock

This section of the handbook will help you navigate the complicated process of cultural adjustment, adaptation, and culture shock. Each person is different and has a different experience, but there are some common stages and processes that all cultural sojourners experience. This section highlights the process and offers suggestions and tools to navigate the process. It is important to remember that the most learning takes place when you go through each stage of the process, and recognizing the stages is the first step. Please read this section carefully before you depart and revisit it throughout the semester. Some of the information here may not make sense now, but it will later.

## Example of one SITA Student's Adjustment Curve

(From a 1992 SITA student journal, with permission)



## Cross-Cultural Adaptation

When you first step off the plane in India, you will immediately be exposed to sights, sounds, and smells you have probably never encountered. You will hear a different language being spoken and attempt to understand and follow new procedures and customs, and may feel overwhelmed by the mass of perceptions and sensations presenting themselves to you. For some of you, panic may set in and your first thought might be to turn around and promptly get back on the airplane that has just brought you to your new home. For others, you may feel a sense of great excitement and an eagerness to "begin," whatever that might mean to you.

As time passes and you settle into a routine, prepare for your classes, and begin the process of making friends and exploring the area you now call home, you will experience emotional, psychological, and possibly physical changes. This is what is known as cultural adjustment or cultural adaptation—a conscious process of dealing with the realities of entering and functioning in a new and different cultural environment. These changes are unavoidable, as there will always be the need for adaptation in establishing an individual's relationship to the host culture, but as long as you recognize these changes for what they are when they occur, you will be better prepared to deal with their consequences.

## What is Culture?

It is nearly impossible to begin a discussion on cultural adjustment without first defining the word "culture." For the purposes of this discussion, we will be drawing heavily from Dr. Robert Kohls' Survival Kit for Overseas Living [1984], which puts forth the following working definition:

Culture: an integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society. Culture refers to the total way of life of particular groups of people. It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does, and makes—its systems of attitudes and feelings. Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation.

If you were to ask several different people what they thought culture meant, you might get a list like the one below:

- ❖ Manners and customs
- ❖ Social institutions
- ❖ Laws (written and unwritten)
- ❖ Ideas and thought patterns
- ❖ Accepted ways of behaving
- ❖ Arts and artifacts
- ❖ Ceremonies and rituals
- ❖ Myths and legends
- ❖ Language(s)
- ❖ Concepts of selfhood and individuality
- ❖ Beliefs and ideas
- ❖ Religious beliefs
- ❖ Knowledge
- ❖ Values and morals

As you can see, culture is a total way of life of any group of people. It is an intricate part of every person and controls the way we speak, think, and the way we behave. Culture will impact the way you interact with everyone in your new environment from your homestay family to bus drivers, from shopkeepers to professors. It is an essential component of your study abroad experience, and we encourage you to take some time to understand what culture is and how it will affect you abroad.

*Take time to Know Thyself and to Know Thy Host Country.* The exercises and suggestions in the following sections will help you as you prepare yourself to make the adjustment to a different culture. Understanding the culture you will soon enter is only one step in your preparation. It is also important to understand your own characteristics, skills, and attributes that will play a major role in your cross-cultural adjustment.

## Know Thyself

The following questions will help you assess how prepared you are to live in another country. Be honest and open with yourself—the truth will come out eventually and there are no wrong answers! Do not become frustrated if you find that your responses do not reflect a genuine and easy acceptance of difference, as this is the perfect time for you to begin developing in the appropriate areas.

- ❖ Are you a good listener?
- ❖ Do you generally accept people as they are?
- ❖ Are you able to tolerate ambiguity well?
- ❖ Are you willing to experiment and try new things?
- ❖ Do you feel you know your strengths and weaknesses well?
- ❖ Can you be flexible with your agenda, schedules or plans?
- ❖ Do you normally ask for directions when lost?
- ❖ Do you interact well with people who are different from you in age, race, or economic status?
- ❖ When things are going badly, do you keep a clear mind and positive attitude?
- ❖ Can you laugh at yourself?

## Understanding Your Objectives

A key component of “knowing thyself” is to understand the objectives you have for your study abroad experience. It is not enough to think through your personal characteristics, but you will also want to consider the goals you would like to accomplish while studying abroad and develop a clear plan to do so. The process of setting objectives is a valuable exercise as you prepare for your study abroad experience, as you will begin to critically examine and understand your motivations for wanting to live and study abroad.

Here is a list of the objectives most commonly given by Americans going overseas. Put an 'X' by those that apply to you:

- 1. Advancement in future job or profession
- 2. Challenge of living and studying overseas
- 3. Opportunity to increase future salary
- 4. Pressure from friends, parents or professors
- 5. Desire to expand your own horizons
- 6. Desire to experience an exotic foreign place
- 7. Desire to learn another language and culture
- 8. Desire to keep up with your peers or friends who have been overseas
- 9. Desire to get away from the United States
- 10. Need for a change
- 11. Desire to get away from college life or something personal
- 12. Hope that the new setting will solve something distressing in personal, college, or family life
- 13. Hope that the international experience will stop the drift, uncertainty, or pointlessness in your personal or college life and give it new meaning
- 14. Other (specify)

If you are like most people, you have checked several items. You will want to review this list occasionally while you are abroad to check whether you are making progress on achieving the objectives you have identified.

Now, go back through the list and note the three or four items that are most important to you now, and rank them in order. Consider these items carefully and acknowledge if there are conflicts among the objectives. Are there motivations on the list that you are unwilling to recognize? It is common to go abroad with mixed emotions and motives, some of which we are not comfortable sharing. We encourage you to use this time prior to your departure to discuss your objectives with friends, your adviser, or a counselor. Be honest and open and you will be better able to establish realistic expectations for your journey abroad.

### Skills That Matter

Some people adapt to a new culture more easily than others. While there is no set formula to ensure that you will have an effortless transition process, there are certain skills and or traits you have (or with minimal effort, can develop) that can make your adjustment process easier. Below is a list of skills that are important in adapting to a new culture:

	(low) 1	2	3	4	5 (high)
Tolerance for Ambiguity					
Low Goal/Task Orientation					
Open-Mindedness					
Empathy					
Nonjudgmental Attitude					
Communicativeness					
Flexibility/Adaptability					
Curiosity					
Warmth in Human Relationships					
Motivation					
Self-Reliance					
Strong Sense of Self					
Tolerance for Differences					
Perceptiveness					
Ability to Fail					
Sense of Humor					

Add to this list any of yours that are not listed. Then on a scale of one (low) to five (high), rate yourself in each of these characteristics. Write the number beside each one and total them. If you scored less than 55, you may want to begin developing some of these skills. Now, circle the traits you think are the most important.

It has been proven that a sense of humor, low goal/task orientation and an ability to fail are essential skills for easing the transition abroad. A sense of humor is important because there is going to be much to weep or get angry or annoyed or embarrassed or discouraged about. No matter how many of the other traits you have, the ability to laugh things off will be a true benefit. Oftentimes, students undertake tasks that are unrealistic and set goals for themselves that are unattainable. Please remember, expectations are premature disappointments. So, while we encourage you to set objectives for your experience, do not refuse to adjust them to the realities of your new environment. The ability to tolerate failure is critical because everyone fails at something at some point, especially while overseas.

It is important for you to recognize the skills you currently possess that will aid you in adapting to a new culture and begin to cultivate them. You will find that this will not only serve you well during your study abroad experience, but it will also help you cope with transitions throughout life.

### Know Thy Host Country

Below is a list of basic questions about your host country and culture. This list is not an all-inclusive list and many more questions will be generated as you attempt to answer these. Go through the list and write down the answers to as many as you can before you depart and complete them during the program. Do not forget about the many international students and resources at your school that can help you in your research. We strongly encourage you to find out as much information about these topics as you possibly can. You can greatly reduce the severity of culture shock by understanding as much as you can about your host country (and yourself). Before reading the culture specific information in the following sections, test yourself here to see how much you already know and what you need to research and have questions about.

1. How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period?
2. What foods are most popular and how are they prepared? Who sits down together for meals? Who is served first?
3. What things are taboo in this society?
4. Do women work outside the home? In professional jobs? How is traditional women's work valued?
5. Is the price asked for merchandise fixed or are the customers expected to bargain? How is the bargaining conducted?
6. What is the predominate religion? Is it a state religion? Is it tolerant of other religions? Have you read any of its sacred writings?
7. Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language?
8. What is your host country's attitude toward trash? The environment? Conservation of resources?
9. What are the important holidays? How is each observed?
10. What is the attitude toward gambling? Toward drinking? Toward smoking? Toward drugs?
11. In the education system, how important is learning by rote?
12. Is there a strong belief in fate?
13. What kind of local public transportation is available? Do all classes of people use it?
14. What is the history of the relationship between this country and the United States?
15. What kinds of health services are available? Where are they located?
16. What is the normal work schedule? Is it important to be on time?
17. How does this society observe a child's "coming of age?" Are boys preferred over girls?
18. On what occasions would you present (or accept) gifts from people in the country? What kind of gifts would you exchange?
19. What are the dress codes for men and women? What do different ways of dressing signify?
20. What rules of interpersonal exchange govern relations between men and women? What is the significance of things like eye contact, touching, or spending time alone together? What about these rules changes or stays the same in different kinds of relationships?

[Adapted from L. Robert Kohls, *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, 1984, pp. 35-36 and Kalamazoo College Center for International Programs' *Study Abroad Handbook*, 2001-2002.]

## **Culture Shock**

In preparing to study overseas, most students have numerous vaccinations and inoculations. These will help keep students safe from many dreaded diseases. Studying abroad also requires obtaining a passport and other documents required for entry. These allow students to legally enter and remain in the country. There is no vaccination, however, for one condition all students encounter—culture shock.

Many students study overseas to experience another culture, but this is not always "fun" or easy, indeed it can be quite stressful. Whether it is called Culture Shock, Cross-Cultural Adaptation Stress, or Displacement Anxiety, a period of adjustment will occur that will involve feelings of depression, homesickness, or frustration with the new surroundings. This is only temporary, and as students become more accustomed to their new environment, will start to appreciate the differences. This section is designed to prepare students to recognize, cope with and understand culture shock.

### **The Nature of Culture Shock**

In the midst of the euphoria of having arrived for a prolonged stay in a new country, it is very important to prepare for the sizeable psychological changes that will have to take place before becoming accustomed to a new environment. No careful approach to living in a country like India would be complete without some consideration of the phenomenon of "culture shock." Unlike disease, culture shock is not selective. Its onset is an inevitable part of moving from a known environment to an unknown one.

Support systems that you have always taken for granted suddenly disappear, and leave a void that is hard to fill in the new environment. You have been used to leading your own lives and making your own decisions, over and above those of your family. In Madurai, you will find yourself suddenly living with a host family who will quite probably want to dominate your non-class time and activities. It is not an easy adjustment! New problems will arise for which you have no easily identifiable solutions from your past experience. The physical environment will also put new stresses on your body with which it is not accustomed to coping. And above all, you will face subtle challenges created by a new culture with its own rules, and new priorities will arise to threaten your own set of values.

## Four Phases of Culture Shock

Experts writing on culture shock (and former SITA students!) have identified four general phases that anyone who lives abroad goes through. The length of each phase varies from individual to individual, but usually each succeeding phase lasts longer than its predecessor. The phases are not discrete, often overlapping in the transition from one to the other. Nor are they exclusive; moments of one phase may show up in the middle of a different one. Nevertheless, at any given period during your stay in India, one of these phases is sure to be dominant in your overall mental state.

### Fascination

In the initial period of time when everything is new; there are seemingly few problems since everyone is being extremely accommodating, and the predominant feeling is one of exhilaration at being in India at last, after a long period of anticipation. Unfortunately, this phase is fairly short-lived!

