

Geog 430C
Interdisciplinary Studies on Alpine Environments:
Human Nature Interactions in the Mt. Everest Region of Nepal
Spring 2018

Instructor:
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Professor

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Office Location: EV1-124; Office hours: Wednesdays 09:00 – 11:30 AM.

Room: AL209

Schedule: 12:30-2:20

TA: Nicole Balliston (nballiston@uwaterloo.ca)

Prerequisite: None, but instructors' approval is required. However, students are required to join a two-month physical fitness program at a local gym. They need to be clear of any physical and mental health issues.

Course Description: The course involves interdisciplinary field studies on alpine environments, geography, geology, anthropological and tourism studies for undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Waterloo

The Mt. Everest Region is a world famous climbing and trekking destination and has been a fertile ground for research on ecology, geology, medical sciences, cultural anthropology, tourism studies, natural hazards, climate change, indigenous knowledge, and conservation biology.

The program will take students to Nepal on a 25-day trip at the end of the Winter term.

Modules: Field activities will be based on the following four modules:

Module 1: Climate change and natural hazard

Module 2: Tourism, culture and modernity

Module 3: Protected areas and conservation practices

Students will be set up in groups of three, based on their interests in specific modules. Linkages across the modules will be strengthened through instructor led discussions and field research.

This is a 1.5 credit course consisting of several pre-trip lectures and preparatory sessions, a 21-day field-trip, concluding with on-site research presentations.

Field Site Description

We fly to Kathmandu, capital of Nepal, and then to Lukla in the Mt. Everest region. From there, we trek by foot up legendary valleys toward Mt. Everest, spending a week in Namche Bazaar, a panoramic village inhabited by the indigenous Sherpa people. Field studies in this area will focus on all four modules. After this, we move higher up toward a Buddhist monastery at Tengboche and reaching a lookout at Chukhung Ri, a peak of 18,238 feet beneath Lhotse, the world's fourth highest mountain (after Everest, K2, and Kangchenjunga) These areas will provide the basis for Module 2 and 3. The trek will continue toward higher alpine pastures and remote tourist villages (Dingboche and Pheriche at 12,000-14,000 ft) where we will focus on Module 1 & 3. After visiting the Mt. Everest Base Camp (17,000 ft), the team will return to Namche Bazaar and then return to Kathmandu. A tentative travel itinerary is attached.

These locations provide excellent opportunities to study human adaptations to past and current social and environmental changes, using integrative perspectives from natural and social sciences. These locations also provide excellent opportunities for students to study world-class examples of geological processes associated with active collisional mountain building, including glacial landforms, natural hazards, climate change, and plate tectonics. Students demonstrating a specific interest in Module 1 will be encouraged to collect field data and samples. Students interested in Module 2 will be encouraged to collect data through interviews with tour guides, local community members, and/or tourists. Students interested in Module 3 will be encouraged to collect data through interviews local NGO staff (e.g., Sagarmatha Pollution Committee, Sagarmatha National Park, local representatives of the Himalayan Trust, etc).

Expected Learning Outcomes: The course will enable students to acquire skills necessary for understanding complex issues of human-nature interactions. Interdisciplinary perspectives, collaborative research efforts, and practical field insights are some unique features of this course. The course challenges students to think broadly, strengthens their skills in conducting interdisciplinary and collaborative research projects, and requires them to think “outside the box” for creative solutions to complex problems.

Course Format: This course will consist of several pre-trip in-class meetings, followed by a 22day (including the duration of flight to Nepal) trip to Nepal (Kathmandu and Mt. Everest Region). Throughout the trip, the instructors will provide short lectures in their respective fields to help students develop a framework for understanding human-nature interactions in this extreme environment. In addition, students will have the opportunity to discuss these issues with local stakeholders.

Course Requirement and Grading

Student participation: Students must attend the pre in-class meetings and participate in the field trip activities to receive full credit for this course. Full attendance at all pre and post trip activities is mandatory.

