BUDDHIST STUDIES IN INDIA

Carleton Global Engagement Programs • Fall 2023 Advising Guide

The dates and fees for Carleton’s Fall 2023 programs are posted on the website in October.

FOCUS
Buddhist meditation practice and comparative Buddhist philosophy, culture, and history.

LOCATION
The Burmese Vihar in Bodh Gaya has hosted the Buddhist Studies in India program for 40 years, and is a ten-minute walk from the Mahabodhi Temple. Bodh Gaya is a unique Buddhist pilgrimage center in northern India, and is home to more than 40 Buddhist temples within a largely Hindu and Muslim community.

THIS PROGRAM WILL BE A GREAT FIT FOR
• Students who want to take a deep dive into the theory and practice of three Buddhist traditions.
• Students who value the opportunity to study and live in community following the Buddhist precepts.
• Students who are excited about carrying out an independent student project (ISP) in South Asia as part of their study abroad experience.

FEATURES AND HIGHLIGHTS
• Live in a Buddhist monastery with a cohort of 25-30 other students from diverse academic institutions and backgrounds.
• Focus on studying the three major Buddhist traditions: Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana.
• Practice three major Buddhist meditation traditions: Burmese Vipassana (Theravada), Japanese Zen (Mahayana), and Tibetan Vajrayana with renowned meditation masters.
• Design and carry out a three-week independent study project that includes the opportunity to travel to a Buddhist community in India or a neighboring country.
COMMUNITY INTERACTION
- Religious and cultural festivals
- Visits to area temples
- Living in an active monastery for pilgrims (the Vihar)

SITE LOCATIONS DURING THE PROGRAM
Chiang Mai, Thailand (orientation)  •  Bodh Gaya, India (primary residence)  •  Varanasi and Calcutta (optional long weekends)  •  ISP locations in neighboring countries (subject to staff approval and travel availability)

IMPORTANT TO KNOW
- While residing at the Vihar, students must commit to following the five basic Buddhist precepts: to protect life, to abstain from theft, to protect relationships and abstain from sexual misconduct, to speak the truth, to abstain from intoxicants.
- Independent student travel prior to the ISP is restricted to scheduled long weekends and must be coordinated with the program staff and other students.
- Locations for ISPs vary from year to year due to political, health and safety, and practical considerations.
- Students must consult with a medical professional during the summer regarding appropriate vaccinations and malaria prevention medication. Students are strongly advised to follow the recommendations of their doctor/medical professional.

BE PREPARED FOR
- Intentional low-technology environment (limited wireless access and phone use)
- Hot weather in September with no air conditioning at the monastery
- Staying hydrated and drinking only purified water
- Vegetarian diet

COURSEWORK
Coursework is accredited and transcribed by Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota. Students enroll in five courses for a total of the Carleton-equivalent of 16 semester credits.

Required Courses
- RELG 359: Buddhist Meditation Traditions
- ASST 255: Introduction to Field Methods and Ethics
- ASST 391: Independent Study

Core Courses
- PHIL 318: Buddhist Philosophy
- SOAN 322: Contemporary Buddhist Culture
- ASST 319: History of South Asian Buddhism

Language Courses
- LCST 101: Elementary Hindi
- LCST 103: Intermediate Hindi
- LCST 101: Elementary Tibetan