### Friendship

Immediately following initial euphoria comes the stage in which the need becomes paramount to build a new social structure to replace the one left behind. Your host family will play a large though challenging part in this effort. A combination of fear of the unknown and desire to create a comfortable new "known" will infuse your relationship with them. There may also be a quite understandable tendency to gravitate to the company of your fellow Americans for friendship, and to take refuge in the familiar—a situation that can sadly but easily solidify into a "we-they" syndrome in the third stage.

### Frustration

After a time, when you begin to become familiar enough with the country to make contacts with people, and to come to grips with the requirements of host family living and getting around, a stage of off-and-on depression begins—often inadvertently fed by the mutual support from your SITA peers! Problems and difficulties that are inevitable in the adjustment process seem to outweigh any possible, or potential, sense of achievement. The Indians you must deal with seem to become intransigent, the physical environment unpleasant, and class and host family demands impossible to fulfill. In your mind, you may be crying "leave me alone, you're not my 'real' friends, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ME!" The result can be that hostility towards India and those in authority becomes a predominant emotion, and homesickness results—sometimes to such a degree that there may be a tendency to feel that the whole India experience is not worth it and an early return home is preferable to remaining permanently miserable.

### Fulfillment

Although the previous stage can be very difficult to live through, it can eventually come to an end with the growth of cultural awareness, leading into the final phase in which the experience of being in India becomes fulfilling and rewarding. The onset of this phase stems from a personal realization and acceptance that, in all its aspects, the Indian environment is not likely to change. Consequently, if the experience is to be satisfying, it is you who must adapt yourself to your new environment by learning to operate within its confines. This will very likely result in compromises—often many of them, some that you probably thought you would never be willing to make—but it also results in a realization that conflicts can be worked out, and that the potential rewards to be gained from the India experience are as great as you are prepared to let them be.

Anyone coming to live in India for an extended period of time is going to experience these emotions, hopefully including the final one, because India is not what it at first appears to be. Though in many respects it is clearly an unfamiliar complex of Asian social and cultural customs, on the surface there are many things that appear at first glance to be familiar, or at least to work in familiar ways. Unfortunately, this often proves to be only a surface impression, and it gradually dawns on the newcomer that this is so. The real India, in terms of social and power structures and traditions, is a very un-Western one! This India is one that may not be nearly as attractive, or as easy to understand, upon a closer look, as it appeared to be on first acquaintance.

This is by no means to say that an American coming to live in India cannot adapt to the country; it is quite possible to do so. But it is extremely important to recognize each phase of the culture shock process as it occurs, and to grow to accept the fact that while Indian ways of doing things that may seem strange—and at times "wrong"—to American eyes, they are nevertheless an integral part of life in India. They are for Indians what your lifestyle in the U.S. is for you, the "known" on which you build your activities and relationships in daily life.

Not everyone actually likes living in India! There are physical and political strains, on top of the sociocultural ones, that place foreigners under a lot of stress. Avenues of "escape" to a comfort zone are few and far between; physical and mental exhaustion take their toll on everyone; and tempers may flare, even with your friends and family. However, there are some practical ways of adapting to and enjoying the experience of becoming in small measure a part of the Indian mosaic.

## Reactions to Culture Shock

While no two people deal with culture shock in the same way, there are common reactions shared by many. Some are less affected than others. Some people withdraw from unpleasant or uncomfortable situations, while others may become aggressive and strike back. You may find yourself trying both approaches, but people generally favor the approach that best fits their personality. The following chart lists the multiple reactions that people normally have to culture shock.

### Overall Symptoms of Culture Shock

- ❖ Anxiety
- ❖ Boredom
- ❖ Confusion
- ❖ Unexplained fits of weeping
- ❖ Homesickness
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Self-doubt
- ❖ Paranoia
- ❖ Helplessness
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Feelings of inadequacy
- ❖ Physical ailments and psychosomatic illnesses

### Passive Coping Mechanisms

- ❖ Physical and/or psychological withdrawal
- ❖ Spending excessive amounts of time reading
- ❖ Short attention span
- ❖ Quitting and returning to your home country early
- ❖ Need for excessive amounts of sleep
- ❖ Only seeing other Americans or Westerners
- ❖ Loss of ability to work or study effectively
- ❖ Diminished productivity

### Aggressive Coping Mechanisms

- ❖ Compulsive eating or drinking
- ❖ Family tensions
- ❖ Hostility toward host nationals
- ❖ Deciding to stay, but hating the country and its people
- ❖ Exaggerated cleanliness
- ❖ Relationship stress
- ❖ Verbal or physical aggressiveness
- ❖ Irritability
- ❖ Excessive chauvinism or stereotyping

Culture shock has been defined and described in many ways. It has been characterized most commonly as feeling “out of control.” A loss of familiar surroundings and styles of communication often result in frustration and stress because one tends to feel isolated and less effective in communicating. There are several ineffective ways that people choose to deal with this problem:

**Flight Reaction**—You may choose to withdraw from confusing or stressful situations. You may view the situation as hopeless. You may even question your reasons for wanting to study abroad in the first place.

**Irrational Aggression or Fight Reaction**—In this situation, one may displace angry feelings onto others in the host society. For example, someone going through culture shock may take his anger out on the teller at the bank or waiter in a restaurant when confronted with a confusing or frustrating problem.

**Filter Reaction**—In this response the traveler will choose to deny some aspect of his/her new existence in an attempt to cope better. Students might deny that they are abroad and build a “little America” where they socialize only with other Americans. This way they can criticize the local culture together. The other reaction is the “going native” response, when the student denies his American identity and takes on all the overt characteristics of the host culture.

## Coping with the Trauma

Coping with culture shock is part of the Indian experience. The symptoms need to be recognized, shared and discussed with SITA students and staff who are there to support you. There is no known way to avoid culture shock entirely when going to live in any new country, much less in one as challenging as India. But there are ways to minimize its impact and to cut down on the length of time occupied by the stages of frustration and hostility.

- ❖ Awareness is the first step. It is essential to recognize the symptoms of culture shock, and share the feelings that each phase generates in you with others, especially other SITA students and staff.
- ❖ Find new ways of coping with old (and new) problems, so that flexible thinking can lead to satisfactory resolutions instead of permanent inertia.
- ❖ Set goals! It is imperative to determine reasonable and achievable goals for your experience in India—even if these goals are different from and/or “lower” than those you had hoped to achieve before leaving the U.S.—and to find ways to

achieve them. Your goals might be as complex as mastering Madurai's social hierarchy, or only that in your own host family; as difficult as being able to carry on a comfortable conversation entirely in Tamil, or just managing to tell the bus conductor where you want to be let off; as intricate as mastering the preparation of many different South Indian food dishes, or simply accepting with grace the fact that you will be eating idli for breakfast every morning; as far-reaching as "understanding" aspects of Indian culture, or as basic as surviving it with a smile. Whatever they may be, set goals and then set out to achieve them, one by one.

- ❖ Recording your experiences in a journal and writing letters can be very therapeutic. Make sure to tell your friends and relatives to write to you regularly, and not to wait for your return letter before writing again. (If you worry about responses crossing in the mail, you could go a month or more before getting a reply!) Receiving letters can be very reassuring, and allows you to establish your daily Indian routine with many fewer worries. With e-mail becoming more and more available in India now there is the danger of communication with friends and family at home becoming unhealthy. Frequent communication can actually exacerbate feelings of homesickness and culture shock. It is important to find a communication balance with home to keep you feeling grounded.
- ❖ Participate and integrate daily Indian life with your own as much as you can. Learning a little bit of Tamil, and understanding local and family traditions that permeate everyday life, are good ways to start. Doing so can decrease substantially the toll that culture shock may take on your psychological and physical well being. No one can survive, either personally or socially, without cultural understandings that are at least to some degree shared with others. The success of your India experience will ultimately depend almost entirely on integrating the best aspects of your own social and cultural 'baggage' with those you learn in South India. So you can feel almost as much at home in your Indian environment as you did in the American one from which you came. This can open you up for discovery and appreciation of a whole world of social, cultural and aesthetic possibilities, which may even become an integral part of a 'new' you.

## Coexistence or Integration?

For those people who find living in India very difficult—and there are many who do—the question may arise whether it is better to suffer in silence, or whether some accommodation can be reached to make the Indian experience tolerable, if not enjoyable. For some people, the answer may mean turning inward, finding refuge in the world of the SITA Center and its comfortable American ambiance. For others, it may mean a tacit tolerance of those facets of Indian life that cannot be avoided, often accompanied by a good dose of rather caustic criticism of India and Indians in private, among trusted friends. It is quite possible to live for your few months in India like this, though such a lifestyle would be to some extent a concession of defeat to the challenge that you accepted in coming to India. So when SITA people encourage you to strike out on your own—and they often will—it is their way of trying to help you defend yourself against a temptation to retreat.

It is extremely unlikely that any non-Indian can become so integrated into Indian society as to be indistinguishable from Indians themselves in thought, though it may be more possible in actions alone. You may meet an occasional Westerner who has been in India for many years, and who seems to have accomplished at least the latter. There are even some rare souls who seem totally at home in the company of Indians and non-Indians as well. For the vast majority of us, though, integration is going to be a limited experience at best. Nevertheless, it is one worth striving for, because the South Indian people are individually some of the most hospitable and friendly people you could hope to meet anywhere in the world. Even limited integration into Madurai society will bring with it an insight into the lives of the people and their culture that is, after all, the ultimate purpose of each of you who is actively seeking the experience of living in and becoming a part of Indian culture.

## Prescription for Culture Shock

- ❖ Understand symptoms and recognize signs of "culture fatigue."
- ❖ Realize that some degree of discomfort and stress is natural in a cross-cultural experience.
- ❖ Recognize that your reactions are largely emotional and not easily subject to rational management.
- ❖ Gather information before you go so at least the difference will seem familiar if not natural. Knowledge is power.
- ❖ Look for the logical reasons behind host culture patterns. It "fits" the culture, discover why.
- ❖ Relax your grip on your normal culture and try and cheerfully adapt to new rules and roles.
- ❖ Don't give in to the temptation to disparage what you do not like or understand. It probably won't change.

- ❖ Identify a support network among host nationals, expatriates, work group, or within school setting. Use it, but don't rely on it exclusively.
- ❖ Understand that it is a passing phase of what will be, in retrospect, a time of great learning and personal growth.
- ❖ Give yourself quiet time, some private space, and don't be too hard on yourself.

[Adapted from: Bruce La Brack, Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication, 2001.]

## General Advice

Encourage yourself to interact with other people. If culture shock is the result of a communications breakdown, then a good way to overcome it is to restore communication, by building relationships. Try to get to know host-country students. Establishing friendships with local students is a good way to better understand the culture. Often, student clubs, sports teams, aerobics classes, or religious groups are more than willing to have an American spectator participate in their activities for a semester or year. This is an easy way to meet local students as well as continue some of the activities you are used to at home. Make friends with other students who are most likely going through the same period of adjustment that you are.

Bring mementos from home, such as photographs that remind you of your life back home. Also, write letters home. It is very common for students to want to restore effective communication. Writing to your friends and family is a good way to accomplish that. Think about how you handle stressful situations in the U.S. and transfer those strategies to your new surroundings overseas. If you are like many students, once you have settled in you won't want to come back!

A warning about email: it is a wonderful means of instant communication, but beware that when you are feeling upset or have a problem your local support system can be the best answer. Friends and family on the other side of the world can be a great listening ear. But ultimately, they cannot help you solve the situation and sometimes you can cause them more worry than it does you good. Writing letters is often a better way to communicate a stressful situation because by the time they have reached your friends and family, the problem is solved and they don't have to worry.

Again, take the time to Know Thyself and to Know Thy Host Country. The exercises included in those sections can help you as you begin to prepare yourself for your cross-cultural adaptation process.