Pre-trip Research Preparation & Presentation: Students will work in teams of three or four, conducting background research relevant to the three modules mentioned above. This background work will contribute to a fuller understanding of environmental and socio-economic challenges in the Everest region. The preparatory meetings will conclude with three group presentations (the format and length to be determined later). This will serve as the main basis for final research (group) report, due at the end of the term.

Personal Journal: Students will keep a daily journal of experiences during the field trip. This journal should have detailed information about the destinations/sites visited, the activities engaged in, personal reflections and observations made during the field trip. Specific questions which need to be addressed in the journal will be provided to students during the field trip. The daily entries in the journal need to be at least 200 words long and can include additional research materials, photographs, personal drawings, etc. Journals will be returned to the students after grading. The journal should complement the group research efforts. Students will submit the journals to the instructor after the fieldtrip has concluded; due at the end of the term.

Daily Reflections: Each day during the course of our visit to the Everest region, students will participate in informal daily reflections. A sharing of penultimate reflection of the Everest experience will be organized at the end of the trekking (in Kathmandu; during the farewell dinner program).

The personal journal,

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>% of Grade</u>
Background Research Preparation and Presentation	30
Field Journal (due at post-trip meeting)	30
Daily Research Reflections (on-site; various times)	20
Discussion, Engagement and Initiatives Field Activities	20

Class Schedule

Date	Topic
May 1	Introduction; course planning, logistics
May 2	Everest region – economy, environment, culture
May 3	Group discussion on themed topics
May 4	Group discussion on themed topics
May 7	Group discussion on themed topics

May 8	Group discussion on themed topics
May 9	Group discussion on themed topics
May 10	Research Presentation 1& 2
May 11	Research presentation 3

The lecture will consist of two introductory lectures on Nepal and Everest Region. The last two meetings will be scheduled for group presentations. The remaining time will be spent researching, developing and discussing materials relevant in preparation of the final research report.

Required Text:

1. One travel guide book of your choice to Nepal/Mt. Everest Region (e.g. Lonely Planet, Frommers, Insight Guides, etc.)

Essential Readings

1. Nepal, S.K., Kohler, T. and Banzhaf, B.R. 2002. *Great Himalaya - Tourism and the dynamics of change in Nepal*. Berne: Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, 92 pp.
2. Fisher, J. F. 1990. *Sherpas: Reflections on change in Himalayan Nepal*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
3. Furer-Haimendorf, C. von. 1964. *The Sherpas of Nepal: Buddhist Highlanders*. New Delhi: Oxford Book Co.
4. Krakauer, J. 1998. *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster*. Anchor Books.
5. Nepal, S.K. 2003. *Tourism and the environment - Perspectives from the Nepalese Himalaya*. Innsbruck and Kathmandu: Studien Verlag and Himal Books, 205 pp.
6. Nepal, S.K. 2000. National parks, conservation areas, tourism, and local communities in the Nepalese Himalaya. In: Butler, R.W. and Boyds, S.W. (Eds.) *Tourism and National Parks: Issues and Implications*. London: John Wiley, pp. 73-94.
7. Nepal, S.K. 2000. Tourism and environment in the Nepalese Himalaya: Opportunities and constraints. *Annals of Tourism Research* 27 (3): 661-681.
8. Nepal, S.K. 2005. Tourism and remote mountain settlements: Spatial and temporal developments of tourist infrastructure in the Mt. Everest Region, Nepal. *Tourism Geographies*. Vol. 7 (2): 205-227.
9. Ortner, S.B 1999. *Life and death on Mt. Everest: Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
10. Ortner, S. B. 1989. *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
11. Stevens, S.F 1990. *Claiming the high ground: Sherpas, subsistence and environmental change in the highest Himalaya*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
12. Hodges, K. V. (2000). "Tectonics of the Himalaya and southern Tibet from two perspectives." *Geological Society of America Bulletin* 112(3): 324-350

Please note:

Participants are directed to read Student Academic Discipline Policy #71 in the Undergraduate Calendar regarding plagiarism (or refer to the following web address: <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.pdf>). Plagiarism offenses are normally treated seriously by the University and can result in significant penalties being assessed (e.g. failing grade, suspension or expulsion).

