SURP 827 International Project Course
Principal’s International Education Innovation Award 2017

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Overview

• Capstone course for second year M.Pl. students
• 8-12 students
• Real client with a real world planning project
• 2 weeks of fieldwork in India
• Public presentation to local residents in India
• Professional style planning report
• Maintain a blog, updated daily, during fieldtrip
Timeline

• Course is offered during the Fall term, say 2018
• Students apply for registering in the course, with a non-refundable deposit, in March 2018
• During the Fall term, the students would engage in research and analysis using secondary data
• Starting on the Monday immediately after fall term classes end, students spend 2 weeks in a city in India
• On the last day of the fieldtrip, students present their findings and recommendations to local residents at a public meeting
• Submit final report before grades are due in Jan 2019
Course Structure

• Students are organized as a mock consulting firm
• Role playing: project manager, logistics coordinator, editor, production manager
• Individual skills/strengths mapping to fill different roles and responsibilities
• Students take ownership of project: enhances both motivation and productivity
• Instructor monitors progress closely, but without interfering with the project
Learning Outcomes

- Manage design and delivery of a large multi-disciplinary planning project under tight deadlines
  - Urban Design Guidelines for Public Spaces (2012)
  - Sustainable Development Performance Measurement System (2013)
  - Heritage Management and Promotion Plan (2014)
  - Framework for Public Participation in City Planning (2015)
  - Growth Management Framework for Settlements in Auroville’s Greenbelt

Proposed Heritage Walk in Pune
Learning Outcomes

• Collaborate and work as a team in both large and small groups

• Collect, analyse, and synthesize background information about a remote location
Learning Outcomes

• Communicate effectively in diverse contexts

• Employ variety of media to both disseminate results and active community engagement
Learning Outcomes

• Overcome tough challenges of working in India
  – Very different notion of "punctuality"
  – Unpredictable power outages
  – Sporadic internet connectivity
  – Language barrier
What have I learnt as the Instructor

• Very different work culture: surprises and shocks are all part of learning
• Stay and work at a guest house (apartment/vacation rental) instead of a hotel
• Hire a single small taxi company for better service and reliability
• Bring lots of stationary from Canada – clipboards, pens, pencils, scotch tape, markers, post its, stapler, crayons, poster paper, etc. etc.
What have I learnt as the Instructor

- Bring working laptops, USB sticks
- Rent/buy a laser printer locally
- Buy local prepaid mobile phone sim cards, internet hotspots
- Use a communication app that is popular locally, e.g. WhatsApp in India WeChat in China
- Involve local university students for fieldwork
- Go old school – sporadic power supply, poor wireless internet connectivity
Thank You!