## A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity\*

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) was created by Milton J. Bennet, Ph.D., as a framework to explain the reactions of people to cultural differences. He observed that individuals confronted cultural difference in some predictable ways as they learned to become more competent intercultural communicators. The underlying assumption is that as one's experience of cultural difference becomes more complex, one's competence in intercultural relations increases.

The first three stages are ethnocentric, meaning that one's own culture is experienced as central to reality in some way. The second three stages are ethnorelative, meaning that one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. Please keep in mind that these stages are on a continuum and should not be viewed as separate, distinct "levels." We encourage you to review the different stages as you move through your adaptation process.

### Ethnocentric States

1. Denial of Difference: No recognition of cultural difference because of isolation or intentional separation. May sometimes be accompanied by attribution of deficiency in intelligence or personality to culturally deviant behavior. Tendency to dehumanize outsiders.

#### Common remarks/observations at this stage:

- ❖ "All big cities are the same—lots of buildings, traffic, people..."
- ❖ "What I really need to know about is art and music."
- ❖ "As long as we all speak the same language, there's no problem."
- ❖ "I never experience culture shock."

2. Defense Against Difference: Recognition of cultural difference coupled with negative evaluation of most variations from native culture—the greater the difference, the more negative the evaluation. Characterized by dualistic us/them thinking

and frequently accompanied by overt negative stereotyping. A tendency towards social/cultural proselytizing of “under-developed” cultures.

Reversal: Tendency to see another culture as superior while maligning one's own. Dualistic thinking is identical; only the poles are reversed.

**Common remarks/observations at this stage:**

- ❖ “When you go to other cultures, it makes you realize how much better the U.S. is.”
- ❖ “I wish these people would talk the way we do.”
- ❖ “These people are so urbane and sophisticated, not like the superficial people back home.”
- ❖ “I wish I could give up my own cultural background and really be one of these people.”

3. Minimization of Difference: Recognition and acceptance of superficial cultural differences such as eating customs, etc., while holding that all human beings are essentially the same. Emphasis on the similarity of people and commonality of basic values. Tendency to define the basis of commonality in ethnocentric terms (i.e., everyone is essentially like us).

Physical Universalism: Emphasis on commonality of human beings in terms of physiological similarity (e.g., “After all, we're all human!”).

Transcendent Universalism: Emphasis on commonality of human beings as subordinate to a particular supernatural being, religion or social philosophy (e.g., “We are all children of God, whether we know it or not.”).

**Common remarks/observations at this stage:**

- ❖ “The key to getting along in any culture is to just be yourself—authentic and honest!”
- ❖ “Customs differ, of course, but when you really get to know them they're pretty much like us.”
- ❖ “Technology is bringing cultural uniformity to the developed world.”

**Ethnorelative States**

4. Acceptance of Difference: Recognition and appreciation of cultural differences in behavior and values, Acceptance of cultural differences as viable alternative solutions to the organization of human existence. Cultural relativity.

**Common remarks/observations at this stage:**

- ❖ “The more difference the better—more difference equals more creative ideas!”
- ❖ “The more cultures you know about, the better comparisons you can make.”
- ❖ “When studying abroad, every student needs to be aware of relevant cultural differences.”
- ❖ “I know my homestay family and I have had very different life experiences, but we're learning to work together.”

5. Adaptation to Difference: The development of communication skills that enable intercultural communication. Effective use of empathy, or frame of reference shifting, to understand and be understood across cultural boundaries.

**Common remarks/observations at this stage:**

- ❖ “To solve this dispute, I'm going to have to change my approach.”
- ❖ “I greet people from my culture and people from the host culture somewhat differently to account for cultural differences in the way respect is communicated.”
- ❖ “In a study abroad program, every student should be able to adapt to at least some cultural differences.”
- ❖ “The more I understand this culture, the better I get at the language.”

6. Integration of Difference: The internationalization of bicultural or multicultural frames of reference. Maintaining a definition of identity that is “marginal” to any particular boundaries.

**Common remarks/observations at this stage:**

- ❖ “I feel most comfortable when I'm bridging differences between the cultures I know.”
- ❖ “Whatever the situation, I can usually look at it from a variety of cultural points of view.”
- ❖ “In an intercultural world, everyone needs to have a transcultural mindset.”

\*[Derived from: Bennet, Milton J. “Towards a Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity” in R. Michael Paige, ed. Education for the Intercultural Experience. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1993.]



## **Part 10** **The Re-Entry Experience**

**Symptoms of Re-Entry Shock**

**Strategies for Coping with Cultural Re-Entry**

**Ideas for Sharing Your SITA Experience with Friends & Family**



## Re-Entry Shock

Crossing cultures, like flying across time zones, has a physical and emotional impact no matter what direction you are going. So whether one is arriving in a new culture or coming back to the home culture, it will involve challenges. Re-entry can often be as or more difficult than going abroad because students do not expect it. Re-entry shock is the reverse of culture shock, which students experience when they return home after an extended stay abroad. The same stages, cycles, or experiences of cultural adjustment and culture shock may occur.

SITA students come to India expecting a variety of experiences, but students don't necessarily expect the challenges involved in bringing these experiences home with them, or integrating them in to a "new" you that must re-adapt to your "old" home setting. In addition, SITA students also experience India on a very personal and emotional level that is often difficult to articulate and explain. Living in India, especially with host families, requires American students to give up much of what they are used to and comfortable with—especially the identity that they might have hitherto taken for granted. As a SITA student, re-learning the basics of eating, drinking, using the bathroom, and communicating can be very exciting, but it is also disorienting, exhausting, and maybe even scary. The learning curve is extremely high, and in four months, SITA students learn to function in an entirely different cultural environment, entailing considerable personal growth. However, when you arrive home, not only do you bring a new cultural skill set, but also you bring with you a new world-view. As a SITA student, you have just experienced and gotten a glimpse of how a large part of the rest of the world lives, and you must now focus on articulating what you have learned not only to yourself, but also to your friends and family who are eagerly awaiting your return and excited to hear all about your experience.

As you prepare for returning home, think back on your semester in India: how you reacted to a certain situation, your emotional highs and lows, and when they occurred. What did you struggle with coming to India? What stressed you out when you first arrived, a month later, halfway through the program and as you prepared to depart? The adjustment cycle changes with time. Remind yourself that, similarly, the re-adjustment cycle will present new surprises.

## Symptoms of Re-Entry Shock

Most students who study abroad will experience re-entry shock to some degree. It will be different for every student depending on personal experiences, but remember that you are not alone on your campus. Below are some identifying symptoms of re-entry shock—they are not necessarily negative, but can be overwhelming and frustrating if you don't know what is happening:

- ❖ Initial euphoria, often followed by depression
- ❖ Bored with the pace of life at home
- ❖ Inability to explain your experience
- ❖ Feeling like nobody wants to listen
- ❖ Reverse homesickness
- ❖ Noticing that relationships have changed
- ❖ Thinking about and planning a return trip
- ❖ Changes in goals and priorities
- ❖ Negative thoughts, attitudes, behaviors toward your home country
- ❖ Inability to apply and integrate new knowledge and skills
- ❖ Feeling like others will misinterpret adopted cultural behaviors
- ❖ Fear of losing or forgetting about the experience

## Strategies for Coping with Cultural Re-Entry

In addition to recognizing the symptoms, there are also ways for coping with and alleviating these symptoms. It is important to remember that the home you left is not the home you are coming back to. Not only have you changed during the semester, but your family and friends have also gone through changes while you were away. Recognize that you will need an adjustment period to adapt to these changes and share your experiences. It will not be a quick process.

- ❖ Reflection: give thought to your return, the changes you have experienced and what you want to share with home. Continue writing in your journal when you return home. It will be interesting to go back a year from now and remember the experience as a whole and how it changed your life.
- ❖ Understand the needs of others: be patient with friends and family who are trying to listen and understand your experiences. Reciprocate and listen to their stories about the last semester/year.
- ❖ Expect negative feelings about home culture: after living in India, you may view the U.S. for the first time as a foreigner. It is common to be highly critical of things, like the pace of life, consumerism, personal communication, academics, politics, and world-views. Remember that all cultures have positive and negative aspects.
- ❖ Accentuate the positive: identify what you like about both cultures and incorporate the best aspects into your life.
- ❖ Stay Connected: keep in touch with SITA friends, staff, and especially your host family. Write letters, send email, or even plan a reunion.
- ❖ Stay Internationally Connected: involve yourself in the international community by becoming involved in clubs or activities on campus, continue studying Tamil, or do volunteer work with the South Asian community.
- ❖ SITA Mentor: become a mentor on your campus to other students thinking of studying in India.
- ❖ Set goals for your development: change can stimulate new ideas and new directions for your life. Do you want to study abroad again, volunteer abroad over the summer, work abroad after graduation, or become a program assistant?

## Ideas for Sharing Your SITA Experience with Friends & Family

- ❖ Create a photo album with your favorite pictures that highlight your experience (limit 25 to 50 photos).
- ❖ Publish an article in your local or school paper.
- ❖ Hold an art exhibit with photos, poetry, souvenirs, items collected in India. Coordinate with other returned study abroad students to have a real international event.
- ❖ Cook meals for family and friends.
- ❖ Give a presentation at your local library, church, or home school about your Independent Study project.
- ❖ Find a teacher in your area and continue your expressive culture at home, or practice on your own.
- ❖ Plan an "India" night with SITA friends on campus.

## **Part 11** References & Resources

**Predeparture Reference Materials**

**Reading List**

**Films**

**Web Resources**

**Tamil Language**

**Madurai Resources**

**SITA Member College Representatives**

**Alumni Resources & Services**



# Predeparture Reference Materials

More recommendations may be sent during the predeparture period, but this is a good list to get you started.

## Reading List

This is a suggested not required reading list. There are thousands of non-fiction and fiction books about India, but previous students, staff and faculty have recommended these books. Required predeparture readings may be assigned by the resident director.

### Nonfiction

- ❖ *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*, by Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal.
- ❖ *Caste Today*, ed. by Chris Fuller.
- ❖ *The Camphor Flame*, by Chris Fuller
- ❖ *Darsan: Seeing the Divine in India*, by Diana Eck
- ❖ *Peasant moorings: village ties and mobility rationales in South India*, by J. L. Racine
- ❖ *Viramma: Life of an Untouchable*, by Viramma and J. L. Racine.
- ❖ *Being a Person the Tamil Way*, by E.V. Daniel
- ❖ *Notes on Love in a Tamil Family*, by Margaret Trawick
- ❖ *Hinduism: An Introduction*, by Shakunthala Jagannathan
- ❖ *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, by V. S. Naipaul

### Fiction

- ❖ *The God of Small Things*, by Arundhati Roy.
- ❖ *Malgudi Days; Swami and Friends; The English Teacher*, by R.K Narayan
- ❖ *Incantations and Other Stories*, by Anjana Appachana
- ❖ *A Fine Balance*, by Rohinton Mistry
- ❖ *The Ramayana*, trans. and ed. R.K. Narayanan
- ❖ *The Life of Pi*, by Yann Martel

### Cultural Preparation

These books can be found at [www.interculturalpress.com](http://www.interculturalpress.com)

- ❖ *Survival Kit*, by Robert Kohls
- ❖ *The Art of Crossing Cultures*, by Craig Storti
- ❖ *Kiss, Bow & Shake Hands*, by Terri Morrison, George A. Borden and Wayne A. Conaway
- ❖ *Culture Shock: India*, Gitnajali Kolanad
- ❖ *The Art of Coming Home*, by Craig Storti
- ❖ *The Lonely Planet Guide to South India*.
- ❖ *Everybody's Guide to People Watching*, by Aaron Wolfgang