Unclaimed assignments:

Unclaimed assignments will be retained until one month after term grades become official in quest. After that time, they will be destroyed in compliance with UW's [confidential shredding procedures](#).

Academic Integrity:

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/

Students who are unsure what constitutes an academic offence are requested to visit the on-line tutorial at <http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/>

Research Ethics:

Please also note that the 'University of Waterloo requires all research conducted by its students, staff, and faculty which involves humans as participants to undergo prior ethics review and clearance through the Director, Office of Human Research and Animal Care (Office). The ethics review and clearance processes are intended to ensure that projects comply with the Office's Guidelines for Research with Human Participants (Guidelines) as well as those of provincial and federal agencies, and that the safety, rights and welfare of participants are adequately protected. The Guidelines inform researchers about ethical issues and procedures which are of concern when conducting research with humans (e.g. confidentiality, risks and benefits, informed consent process, etc.). If the development of your research proposal consists of research that involves humans as participants, the please contact the course instructor for guidance and see <http://iris.uwaterloo.ca/ethics/>

Note for students with disabilities:

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Religious Observances:

Student needs to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

Grievance:

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please contact your Graduate Advisor for details.

Discipline:

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Graduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm

Appeals:

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 – (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) may be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all materials and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course. For further information on UW’s Turnitin guidelines, see:

<http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/home/guidelines-instructors>

LEARN:

Users can login to LEARN via:

<http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/>

use your WatIAM/Quest username and password

Documentation is available at:

http://av.uwaterloo.ca/uwace/training_documentation/index.html

**Geog 430C Nepal Field School
May 14-June 4 Nepal Itinerary**

Actual Travel Itinerary		
14/May	M	Depart from Toronto, Canada
15/May	T	Arrival in Kathmandu via Cathay Pacific 10 pm arrival. KATHMANDU
16/May	W	Cultural and Heritage Sites; Everest trip preparation KATHMANDU
17/May	Th	KATHMANDU sight-seeing; Everest preparation
18/May	F	Morning Flight to Lukla (2843m) Trek to Phakding or Monjo (2835m); MONJO
19/May	S	Trek toward Namche Bazaar, 5-6 hours trek (3467m); NAMCHE
20/May	Su	Excursion around Namche Bazaar NAMCHE
21/May	M	Trek toward Phortse (6-7 hours trek) (3791m) PHORTSE
22/May	T	Excursions around Phortse PHORTSE
23/May	W	Trek toward to Pangboche, 3-4 hours trek (3966m) PANGBOCHE
24/May	Th	Trek toward to Dingboche 3-4 hours trek, (4301m) DINGBOCHE
25/May	F	Trek toward Chukhung, 3 hours trek (4700m) CHUKUNG
26/May	S	Excursion to Imtse lake 4 hours trek (5120m); CHUKUNG
27/May	Su	Trek toward Dingboche; Excursion to AmaDablam Base Camp; DINGBOCHE
28/May	M	Trek toward Lobuche, 6-7 hours trek (4924m) LOBUCHE
29/May	T	Trek toward Gorak Shep (5150m,) 6-7 hours trek (visit to Everest Base Camp 5318) GORAKSHEP
30/May	W	Trek toward Kalapattar 5639m, night at Pheriche (4300m); 7 hrs. trek PHERICHE
31/May	Th	Trek toward Tengboche (4-5 hours trek) (3791m,) visit to Tengboche Gomba DEBOCHE
1/June	F	Trek toward Namche (3467m) NAMCHE
2/June	S	Trek toward Lukla LUKLA
3/June	Su	Fly to Kathmandu KATHMANDU; Evening Meeting; Farewell Dinner
4/June	M	Field Trip Concludes; Depart from Kathmandu or other options