

University of Iowa
Sustainable Development in Kerala (God's Own Country), India
165:197 International Development, Sec. 002

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Winterim 2011-12 (December 27, 2011 -- January 15/16, 2012)

Course Outline

The course instructor, David Osterberg, is Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health. His graduate degrees are in Water Resources Management and Agricultural Economics. He directs the Iowa Policy Project a nonprofit organization he founded in 2001 to produce policy research and engage citizens to intelligently engage in policy decisions. The IPP conducts research on poverty, government budgets and environmental protection. Osterberg has taught classes in Sweden, Slovenia as well as Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in India. He was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Iran. This will be his 3rd winterim course in India

In country Sponsor: Our in-country sponsor is an organization called "Inspiration" of Kochi, in the state of Kerala. <http://www.inspire-india.com/>. They have over 18 years of experience in nature-friendly and sustainable designs for over 400 projects for clients ranging from individuals, businesses, corporations, governments, and NGOs. They have received state and national recognition and have won numerous national and international awards for sustainable eco-sensitive designs.

Inspiration's Office in Kochi, Kerala



"Inspiration" team includes architects, planners, engineering, management, natural resources, and physical and biological sciences professionals.

The two major partners of "Inspiration," Mr. Jaigopal Rao and Ms. Latha Jaigopal have agreed to be our mentors and will oversee and guide our program in Kochi in all aspects of its design, maintenance, and delivery. They will actively collaborate with Professor Osterberg and his students in making their experience in Kerala, a memorable one.

The course: First, students will have an opportunity to observe, discuss, and learn about the processes adopted by "Inspiration" in the development of a few of their sustainable development projects, at various scales. Inspiration architects and planners will explain their view of sustainability through selected past and current development projects. It is hoped that this process of sharing information will lead to an understanding of the compromises that are needed to attain changes in the land that will lead to sustainable resource management practices.

Second, several 1-2 day trip to elephant preserves, rehabilitation centers, wildlife sanctuaries will be explored to demonstrate a variety of issues related to herd management, preservation, rehabilitation issues, inter-state migration, domestication, training, and private property protection.

Third, several short visits of 1-2 days will be explored with tourism-oriented organizations that seek to encourage local entrepreneurs to develop sustainable practices and services for in-country and international tourists. The notion of "ecotourism" as low impact causing visits to ecologically significant and beautiful landscapes will be explored. The role of environmental education, sustainability, nature conservation and community involvement in this process will also be explored.

Fourth, the students will also benefit by visiting the one and only heritage hub of Kerala by visiting the Cochin Cultural Center and observing the cultural traditions of Kerala come alive. www.cochinculturalcentre.com

Fifth and finally, the students will also benefit from events (such as conferences and festivals) that will be taking place in Kochi and vicinity during the duration of their stay.

In all five sections, students will work with the hosts and the instructor on sustainable water, sanitation, and energy practices and the process of integrating such practices within a holistic concept of resource management. Students will be expected to gain an appreciation of how sustainability works to protect the resources, enhance learning about local people and culture, and preserve the beauty of this state (God's own country) in southern India. Students will be able to see, understand, and evaluate how several forms of commerce can be translated to achieve a sustainable world. They will work individually or in teams, report findings to each other and the instructor every

night, write a daily blog and finally present a summary (in the form of a presentation) of what was learnt to our hosts (partner organizations) at the end of the course duration, on January 13, 2012.

Course Requirements: You must be an active learner before we depart, while we are in India and after we return.

Prior to departure

- Attend orientation meetings
- Attend two Friday afternoon seminars
- Read or view the required materials
- Write two (1 page) reflections on the material

During our stay in India

- Attend all planned activities and excursions
- Attend all nightly group meetings
- Write a daily blog
- Present a summary of your findings at a final one-day conference in Kochi

After we return

Write a 7-10 page paper, one week after returning based on your blogs
Write a 400-500 word newspaper style article for a newspaper in your home community (unless you have arranged to blog for the paper)
Participate and present a group summary with the instructor (under 45 minutes) at a winterim symposium that will be organized before the end of February at the UI

Present list of readings (will be expanded later)

Brightsmith, D.J., Stronza, A., Holle, K., 2008. Ecotourism, conservation biology, and volunteer tourism: A mutually beneficial triumvirate. *Biological Conservation*, 141. pp. 2832-2842.

Gössling, S., 1999. Ecotourism: a means to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem functions? *Ecological Economics* 29, pp. 303-320.

Markandya, A & Halsnaes, 2002 K. Climate change and sustainable development: Prospects for developing countries. Chapter 1 only.

http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=0_u7QRigfZ0C&oi=fnd&pg=PR4&dq=sustainable+development+developing+countries&ots=OYqF6OFICs&sig=aqJbbsJ380n6F7d4hQqLjxZyQR4#v=onepage&q&f=false

Osterberg, David (2010) Read his blog for his 2010 green bike tour at www.greenbiketour.blogspot.com

Course Grade Determination:

- 10% Attendance at fall seminars and two, single page reflection papers
- 25% Active engagement in discussions with students, hosts and instructor
- 35% Daily blog and paper on what you learned
- 10% newspaper article
- 20% Conference participation/presentation in Kerala and at the UI

More Information:

- Go to India Iowa (INdIA) Winterm web page at:
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~geog/india/>
- Courses from previous years and information on financial aid
- Contact David Osterberg at david-osterberg@uiowa.edu or 335-4424 or 319-210-0570 come by his office at IPP in Old Brick or his UI office at the IREH building on the Oakdale Campus.
- For information about financial aid possibilities, go to <http://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/funding/financial-aid/iowa-programs.asp> and click on either "undergraduate scholarships" or "graduate fellowships."