### Films

- ❖ Freaky Chakra, 2003
- ❖ Bend It Like Beckham, 2002
- ❖ Leela, 2002
- ❖ American Desi, 2001
- ❖ Earth, 1998
- ❖ Bhaji on Beach, 1993
- ❖ A Passage to India, 1984
- ❖ The Guru, 2003
- ❖ Bollywood Hollywood, 2002
- ❖ Mr. & Mrs. Iyer, 2002
- ❖ Lagaan, 2001
- ❖ Fire, 1996
- ❖ Mississippi Masala, 1991
- ❖ Gandhi, 1982
- ❖ American Chai, 2002
- ❖ Chutney Popcorn, 2002
- ❖ The Mystic Masseur, 2002
- ❖ Monsoon Wedding, 2001
- ❖ Kamasutra, 1996
- ❖ Salaam Bombay, 1988

# Web Resources

## Indian Journals

- ❖ Economic and Political Weekly: <http://www.epw.org.in/>
- ❖ Manushi (a feminist journal): <http://free.freespeech.org/manushi/indexold.html>
- ❖ Outlook: <http://www.outlookindia.com/>
- ❖ India Today or India Today International—<http://www.india-today.com>
- ❖ Frontline (current affairs journal): <http://www.frontlineonline.com>

## Indian Newspapers

- ❖ The Hindu: <http://www.thehindu.com>
- ❖ Indian Express: <http://www.expressindia.com>
- ❖ Times of India: <http://www.timesofindia.com>

## U.S.-based Travel Resources

- ❖ U.S. Department of State, Travel Information <http://www.state.gov/travel/>  
Includes: travel warnings, country background information, passport and visa information, travel tips, and links to the CDC, WHO and U.S. Embassies and Consulates
- ❖ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs: <http://www.travel.state.gov/>
- ❖ Embassy of India, Washington DC: <http://www.indiagov.org/>
- ❖ Consulate General of India, San Francisco: <http://www.indianconsulate-sf.org/>
- ❖ Consulate General of India, Chicago: <http://chicago.indianconsulate.com/>
- ❖ Consulate General of India, New York: <http://www.indiacgny.org/>
- ❖ Lufthansa Airlines <http://www.lufthansa.com>
- ❖ Lonely Planet <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>
- ❖ Transitions Abroad Magazine <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/>

## India-based Travel Resources

- ❖ U.S. Embassy, New Delhi <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/>
- ❖ U.S. Consulate General, Chennai: <http://usembassy.state.gov/chennai/>
- ❖ Indian Railway: <http://www.indianrail.gov.in/>
- ❖ Southern Railway: <http://www.southernrailway.org/>
- ❖ Indian Airlines: <http://indian-airlines.nic.in/>
- ❖ Jet Airways: <http://www.jetairways.com/>

## Madurai Sites

- ❖ Madurai Homepage: <http://www.madurai.com/>, <http://www.digitalmadurai.com/index.htm>
- ❖ The American College: <http://www.americancollege.edu/webpage/index.htm>
- ❖ Madurai Weather: [http://weather.123india.com/tamil\\_nadu/madurai.html](http://weather.123india.com/tamil_nadu/madurai.html)
- ❖ Meenakshi Temple: <http://www.maduraimeenakshi.org/>

## Insurance

- ❖ Travel Health Insurance: <http://www.culturalinsurance.com>
- ❖ Tuition Insurance: <http://www.collegerefund.com/>

## Gay, Lesbian, Bi & Transgender Resources

- ❖ NAFFSA-Lesbigay Support: <http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm>  
This site has information on lesbian and gay study abroad issues as well as links to international lesbian and gay organizations and overseas support..
- ❖ Bombay Dost: <http://www.bombay-dost.com/>

## Tamil Language

- ❖ University of Pennsylvania: <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/plc/tamilweb/>  
This is a great introductory website to the Tamil language. Practice writing the script, sounding out the letters, forming sentences and learn vocabulary.

## Tamil Language

Here is some basic information about the Tamil language before classes start at orientation:

- ❖ Tamil has 11 primary vowels (plus a vowel “au” that is rarely used)
- ❖ 18 consonants—plus 4 “new” ones used to write non-Tamil words.
- ❖ Almost exact equivalents of every sound in Tamil are also found in English, Tamil uses these sounds in different ways from English.
- ❖ Your brain and mouth already know how to make the sounds, it just takes practice

In spite of the ease with which the language can be read, there are three important rules when learning Tamil:

- ❖ Some Tamil letters are written differently but pronounced the same. (This is only a problem for writing, not for reading). The Tamil alphabet charts have a corresponding “pronunciation key” for some of the letters and may give the same example for two different letters.
- ❖ Some Tamil letters may be pronounced in two different ways. The “pronunciation key” shows, for instance, k/g as the English equivalent for one Tamil letter. In Tamil two sounds are written with a single letter. The differences in pronunciation is almost predictable; and in every case, each of the pairs of sounds is produced by your mouth in exactly the same way—the only difference being that for k your vocal cords are not vibrating, while for g they are (so in linguistic terms, the first is “voiceless” and the second “voiced”). The rules for deciding which one of the sounds to make will take some getting used to, but after a time you will make the distinction easily.
- ❖ Tamil is written in syllables. If the first syllable is a vowel, the letter for that vowel is used. (This is the only time when the vowel is written out as a separate letter.) In all other places, a marker is added to the consonant letter to indicate the vowel that goes with it. If the consonant has no vowel, a dot is put over the letter for the consonant. (This is how “double” consonants, or two consonants with one vowel, are shown.)

# Madurai Resources

Once you start to learn Tamil, you will want to start practicing it around town. Below is a list of services and businesses the program has used before and students have recommended in the past. This is NOT an exhaustive list, please ask your host family for more suggestions. At the end of the program feel free to suggest suggestions and additions to this list.

## Academic Resources

- ❖ American College—Alagarkoil Road, Goripalayam
- ❖ Lady Doak College—Next door to SITA Center
- ❖ Madurai Kamaraj University
- ❖ TTS-Center for Social Analysis

## SITA Library Resources

The SITA Library is divided into subject sections such as art, history, politics, environment, economics, social sciences, religion, literature, women's studies and resources. The library also includes back issues of several journals/magazines, and photocopies of articles brought from the U.S. and from India. There are several library indexes in the classroom.

## Non-Governmental Organizations

- ❖ People's Watch Tamil Nadu
- ❖ CESC: <http://www.cesci.ch/>

## Food

- ❖ Ashok Bhavan  
Goripalayam—inexpensive vegetarian thalis and tiffin.
- ❖ Arya Bhavan  
1. Poonga Arya Bhavan—opposite to Gandhi museum, next to Rajaji park,  
2. Corner of W. Masi and Dindigul Rd.  
Both provide inexpensive vegetarian thalis, tiffin, and sweets.
- ❖ Narayana Restaurant  
Bibikulam—pass Bibikulam gutter canal bridge and turn right; inexpensive vegetarian thalis.
- ❖ College House  
Town Hall Road—inexpensive thalis & tiffin.
- ❖ Indo Ceylon  
Town Hall Rd—inexpensive biriyani, vegetarian and non-vegetarian.
- ❖ Modern Restaurant  
Netaji road—vegetarian.
- ❖ Mutai Parota Stalls  
Roadside stalls in Ameer Mahal area (Muslim tomb) in Goripalayam and Bibikulam area—inexpensive non-vegetarian and incredible atmosphere.
- ❖ Taj Restaurant  
Town Hall Road and Alagarkoil Road—vegetarian and non-vegetarian Continental and Indian cuisine.
- ❖ Meenakshi Bhavan  
Past the Gandhi museum to your right, next to the MAVMM school, near Anna Bus Stand—excellent inexpensive vegetarian thali and tiffin meals.
- ❖ Murugan Idli Shop  
On W. Masi Street off Dindigul Rd., Goripaliyum, & Madurai Railway Junction—excellent inexpensive vegetarian tiffin.

## Clothes

- ❖ Hajeemoosa  
Near Pudumandapam—expensive, ready-made salawars, saris and kurtas.
- ❖ Trends  
Goripalayam—expensive, ready made salawars, saris and material for stitching. Tailor on site.
- ❖ Handloom House  
East Veli Street near Temple—handloom cotton items.
- ❖ Apco & Cooptex  
Goripalayam- great for veshtis and lungis; towels, sheets, etc. are also available.
- ❖ V-TEX Tailors  
No. 123 in Pudumandapam—good prices and long-standing relationship with SITA students.
- ❖ Sakthi Ladies Tailors  
Goripalayam—Stitch salawar sets, sari blouses and sari falls.

## Hair Saloons (Men only) & Beauty Parlors (Women only)

- ❖ Odean Saloon  
Past Rajaji Hospital, before the Anna bus stand on the right; inexpensive.
- ❖ Singapore Saloon  
Town Hall Road: inexpensive.
- ❖ Vinitha Beauty Parlour  
K.K. Nagar, next to Anandamalikai marriage hall.
- ❖ Remuki Beauty Parlour  
1st floor of Remuki's department store in K.K. Nagar.

## Handicrafts

- ❖ Khadi Shop  
Town Hall Road—great for ayurvedic soaps, incense, khadi clothing, chuppuls, bronze & clay items.
- ❖ Government Emporiums  
Near railway station—a variety of handicrafts available; cheaper and more reliable than “emporiums” near the temple.
- ❖ Meenakshi Treasures  
Opposite of North Gate of Meenakshi Temple—expensive but a wide variety of quality handicrafts from around India.  
Rooftop view of the temple.

## Bookstores

- ❖ Higginbothams  
Goodshed Street—the largest bookstore.
- ❖ Motherland  
Opposite the railway station.
- ❖ Sarvothaya Ilakkiyappannai  
West Veli Street near the Periyar bus stand.

## Card Shops

- ❖ Top Shop  
Near petrol station in Goripalayam—good selection of cards, envelopes, stationery, tape, etc.
- ❖ Disney Card Shop  
Goripalayam near Trends—pens, journals, and small gifts.

## Department Stores

- ❖ Sendurams  
Income Tax Road—food items, toiletries and some produce.
- ❖ Remuki  
K.K. Nagar & behind Pudumandapam (Tues. holiday) - food items, toiletries, sweets, cards, art supplies, and beauty products.
- ❖ Shoppers Shop  
Town Hall Road—has a variety of imported goods.

## Photo Labs

Note: Advantix processing is not available in Madurai. Black & White processing is limited and expensive. Standard color processing is available and inexpensive.

- ❖ Dass Colour Lab  
Dindigul Road in Empee Hotel
- ❖ Minimax Colour Lab  
Across from railway station
- ❖ Raja Raheshwari  
Goripaliam, take left at Thevar Statue.

## Communication

- ❖ STD and ISD (phones)  
Phone booths near the SITA centre; Tallakulam Post Office in Goripalayam; & Income Tax Road.
- ❖ iWay Internet & Phone  
Located throughout India. Inexpensive internet use and internet international calling.
- ❖ Fax  
Tallakulam Post Office, fax#: 011-91-452-2531056, costs approx. Rs. 110/page to send and Rs. 10 to receive, it is the least expensive place. There should be a note on the faxes sent to you "Attn: SITA Program. Phone No: 2531248".

Fax machines are also available at many copy centers & phone booths.

- ❖ Stamps, aerogrammes, and speed post  
Tallakulam Post Office in Goripalayam & General Post Office in town.

## Banks (Foreign Exchange)

- ❖ ICICI Bank  
Across from SITA Center—ATM available.
- ❖ Canara Bank and State Bank of India  
On West Veli, before railway station—ATM available.
- ❖ Trade Wings Limited Foreign Exchange Division  
184-A/1, North Veli Street—Will cash travelers checks.
- ❖ LKP Foreign Exchange  
KRV Arcade, AR Plaza 1st Floor, Shops V&W, 16 & 17 North Veli Street. Will cash traveler's checks.

Note: Bring your passport when exchanging money. Ask for an encashment certificate and/or receipt because you may need this at the airport to convert money. Do not change money on the black market!

## Transportation In Madurai

Autos or rickshaws from the SITA Center (OCPM Auto Stand)

- ❖ Rs. 10/-To Goripalayam, Sellur, Tallakulam.
- ❖ Rs. 20/-To Income Tax Office, Anna bus stand, Gandhi Museum, Krishnapuram and M. G. Nagar.
- ❖ Rs. 30/-To Pudur, Viswanathapuram, Hajeemoosa, Meenakshi Temple,
- ❖ Rs. 35/-To Madurai Junction, Canara Bank K.K. Nagar, Anna Nagar, Handloom House, Palace.
- ❖ Rs. 40/-Periyar, Tiruvalluvar and Aarappaalayam bus stand
- ❖ Rs. 50/-Mapillai Vinayagar Movie Theater, S.S. Colony, and Theological Seminary.

\*Prices above are one-way one-day estimates and subject to change. Negotiate a price before getting into an auto!

## Buses

- ❖ SITA Center Bus Stop
- ❖ OCPM School, across from Auto Stand
- ❖ Goripalayam, near Tallakulam Post Office

\*Prices vary depending on distance. Within Madurai city prices range from

## Transportation Outside of Madurai

### Train

Reservations are made at Madurai Junction and at the Tallakulam Reservation Counter (about 100 yards before Tallakulam post office). Present the clerk with a filled out reservation request sheet (available at the station, but it is a good idea to do this in advance). If the desired train is full, ask about the "foreign tourist quota". To reserve a seat within this quota the passenger must come with their passport and approach the Reservation supervisor sitting inside the computer reservation room. Travel within South India can be booked from the Tallakulam Reservation Counter. Travel to and within North India must be booked at the Reservation Center at Madurai Junction. Book long distance trains early.

### Bus

- ❖ Periyar (Central) Bus Stand: Town buses only
- ❖ Anna Bus Stand: Trichy, Thanjavur
- ❖ Aarappaalayam Bus Stand: Kodaikanal, Coimbatore
- ❖ Palanganatham Bus Stand: Kanyakumari, Nagercoil
- ❖ Tiruvalluvar Bus Stand: Interstate buses (i.e. to Kerala, Karnataka, Pondicherry, etc.).
- ❖ KPN: opposite Thiruvallavur bus stand—deluxe private buses to Madras
- ❖ KB: at Hotel Aarthy near Periyar bus stand; good service; deluxe private buses to Madras

### Air

- ❖ Indian Airlines:\* Across from Madurai Junction, beside State Bank of India.
- ❖ Jet Airways:\* Madurai Airport

\*Travel Agents can book tickets on planes and trains for a fee.

# SITA Member College Representatives

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## **Alumni Resources & Services**

SITA alumni on your campus are a great supplemental resource because they have recently returned and can share their stories and memories of India-especially to new SITA students. Learning about their experiences will provide more insight into what life can be like in Madurai.

Currently, there is no formal programmatic system to keep in touch with alumni, however, an alumni network is currently is being developed. So stay in touch with the program after your return! We love to hear from alumni and look forward to putting you all in contact with one another soon.



## **Appendix** அறிநாள் பரஓநாள் அம்

**Sample Course Syllabi**

**Cultural Insurance Services International—Schedule of Benefits**

**Condition of Participation Form—Student Copy**



# Elementary Functional Tamil

## First Semester Syllabus

Instructor:	Dr. J. Arun Raja Selvan
Course Hours:	Tamil language classes will meet for a total of 60 hours during the first three months of the program. Five days a week (Monday-Friday), from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., and at least one 30-minute tutorial session each week.
Description:	The elementary Tamil language course in the first semester will attempt to make the learners functionally competent to understand and speak basic simple, compound and a few complex sentences in Tamil. Conversation drills will be extensively given in the classroom to equip the learners to deal with different situations they will encounter in their day-to-day activity. Though the four language skills—speaking, listening, reading and writing—will be taught in the class, emphasis will be given to develop speaking and listening in order to make the learners communicatively competent. Home work sheets and assignments will be given almost daily. The learners will be graded based partly on their performances in the three tests to be conducted. Using language outside the classroom will be stressed and encouraged. Classroom teaching will be supplemented by afternoon one-on-one tutorial sessions. The following aspects of language are expected to be covered and learned:
I. Sounds:	Vowels and consonants—short vs. long vowels; training for “difficult” sounds
II. Script:	Syllabic writing system—vowels, consonants and vowel-consonants
III. Morphophonemics:	Simple basic sandhi rules involving question particle, case markers, tense and PNG suffixes
IV. Vocabulary:	Nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, numerals, adverbs, infinitives, AVPs, demonstratives, etc., and also vocabulary required for day-to-day conversation
V. Basic Grammar:	Formation of the interrogative—question particles and Wh-questions; case markers; connective phrases; conjugation of verbs; present, past and future tense suffixes; PNG suffixes; impersonal verbs; modal auxiliary verbs; negatives; echo word formation; post-positions; AVPs; etc.
VI. Syntax:	Structure of Tamil sentence SOV as opposed to English SVO; equational sentences; finite verb constructions; constructions having infinitives/AVPs; impersonal verb constructions expressing different moods and aspects; interrogative sentences: formation & structure; tag questions; conditional constructions; and forming quoted phrases
VII. Dialogue:	Situational conversations
Grading:	Grading is done by observing the student's participation in the class, promptness in submitting homework sheets, enthusiasm in using the language outside the class, and the three oral tests to be conducted.

## Teaching Schedule:

- Week I:** Introducing sounds  
Basic conversation  
Monosyllabic simple vocabulary  
Simple nouns, adjectives, a few adverbs  
Imperative verbs (verb stems)  
Vocabulary—food items  
Honorific and non-honorific suffixes, suffixes that convey respect, intimacy, closeness, distance, offensive, social distance, etc.
- Week II:** Question Particle  
Pronouns, demonstratives, dative & locative case markers  
Case markers—accusative, locative, instrumental, ablative, dative, sociative, benefactive  
Numbers  
Sentence structure in Tamil SOV as opposed to English SVO  
Conjunctions  
The connective particle—um in Tamil meaning 'and' and also 'also'  
Equational sentences
- Week III:** Sandhi rules relating to the use of question particle  
Question words, close & remote pairs relating to Q-words  
Conversation practice  
Expressing time, more vocabulary  
Veenum, veenaam, pitikkum, pitikkaatu, teriyum, teriyaatu constructions  
Finite verb in Tamil—its nomenclature  
Present tense suffix and PNG suffixes  
Conversation drills with present tense usage
- Week IV:** Verb conjugation with future tense suffix -habitual vs. future time  
Future tense non-human—formation, usage, etc  
Drills to practice future tense  
Emphatic clitic 'taan'  
Review of items covered so far, Test—I
- Week V:** Impersonal Verbs expressing different aspects & moods  
Infinitive in Tamil—structure & construction  
Inf+laam, Inf+kuutaatu construction  
Inf+illa, Inf+maatt+PNG construction  
Inf+poo+tense+PNG construction  
Conversation practice
- Week VI:** Constructions of -ai poola 'like', -ai parri 'about', -ai vita -Tam/-kitta meaning roughly 'have'/'with me'  
Sandhi rules  
-M ending, -r ending and -tu ending words  
Written to spoken conversion with reference to finite verbs with present tense  
Vocabulary—parts of body, vegetables  
Conversation practice
- Week VII:** Past tense suffix  
Elaborate drills, using all tense suffixes, more adverbs like kantippaa, caataaranamaa, oruveelai, cila camayam, atikkati, etc  
Tamil cine song learning  
Oral presentation  
Conversation drills  
Review
- Week VIII:** Introducing Tamil script  
Syllabic writing system—introducing vowel-consonants & vowel markers  
Reading & writing in Tamil script—practice  
Consonant clusters in Tamil, nasal + stop combination, pronunciation drills  
Voicing and fricativisation in Tamil—rules Quotative (collu, ninai, and keel verbs following the quoted phrase)  
Tag questions in Tamil—formation, difference between English & Tamil  
Echo words in Tamil—formation, meaning, etc.  
Conversational drills  
Final Test

# Doing Ethnography in India

## SITA Fall 2003 Syllabus

Shanti Pillai, Instructor

### Course Description:

This course has three objectives: 1) to introduce you to ethnographic research methods and writing; 2) to assist you in the design of a research proposal for your independent study projects, and 3) to learn about various aspects of Indian culture generally, and Tamil culture in particular.

We will briefly consider the history of "writing culture," and then move to looking closely at how contemporary scholars are producing ethnographic literature. We will examine issues of authority and identity on the part of the researcher, in addition to the advantages and disadvantages of various fieldwork methodologies, including participant observation, interviews, archival research, and mapping. As we read a series of ethnographic texts throughout the semester, we will explore how scholars have made use of certain techniques in looking at particular topics. We will also pay attention to how the researcher's own feelings, history, and political position give shape to her/his writing.

All of this will serve as a backdrop for our own ethnographic adventures. Over the weeks we will engage in a series of mini-fieldwork exercises designed to try out various techniques, hone our observation skills, and practice writing research findings. This will be invaluable experience when we turn our attention to the project design and methodology of your own independent projects. After the tour in Kerala, each of you will be conducting research in Madurai that will culminate in the production of a paper at the end of the semester. During this course, you will work on the research proposal for that independent project. Your final grade for this class will be based largely on your completed proposal. Thus, alongside our reading of other people's work, we will be working steadily towards developing a focused objective and appropriate methodology for your own endeavors.

Most of the ethnographic texts we will read in this class are about India, and many of them are about South India in particular. In this way, we can meet our third objective for the class, to familiarize ourselves with some aspects of local culture. Perhaps some of the topics we examine will pique your interest, suggesting possible avenues for your own research.

## Course Schedule:

### August 23 Introduction

(at Thanjavur): FW Assignment 1

### August 25 What is Ethnography?

(at Thanjavur): Review FW Assignment 1

### August 29: Thick Description

Reading: Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture."  
FW Assignment 2

### September 2: Authority

Reading: Clifford, "On Ethnographic Authority."  
Review FW Assignment 2

### September 3: Identity in the Field: "Inside/Outside"

Reading: Narayan, "How Native is the 'Native Anthropologist'?"

### September 9: Women in the Field

Reading: Behar, "Introduction" and  
Visweshwaran, "Defining Feminist Ethnography"

### September 11: Women as Informants

Reading: Visweshwaran, "Refusing the Subject."  
Grodzins Gold, "New Light in the House:  
Schooling Girls in Rural North India"  
Dickey, "Anjali's Prospects: Class Mobility in  
Urban India."  
FW Assignment 3

### September 16: Performance

Reading: Schechner, "The Ramlila of Ramnagar"  
Seizer, "Offstage with Special Drama Actresses in  
Tamil Nadu, South India"  
Review FW Assignment 3

### September 22: Urban Spaces

Reading: Srinivas, "Civic Rituals in the New  
Silicon Valley"  
Roy, "The Politics of Poverty"  
FW Assignment 4

### September 24: Village Spaces

Reading: Mines, "The Hindu Gods in a South  
Indian Village"  
Viramma, Racine & Racine, "High and Low Castes  
in Karani"  
Review FW Assignment 4

### September 27: Material Culture

Reading: Nagarajan, "(In)Corporating Threshold  
Art: Kolam Competitions..."  
FW Assignment 5

### September 29: Images

Reading: Bate, "Political Praise in Tamil  
Newspapers"  
Pinney, "Photographic Portraiture in Central  
India in the 1980s and 1990s"

### October 1: Popular Culture

Reading: Dickey, "Consuming Utopia: Film  
Watching in Tamil Nadu"  
Review Fieldwork Assignment 5

### October 3: Emotions

Reading: Trawick, "The Ideology of Love in a  
Tamil Family"

### Session 15 Proposal presentations and wrap-up

(in Trivandrum):

## Course Requirements:

### Class Attendance & Participation

Your active participation is necessary for your own learning experience, as well as that of everyone participating in the seminar. You must attend all classes and come prepared to discuss the session's assigned readings. I accept only medical absences.

### Group Forum Participation

Concurrent with the class and continuing into the Independent Study period, Jake and Kirsten will lead weekly discussion sections. The purpose of these discussions is for you to continue your reflections about the experience of learning and living in India, but on a more personal level. The idea between the Forum and the class is for you to develop a lively dialogue between personal reflection and experience, on the one hand, and critical and theoretical thinking on the other. Your attendance, full participation, and completion of assignments are required in the Forum. We will accept only medical absences.

### Fieldwork Exercises

During the course of the semester we will have little mini-assignments aimed at allowing you to practice various fieldwork methods and sharpen your cultural observation skills. The assignments will be announced in class and will require a brief write-up to be shared in the following class. The fieldwork exercises will be an important part of our class discussions. If you haven't done yours on time, it will hinder your ability to participate, and also will rob you of an important opportunity for feedback from your colleagues. I strongly encourage you to do them on time. If you hand them in late, I reserve the right to lower the grade you receive on the assignment by one full grade.

### Research Proposal

The purpose of this course is largely to assist you in the preparation of a research project that you will conduct during the Independent Study period. The key to a successful project is a well-written, tightly-focused proposal that will detail the problem you are to examine, the methods you will use, and the work's relevance to the study of India generally. The proposal will serve as your "final paper" for this class. Because of the schedule of the semester, it is absolutely crucial that you hand your proposal in on time, so that I can look it over while we are on the tour and then hand it back to you so you are 100% ready to get started on your project at the beginning of the Independent Study period. Therefore, to suit your needs as well as my own, I will NOT ACCEPT any final proposals late.

## Grading will be as follows:

Assignment	Due Date	Percent of Final Grade
Class Participation	Every Class!	15%
Participation in Group Forum	Every Forum!	10%
FW Exercise #1	August 25	5%
FW Exercise #2	September 2	5%
FW Exercise #3	September 16	5%
FW Exercise #4	September 24	5%
FW Exercise #5	October 1	5%
Research Proposal	October 12	50%

## Readings:

All readings are in the packet that will be distributed to you upon your arrival in Madurai. The following is a sample reading list:

### Readings

- Behar, Ruth 1995 "Introduction: Out of Exile." In *Women Writing Culture*. Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon, eds. Pp. 1-29.
- Clifford, James 1988 "On Ethnographic Authority." In *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Pp. 21-54.
- Dickey, Sara 1995 "Consuming Utopia: Film Watching in Tamil Nadu." In *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 131-156.
- Geertz, Clifford 1973 "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, Inc. Pp. 3-30.
- Nagarajan, Vijaya Rettakudi 2001 "(In)Corporating Threshold Art: Kolam Competitions, Patronage, and Colgate." In *Religions/Globalizations: Theories and Cases*. Dwight N. Hopkins, et. al., ed. Durham: Duke University Press. Pp. 161-186.
- Narayan, Kirin 1993 "How Native is the 'Native Anthropologist'?" *American Anthropologist* 95 (3): 786-796.
- Pinney, Christopher 2002 "Photographic Portraiture in Central India in the 1980s and 1990s." In *The Material Culture Reader*. Victor Buchli, ed. Oxford, New York: Berg.
- Roy, Ananya 2003 "The Politics of Poverty." In *City Requiem, Calcutta: Gender and the Politics of Poverty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 25-78.
- Schechner, Richard 1985 "Ramlila of Ramnagar." In *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Pp. 151-211.
- Srinivas, Smriti 2001 "Civic Rituals in the New Silicon Valley." In *Landscapes of Urban Memory: The Sacred and the Civic in India's High-Tech City*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 1-35.
- Trawick, Margaret 1990 "The Ideology of Love in at Tamil Family." In *Divine Passions: The Social Construction of Emotion in India*. Owen M. Lynch, ed. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 37-63.
- Visweshwaran, Kamala 1994 "Defining Feminist Ethnography" and "Refusing the Subject." In *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*. Pp. 17-39 and 60-72.

### The following are all to be found in:

- Mines, Diane P. and Sarah Lamb, eds. 2002 *Everyday Life in South Asia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bate, Bernard J. "Political Praise in Tamil Newspapers: The Poetry and Iconography of Democratic Power." Pp. 308-325.
- Dickey, Sara "Anjali's Prospects: Class Mobility in Urban India." Pp. 214-226.
- Grodzins, Ann Gold "New Light in the House: Schooling Girls in Rural North India." Pp. 86-99.
- Mines, Diane P. "The Hindu Gods in a South Indian Village." Pp. 236-248.
- Seizer, Susan "Offstage with Special Drama Actresses in Tamil Nadu, South India: Roadwork." Pp. 116-131.
- Viramma, Josiane Racine & Jean-Luc Racine, "High and Low Castes in Karani." Pp. 190-198.

# **SOUTH INDIA TERM ABROAD PROGRAM—2004**

## **Socio-Political Issues: Caste, Community and Gender**

**Instructor:** Prof. T. Chinnaraj Joseph  
Head, Department of Religion, Philosophy and Sociology & Director, Post Graduate Department of Social Work, The American College, Madurai-2

**Course Objective:** To provide the visiting students with an opportunity to interrogate India, as a post-colonial reality.

**Course Requirements:** Mandatory attendance and preparation on readings  
One final paper, (approximately 12 pages, on a topic of your choice) (Suggested topics will be announced.)  
The final paper is due during finals week date TBA. Papers will be graded according to the following standards:  
Clarity of objects and themes, internal consistency and quality, a range of data and references, originality of analysis and interpretation, synthesis of ideas, and conclusions).

**Grading:** Your final mark will be based on the following:  
Class participation and preparedness (20%)  
Final Paper (80%)

**Required Texts:** Please refer to syllabus: readings will be handed out in advance

**Course Schedule:** Consult SITA calendar for time schedule for the semester)

## **Course Description:**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **SESSION 1**

Theme: Understanding India and a discussion on course objectives and perspective.

### **II. INDIA'S PAST**

#### **SESSION 2**

Theme: India through Ages: The Politics of Understanding India's Past

Required Reading:

Stanley Wolport, "Historic Prologue" in Introduction to India (California : Viking 1991), 23-70.

#### **SESSION 3**

Theme: Pre-Colonial India: An Overview of Economy, Culture and Society.

Required Reading:

A.R.Desai, "An overview of Economy and Culture in Pre British India" in Social Background of Indian Nationalism, (Bombay : Popular Prakasam 1976), 7—29.

### **III. THE COLONIAL AND THE MODERN**

#### **SESSION 4**

Theme: Colonial Modernisation and Economic Rationale: India's 'Third World' Status.

Required Reading:

Bipan Chandra, "The Colonial Legacy" in Bimal Jalan, ed The Indian Economy: Problems and Prospects ( New Delhi : Penguin, 1992), 1—31.

#### **SESSION 5**

Theme: Colonial Modernisation and Cultural Issues: The Case of Indian Education and English

Required Readings:

i) Elimer H.Cutts, "The Background of Macaulay's Minutes," The American Historical Review 1952—53, 824—853.

ii) Amit Chaudhuri, "Poles of Recovery: From Dutt to Chaudhr," The Hindu, July 15 , 22 & 29 , 2001.

## **SESSION 6**

Theme: Colonial Modernisation and The Indian Response: Gandhi and Nehru

Required Readings:

- i) A.K. Saran, "Gandhi's Theory of Society and our Times" in Fred Dallmayr & G.N. Devy, 201—215.
- ii) Thomas Pantham "Understanding Nehru's Political Ideology", in Fred Dallmayr & G.N. Devy, 126—233.

## **SESSION 7**

Theme: Colonial Modernisation: Construction of Religious Communities and the Birth of India and Pakistan

Required Readings:

- i) Kushwant Singh, "Train to Pakistan," in Kushwant Singh, Not a Nice Man to Know: The Best of Kushwant Singh, ( Delhi : Penguin, 1993 ) 298—316.
- ii) Gyanendra Pandey, "Community and Violence," Economic and Political Weekly, Aug 9, 1997, 2037—2045.

## **IV. CASTE, GENDER AND VIOLENCE**

### **SESSION 8**

Theme: Some Classic Statements on Caste and their Interpretation

Required Readings:

- i) Andre Beteille, "Caste in a South Indian Village", in Dipankar Gupta ed., Social Stratification (New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1996 ) 146—162.
- ii) G.S. Ghurye, "Features of the caste system," in Dipankar Gupta ed.

### **SESSION 9**

Theme: Dalit Self-Assertion, Violence and Gender

Required Readings:

- i) Gabriele Dietrich, "Dalit Movement and Women's Movements," in Reflections on the Women's movement in India: Religion, Ecology, Development, (New Delhi : Horizon India Books, 1992 ) 73—93.
- ii) T. Kannan, "Caste Violence and Dalit Consciousness: A Critical Interpretation of Dominance," ( Bangalore : Institute of Social and Economic Change, 2000).

### **SESSION 10**

Theme: Guest lecture on Dalit Issues

## **V. FAMILY AND GENDER**

### **SESSION 11**

Theme: Peculiarities of Indian Family: Issues Relating to Joint Family Structure

Required Readings:

- i) Sudhir Kakar, "Families and Children," in The Inner World: A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India, (New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1990,) 113—126.
- ii) A.K. Ramanujam, "The Indian Oedipus," in Vinay Dharwadkar, ed., The Collected Essays of A. K. Ramanujam ( New Delhi : Oxford Univ Press, 1999) 337—397.

### **SESSION 12**

Theme: Indian Family and Female Identity

Required Readings:\

- i) Sudhir Kakar, "Mothers and Infants," in The Inner World: A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India, ( New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1990,) 52—111.\
- ii) Mark Tully, "The Barren Woman of Balaram Goan," in The Heart of India, (London : Penguin Books, 1996), 1—21.

### **SESSION 13**

Theme: Violence Against Women and Response

Required Reading:

- i) Select Cases from Manushi.
- ii) Janaki Nair, "Social Reform and Women's Question," in Women and Law in Colonial India, (New Delhi : Kali for Women, 1996), 49—94.

## **VI. UNDERSTANDING INDIAN POLITY**

### **SESSION 14**

Theme: Identity Politics and Emergence of 'Hindutva' or Hindu Nationalism

Required Reading:

i) Thomas Blom, "Recuperating Masculinity: Hindu Nationalism and The Exorcising of the Muslim OTHER," Revised version of the paper presented at the Conference "Comparative Approaches to National Identities". (Copenhagen : Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 1994)

### **SESSION 15**

Theme: Problematising Globalisation: The Indian Case

Required Readings:

A. Political Economy:

i) Rahul Mukherji, "Privatisation, Federalism and Governance," Economic and Political Weekly (EPW), Jan 3, 2004, 109—113.

ii) Suprya Roy Chowdhury, "Globalisation and Labour," EPW, Jan 3, 2004, 105-108.

B. Theorising Globalisation:

i) Abhay Kumar Dubey, " Globalisation: in the History Workshop," EPW, Jan 3, 2004, 72—79.

ii) Aditya Nigam, " Imagining the Global Nation", EPW, Jan 3, 2004, 72-79.

C. Cultural Critique of Globalisation:\

i) Ashish Nandy, "The Beautiful Expanding Future of Poverty: Popular Economics as Psychological Defence," EPW, Jan 3, 2004, 94-99.

ii) Nivedita Menon, "Refusing Globalisation and the Authentic Nation: Feminist Politics in Current Conjuncture," EPW, Jan 3, 2004, 100—104.

### **SESSION 16**

Theme: Mainstream vs. Alternate Politics

Required Readings:

i) Mary Kantzenstein et. al., "Social Movement Politics in India: Institutions, Interests and Identities" in Atul Kohli (Ed), The Success of Indian Democracy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

ii) D.L.Sethi, " Globalization and New Politics of Micro—Movements," EPW, Jan 3, 2004.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

### **SESSION 17**

Theme: Summing Up and Student Response

# Modern Indian Fiction

## SITA—Spring 2004

Course Teachers: **R. Padmanabhan Nair and Premila Paul**

12 January	1:30 P.M.	Introduction	11 February	10:30 A.M.	Ghosh, Amitav. <i>The Shadow Lines</i> . New Delhi: OUP, 1988.
14 January	10:30 A.M.	Indian Fiction in English	13 February	10:30 A.M.	Ghosh, Amitav. <i>The Shadow Lines</i> — (Continued)
20 January	10:30 A.M.	Narayan, R. K. <i>The Guide</i> . New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1980.	17 February	10:30 A.M.	Rushdie, Salman. <i>Midnight's Children</i> . London: Pan Books, 1981.
22 January	10:30 A.M.	Deshpande, Shashi. <i>The Dark Holds No Terrors</i> . New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1990.	19 February	10:30 A.M.	Rushdie, Salman. <i>Midnight's Children</i> . (Continued)
27 January	10:30 A.M.	Ananthamurthy, U. R. <i>Samskara</i> . New Delhi: OUP, 1989.	23 February	10:30 A.M.	Roy, Arundhati. <i>The God of Small Things</i> . New Delhi: Indialnk, 1997.
3 February	10:30 A.M.	Ananthamurthy, U. R. <i>Samskara</i> (Continued)	24 February	1:30 P.M.	Roy, Arundhati. <i>The God of Small Things</i> .
4 February	1:30 P.M.	Student Presentations:			
6 February	1:30 P.M.	Selections from <i>The Inner Courtyard</i> Ed. Lakshmi Holmstrom, New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 1977. (at SCILET, American College)	20 February	10:30 A.M.	Lecture by Mahesh Dattani Auditorium, American College
9 February	10:30 A.M.	Naipaul, V.S. <i>India: A Wounded Civilization</i> . London: Penguin, 1979.	03 March	11:30 A.M.	Lecture by Shashi Deshpande Seminar Hall, American College

# SOUTH ASIAN ART: HISTORY, MYTH AND MEANING

## Syllabus

Dr. R.Venkatraman

This is an introduction to a composite course that takes South Asian art as a unit and traces the unity of and relationships between the South Asian religions, literature, art and history so that the students are enabled to explore and gain a total perspective and a deeper understanding of this region as a whole. Consequently, this will help students gain a better appreciation of the religion and art of the South East Asia and the Far East (China and Japan). It also may train them to gain a better perspective towards their own civilization.

The South Asian art reflects different layers of culture traits and attitudes that have been added over two millennia by different groups, like the people of the Harappan civilization (c.2500 B.C.), the Indo-Aryans (c.1500 B.C.), the Buddhists and Jains (c.550 B.C.) and many 'little' traditions, besides influences on her art from Persia (c.500 B.C.), Greece and Rome (c.300 B.C.).

The lectures are clarified with color slides, diagrams and field trips to the hills, caves and temples around Madurai, the magnificent architecture at Tanjavur (a World heritage center), Darasuram, and the world-famous bronze-making with 'lost wax process' at Swamimalai.

- Lecture 1:** Characteristics of South Asian art and its role in:  
a) the evolution of monotheism from polytheism,  
b) the promotion of Buddhism spatially and philosophically (concepts of Axis Mundi, Dharma, Nirvana, etc.), and  
c) enabling Hinduism to adopt art from Buddhism and defeating Buddhism with that art in India.
- Lecture 2:** Harappan Art (c.2500 B.C.); West Asian influences.
- Lecture 3:** Mauryan Art (c.320 B.C.) under Asoka; Persian and Greek influence.
- Lecture 4:** Art of the Buddhists; evolution of symbolism in art—Stupas of Sanchi, Amaravati and Sri Lanka.
- Lecture 5:** Buddhist Chaityas—Hinayana (at Bhaja and Karli).
- Lecture 6:** Buddhist Chaityas (contd.) - Mahayana Chaityas at Ajanta and Ellora.
- Lecture 7:** Kushan Art - "The Gandhara School" with Graeko-Roman influence and "the Mathura School" with local influences. Evolution of Buddha and Bodhisattva sculptures under both the schools.
- Lecture 8:** The emergence of the classical South Asian art under the Guptas (A.D. 320 -540); the appearance of Hindu art and mythology.
- Lecture 9:** The Hindu cave temple architecture—its origin and evolution as cave sanctuaries at Udayagiri, Elephanta and Ellora.
- Lecture 10:** The Hindu structural temple architecture—form and spirit—origin of its simple form as at Sanchi Temple 17 and Udayagiri; and evolution into two styles—the Nagara and Dravida. Ritual procedures for breathing 'spirit' to the temple.
- Lecture 11:** The Pallava art—Mahabalipuram caves and Rathas—the Pandya caves of Madurai and Ratha at Kalugumalai.
- Lecture 12:** The Chola architecture and "bronzes;" the iconography of Hindu gods and goddesses.
- Lecture 13:** The Orissan architecture—Bhuvaneshvar and the Sun temple at Konark.
- Lecture 14:** The Khajuraho art and architecture.
- Lecture 15:** The Art of Vijayanagar and the Nayaks of Madurai.

The comprehension of the students will be assessed by means of two tests (a mid-term test and a final test of 1 1/2 hours each) and a term paper to evaluate their observation and analytical skills. Thus the course will consist of 17 sessions of 1 1/2 hours each, 15 for lectures and 2 for tests, besides field trips.

**Required Texts (Available at the SITA library):**

- BASHAM, A.L.                    The Wonder that was India (III ed.), Fontana, Delhi, 1977.
- CRAVEN, ROY C.                Indian Art: A concise History, Thames and Hudson, London, 1987.
- HUNTINGTON, SUSAN L.        The Art of Ancient India, Weatherhill, New York, 1985.
- MICHELL, GEORGE                The Hindu Temple: An Introduction to Its Meaning and Forms, Chicago, 1988.

# CISI: Cultural Insurance Services International

www.culturalinsurance.com

(800) 303-8120

## World Class Coverage Plan: The insurance program for study abroad students

Schedule of Benefits (SITA purchases both the Basic and Optional Extra Plan for its students)

### BASIC PLAN COVERAGES

Plan Coverages	Maximum Limits
• Medical Expense (per Accident or Sickness)	
Deductible	\$100
Limit	\$50,000 at 100%
• Accidental Death and Dismemberment	\$10,000
• Medical Evacuation/Repatriation/Return of Mortal Remains	Combined limit \$50,000
• Team Assist	Included

### OPTIONAL EXTRA PROTECTION

Plan Coverages	Maximum limits
Medical Expense (per Accident or Sickness)	
Deductible	Zero
Limit	\$100,000 at 100%
• Accidental Death and Dismemberment	\$10,000
• Medical Evacuation/Repatriation/Return of Mortal Remains	Combined limit \$50,000
• Team Assist	Included
• <b>Baggage Loss</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>
• <b>Emergency Medical Reunion</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>
• <b>Tuition Refund</b>	<b>50% up to \$1,000</b>

## Eligibility

Citizens of the U.S. who are enrolled as full-time students at U.S. institutions or on a recognized study abroad program and who are temporarily engaged in international, educational or cultural activities outside their home country are eligible for coverage.

## Period of Coverage

Once we accept your application and the correct payment, the effective date of your coverage is the latest of the following: (a) your requested effective date or (b) two days after the date the completed enrollment form and premium have been received by the Administrator. Coverage terminates when the first of the following occurs: (a) expiration of the period of requested coverage for which premium has been paid, (b) termination of participation in international education programs, (c) return to your country of domicile, (d) termination of the Master Policy.

## BASIC PLAN

### Accident and Sickness Medical Expenses

The Company will pay Covered Expenses due to Accident or Sickness only, as per the limits stated in the Schedule of Benefits. Coverage is limited to Covered Expenses incurred subject to Exclusions. All bodily Injuries sustained in any one Accident shall be considered one Disablement, all bodily disorders existing simultaneously which are due to the same or related causes shall be considered one Disablement. If a Disablement is due to causes which are the same or related to the cause of a prior Disablement (including complications arising there from), the Disablement shall be considered a continuation of the prior Disablement and not a separate Disablement.

Treatment of an Injury or Illness must occur within 30 days of the Accident or onset of the Illness.

When a covered Injury or illness is incurred by the Insured Person the Company will pay Reasonable and Customary medical expenses excess of the Deductible and Coinsurance as stated in the Schedule of Benefits. In no event shall the Company's maximum liability exceed the maximum stated in the Schedule of Benefits as to Covered Expenses during any one period of individual coverage.

### Covered Accident and Sickness Medical Expenses

Only such expenses, incurred as the result of a Disablement, which are specifically enumerated in the following list of charges, and which are not excluded in the Exclusions section, shall be considered as Covered Expenses:

- ❖ Charges made by a Hospital for room and board, floor nursing and other services inclusive of charges for professional service and with the exception of personal services of a non-medical nature; provided, however, that expenses do not exceed the Hospital's average charge for semiprivate room and board accommodation
- ❖ Charges made for Intensive Care or Coronary Care charges and nursing services
- ❖ Charges made for diagnosis, treatment and Surgery by a Physician
- ❖ Charges made for an operating room
- ❖ Charges made for Outpatient treatment, same as any other treatment covered on an Inpatient basis. This includes ambulatory Surgical centers, Physicians' Outpatient visits/examinations, clinic care, and Surgical opinion consultations
- ❖ Charges made for the cost and administration of anesthetics
- ❖ Charges for medication, x-ray services, laboratory tests and services, the use of radium and radioactive isotopes, oxygen, blood, transfusions, iron lungs, and medical treatment
- ❖ Charges for inpatient physiotherapy, if recommended by a Physician for the treatment of a specific Disablement and administered by a licensed physiotherapist
- ❖ Dressings, drugs, and medicines that can only be obtained upon a written prescription of a Physician or Surgeon
- ❖ Charges made for artificial limbs, eyes, larynx, and orthotic appliances, but not for replacement of such items
- ❖ Local transportation to or from the nearest Hospital or to and from the nearest Hospital with facilities for required treatment. Such transportation shall be by licensed ground ambulance only, within the metropolitan area in which the Insured Person is located at that time the service is used. If the Insured Person is in a rural area, then licensed ground ambulance transportation to the nearest metropolitan area shall be considered a Covered Expense
- ❖ Nervous or Mental Disorders are payable a) up to \$500 for outpatient treatment; or b) up to \$2,500 on an inpatient basis. The Company shall not be liable for more than one such inpatient or outpatient occurrence per lifetime under the Policy with respect to any one Insured
- ❖ Chiropractic Care and Therapeutic Services shall be limited to a total of \$50 per visit, excluding x-ray and evaluation charges, with a maximum of 10 visits per injury or illness. The overall maximum coverage per injury or illness is \$500 which includes x-ray and evaluation charges.

## Accidental Death and Dismemberment

If injuries result in death or dismemberment within one year after the date of Accident, the plan provides these benefits for loss of:

Life	\$10,000
Two or more members*	\$10,000
One member*	\$ 5,000
Thumb and index finger of either hand	\$ 2,500

\*Member means hand, foot or eye

Only one benefit, the largest to which you are entitled, is payable for losses from the same Accident. Please note: The death benefit will be paid to your estate unless you provide the name and relationship of your beneficiary at time of enrollment.

## Emergency Medical Evacuation/Repatriation

The Company shall pay benefits for Covered Expenses incurred up to the maximum stated in the Schedule of Benefits, if any Injury or covered Illness commencing during the Period of Coverage results in the Medically Necessary Emergency Medical Evacuation or Repatriation of the Insured Person. The decision for an Emergency Medical Evacuation or Repatriation must be ordered by the Company's appointed Assistance Company in consultation with the Insured Person's local attending Physician.

Emergency Medical Evacuation or Repatriation means: a) the Insured Person's medical condition warrants immediate transportation from the place where the Insured Person is located (due to inadequate medical facilities) to the nearest adequate medical facility where medical treatment can be obtained; or b) after being treated at a local medical facility, the Insured Person's medical condition warrants transportation with a qualified medical attendant to his/her Home Country to obtain further medical treatment or to recover; or c) both a) and b) above.

## Return of Mortal Remains or Cremation

The Company will pay the reasonable Covered Expenses incurred up to the maximum as stated in the Schedule of Benefits, Return of Mortal Remains, to return the Insured Person's remains to his/her then current Home Country, if he or she dies.

Covered Expenses include, but are not limited to, expenses for embalming, cremation, a minimally necessary container appropriate for transportation, shipping costs, and the necessary government authorizations.

All Covered Expenses in connection with a Return of Mortal Remains must be pre-approved and arranged by an Assistance Company representative appointed by the Company.

## Team Assist Plan (TAP)

The Team Assist Plan is designed by CISI in conjunction with the Assistance Company to provide travelers with a worldwide, 24-hour emergency telephone assistance service. Multilingual help and advice may be furnished for the insured in the event of any emergency during the term of coverage. The Team Assist Plan supplements the insurance benefits provided by Virginia Surety Company, Inc. The Assistance Company will be On Call International.

## OPTIONAL EXTRA PROTECTION PLAN

In addition to the Basic Plan, you may purchase an insurance upgrade prior to your departure. The cost of the Extra Protection Plan is \$100 per semester. A semester is any period from one to six months. The Extra Protection Plan contains these additional benefits:

### Accident and Sickness Medical Expenses

Your maximum medical benefit will be increased to \$100,000 (from \$50,000) for usual, customary and reasonable medical expenses. The per incident deductible will be reduced from \$100 to \$0.

### Baggage and Personal Effects

The company will reimburse the Insured Person, up to the amount stated in the Schedule of Benefits, Baggage Loss, for loss, theft or damage to baggage and personal effects, provided the Insured Person has taken all reasonable measures to protect, save and/or recover his/her property at all times. The baggage and personal effects must be owned by and accompany the Insured Person at all times. Each claim is subject to a deductible of \$50. There will be a per article limit of \$100, except cameras, which have a limit of \$250.

## Emergency Medical Reunion

When an Insured Person is hospitalized for more than six days, the Company will arrange and pay for round trip economy-class transportation for a parent, spouse, sibling (over age 21) or legal guardian, from the Insured Person's current Home Country to the location where the Insured Person is hospitalized. The benefits payable will include:

- ❖ The cost of a round trip economy airfare and their hotel and meals (to a maximum of \$100 per day) up to the maximum stated in the Schedule of Benefits, Emergency Medical Reunion;
- ❖ All transportation in connection with an Emergency Medical Reunion must be pre-approved and arranged by an assistance company representative appointed by the Company.

## Tuition Refund

The Company will pay 50% of any unreimbursed tuition expense up to \$1,000 if you suffer a covered Injury or Sickness which prevents you from taking final examinations or make-up examinations. The condition must last at least four consecutive weeks and be certified by a Physician.

## Premium Rates Basic Plan:

Age	Monthly premium
up to 25	\$32
26-30	\$49
31-40	\$74
41-60	\$144
61+	\$259

## Extra Protection Plan:

Months	Additional premium
1-6	\$100*
7-12	\$200*

\* This amount is in addition to the Basic Plan premium.

Rates are valid until December 31, 2004. Full months only, please.

## Exclusions—For benefits listed in the Schedule of Benefits, this Insurance does not cover:

- ❖ Pre-Existing conditions, defined as any Injury or Illness which meets the following criteria:

1) a condition that would have caused a person to seek medical advice, diagnosis, care or treatment anytime prior to the Effective Date of coverage under this Policy;

2) a condition for which medical advice, diagnosis, care or treatment was recommended or received anytime prior to the Effective Date of coverage under this Policy

- ❖ Charges for treatment which is not Medically Necessary
- ❖ Charges incurred for Surgery or treatments which are, Experimental/ Investigational, or for research purposes
- ❖ Services, supplies or treatment, including any period of Hospital confinement, which were not recommended, approved and certified as Medically Necessary and reasonable by a Physician
- ❖ Suicide or any attempt thereof, while sane or self destruction or any attempt thereof, while sane
- ❖ Any consequence, whether directly or indirectly, proximately or remotely occasioned by, contributed to by, or traceable to, or arising in connection with a) war, invasion, act of foreign enemy hostilities, warlike operations (whether war be declared or not), or civil war; or b) mutiny, riot, strike, military or popular uprising insurrection, rebellion, revolution, military or usurped power
- ❖ Routine physicals, immunizations, or other examinations where there are no objective indications or impairment in normal health, including routine care of a newborn infant, and laboratory diagnostic or x-ray examinations, except in the course of a Disablement established by a prior call or attendance of a Physician

- ❖ Treatment of the Temporomandibular joint
- ❖ Vocational, speech, recreational or music therapy
- ❖ Services or supplies performed or provided by a Relative of the Insured Person, or anyone who lives with the Insured Person
- ❖ The refusal of a Physician or Hospital to make all medical reports and records available to the Company will cause an otherwise valid claim to be denied
- ❖ Cosmetic or plastic Surgery, except as the result of a covered Accident; for the purposes of this Policy, treatment of a deviated nasal septum shall be considered a cosmetic condition
- ❖ Elective Surgery or Elective Treatment which can be postponed until the Insured Person returns to his/her Home County, where the objective of the trip is to seek medical advice, treatment or Surgery
- ❖ Treatment and the provision of false teeth or dentures, normal ear tests and the provision of hearing aids
- ❖ Eye refractions or eye examinations for the purpose of prescribing corrective lenses for eye glasses or for the fitting thereof, unless caused by Accidental bodily Injury incurred while insured hereunder
- ❖ Treatment in connection with alcoholism and drug addiction, or use of any drug or narcotic agent
- ❖ Injury sustained while under the influence of or Disablement due to wholly or partly to the effects of intoxicating liquor or drugs other than drugs taken in accordance with treatment prescribed and directed by a Physician for a condition which is covered hereunder
- ❖ Any Mental and Nervous disorders or rest cures, unless otherwise covered under this Policy
- ❖ Treatment while confined primarily to receive custodial care, educational or rehabilitative care, or nursing services
- ❖ Congenital abnormalities and conditions arising out of or resulting there from
- ❖ Expenses which are non-medical in nature
- ❖ The cost of the Insured Person's unused airline ticket for the transportation back to the Insured Person's Home Country, where an Emergency Medical Evacuation or Repatriation and/or Return of Mortal Remains benefit is provided
- ❖ Expenses as a result or in connection with intentionally self inflicted Injury or Illness
- ❖ Expenses as a result or in connection with the commission of a felony offense
- ❖ Injury sustained while taking part in mountaineering where ropes or guides are normally used; hang gliding, parachuting, bungee jumping, motorcycle/motor scooter riding, scuba diving, snow skiing, skydiving, racing by horse, motor vehicle or motorcycle, parasailing
- ❖ Treatment paid for or furnished under any other individual or group policy or other service or medical pre-payment plan arranged through the employer to the extent so furnished or paid, or under any mandatory government program or facility set up for treatment without cost to any individual
- ❖ Dental care, except as the result of Injury to natural teeth caused by Accident (limited to \$250 per tooth per Injury)
- ❖ Routine Dental Treatment
- ❖ Drug, treatment or procedure that either promotes or prevents conception, or prevents childbirth, including but not limited to: artificial insemination, treatment for infertility or impotency, sterilization or reversal thereof, or abortion
- ❖ Treatment for human organ tissue transplants and their related treatment
- ❖ Expenses incurred within the Insured Person's home country or country of residence
- ❖ Weak, strained or flat feet, corns, calluses, or toenails
- ❖ Diagnosis and treatment of acne
- ❖ Injury sustained while the Insured Person is riding as a pilot, student pilot, operator or crew member, in or on, boarding or alighting from, any type of aircraft.

## Definitions

In addition to the exclusions listed above, the following exclusions apply to Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance only:

- ❖ Disease of any kind
- ❖ Bacterial infections except pyogenic infection which shall occur through an accidental cut or wound
- ❖ Neuroses, psychoneuroses, psychopathies, psychoses or mental or emotional diseases or disorders of any type.

## Definitions

Accident or Accidental means an event, independent of Illness or self inflicted means, which is the direct cause of bodily Injury to an Insured Person.

Company Virginia Surety Company, Inc. Hospital means except as may otherwise be provided, a Hospital (other than an institution for the aged, chronically ill or convalescent, resting or nursing homes) operated pursuant to law for the care and treatment of sick or Injured persons with organized facilities for diagnosis and Surgery and having 24-hour nursing service and medical supervision.

Illness means sickness or disease of any kind contracted and commencing after the Effective Date of this Policy and Disablement covered by this Policy.

Injury means bodily Injury caused solely and directly by violent, Accidental, external, and visible means occurring while this Policy is in force and resulting directly and independently of all other causes in Disablement covered by this Policy.

Insured Person(s) means a person eligible for coverage under the Policy as defined in "Eligible Persons" who has applied for coverage and is named on the application and for whom the company has accepted premium.

Physician means a doctor of medicine or a doctor of osteopathy licensed to render medical services or perform Surgery in accordance with the laws of the jurisdiction where such professional services and physiotherapists.

Policy terms and conditions are briefly outlined in this document. A complete description is contained in the Summary of Coverage which you will receive after your enrollment in the Plan.

# Conditions of Participation Form

- I accept the offer to participate in the SITA Program.
  - My \$500 nonrefundable deposit is included here.
  - My school will be sending you my deposit.
  
- I agree to share with SITA any information on mental or physical health conditions that are relevant to my health and safety during my participation in the program, or that may require special accommodation. I understand that failure to do so is equivalent to an assertion that no such conditions exist.
  
- I have met with my personal physician within the timetable prescribed by SITA to:
  - 1) Discuss any health risks that living in India might pose to me;
  - 2) Discuss any health-related arrangements I need SITA to make on my behalf;
  - 3) Acquire all immunizations recommended by my physician;
  - 4) Discuss malaria prophylaxis, and which, if any, might be best suited to me; and
  - 5) Obtain sufficient quantities of any prescription medication that I take regularly to last me for the entire duration of my stay in India.
  
- I understand that I am responsible for obtaining my own passport and Indian visa (SITA will coordinate student visa authorization with AIIS).
  
- I understand that I am responsible for making my own travel arrangements to and from the common point of departure from the United States. SITA will cover all international travel, and I agree to travel to India as part of the SITA group.
  
- I understand that India has a very strict anti-narcotics policy, and that any use or association with illegal substances may not only lead to fines or imprisonment by the Government of India, but will result in automatic expulsion from the SITA Program, and immediate deportation from India with no refund or credit granted from the program.
  
- I understand that SITA students may not drive any motorized vehicle at any time in India. Students may travel on public transportation, including buses, rickshaws, and licensed taxis; with respect to private motorized vehicles, students may ride only with licensed and insured drivers.
  
- I understand that consumption of alcohol and public smoking are prohibited by SITA in Madurai, and agree to abide by this policy.
  
- I agree to abide by all SITA policies and regulations included in this handbook during my participation in the program with the understanding that failure to do so can result in expulsion from the program with no refund or credit granted.

My signature below and the \$500 nonrefundable deposit indicate my full assent to all of the above.

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Signature

Printed Name

Date

Note: This is a copy provided for your information. You are to complete and return the Conditions of Participation Form provided with other confirmation materials.

\* Deadlines are subject to change. Please refer to your acceptance letter and email communications for semester-specific dates.

† These dates are subject to change. Please refer to your acceptance letter and email communications for semester-specific deadlines.