

HOLY CROSS SUMMER (MAYMESTER) PROGRAM 2020

BANGALORE, INDIA

“Social Justice in Context”



FACULTY: Holy Cross Professors Victor Matheson (Economics), Chuck Anderton (Economics), and Kevin Walsh (Computer Science), with assistance from the faculty at the Indian Social Institute.

INFORMATION SESSION: Wednesday, October 9, 2019 at 4:30 PM in Smith 201

DATES: Departure from the U.S. on **Saturday, May 16, 2020** with arrival in India the following day, and departure from India on **Saturday, June 13, 2020**. These dates are tentative.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Bangalore is India’s third largest city with a population of approximately 8,500,000 people. It lies in the South Indian state of Karnataka. In Kannada, the native language of Karnataka, Bangalore is called “Bengaluru,” and the city has recently adopted this as its official name. Popular legend says is a contraction from the Kannada phrase for “the town of boiled beans,” given to the place by a king who was generously offered boiled beans by one of the area’s residents when he became lost. Bangalore is an ideal city for encountering India’s cultural and religious diversity and for understanding the opportunities and challenges presented by urbanization in the developing world. Bangalore’s history dates from the 9th century, so it is an old city that has grown rapidly in recent decades, especially with the expansion of India’s technology sector. As Karnataka’s capital city, Bangalore draws people from nearly all of India’s ethnic and linguistic groups, including a large population of Tamils from the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu. The city is home to beautiful Hindu temples, Muslim mosques, Sikh gurdwaras, and Catholic churches and shrines. Bangalore is also known as India’s “Silicon Valley,” and is home to the headquarters of Infosys and Wipro, Microsoft Research, Google, Oracle, and Hewlett-Packard. Many other software and technology companies also have a significant presence in Bangalore. While Bangalore is known as India’s most developed and cosmopolitan city, it also faces a number of pressing challenges that disproportionately affect the city’s most vulnerable populations. For India as a whole, until very recently nearly 70% of the population lived on less than two dollars per day, and a third of the population lived on less than \$1.25 per day (World Bank, World Development Indicators), and there are estimated to be over 800 slums in Bangalore alone. Rapid population growth has not only strained the city’s infrastructure, but threatens to outstrip local water resources within a few decades. The presence of a highly developed technology sector in this context also raises difficult ethical questions about the scope and direction of urban planning and resource allocation, including access to basic necessities for women and girls as well as the impact of foreign resources and ideas on local communities. All of these issues revolve around the central concerns of social justice: Who benefits from economic development, growth, and technology? Who bears the burdens? And who gets to make those decisions?

ACADEMIC RATIONALE AND STRUCTURE: The summer program in Bangalore is intended to engage Holy Cross students in understanding the dynamism and paradoxes of modern Bangalore through intellectual inquiry, guided tours, internships, and personal reflection. Through study of the ever-changing interplay between technology, culture, economics, politics, and history, students will learn about the unbalanced, often inequitable, and sometimes disastrous social consequences of these exchanges. Students will engage directly with these complex issues through field projects and immersive field experiences, and students will observe social justice in context by visiting and working in Bangalore's diverse communities.

Five components, spread over four weeks in India will provide students a distinctive opportunity for academic and personal reflection on issues relating to social justice. Each student will also select a single perspective from which to approach her/his studies, according to the specialties of the faculty accompanying the program and the students' own academic discipline and interests. Students in computer science may explore topics from a sociotechnical perspective, for example, studying the interplay of technology and social justice and how technology shapes and is shaped by individuals and communities. Meanwhile, other students may explore the same issues from religious studies, economics, or health-based perspective. When brought together, these complementary academic approaches will provide a multi-disciplinary intellectual experience for the students studying on the program. Students will reside at the Indian Social Institute, maintained by the Society of Jesus.

- The first part of the program consists of a series of meetings during the spring semester that offer students an orientation for their journey, a brief overview of contemporary Indian society and current issues, and an introduction to Hinduism and religions of India.
- After landing in Bangalore and settling into the campus of the Indian Social Institute, the second part of the program offers an in-depth look at Indian culture and society with a special emphasis upon social justice issues relating to development and urbanization in Bangalore. Morning seminars are paired with afternoon field trips around the city to visit related cultural sites and meet with some of Bangalore's varied communities. Students will be given frequent short writing assignments in which they begin to reflect upon their experiences. Some days will be devoted to traveling outside the city to visit rural communities in Karnataka, where students will consider the extent to which social realities and challenges differ between city and country.
- In the third part of the program, students participate in a two-week intensive field experience. Evening shared group seminars provide students and faculty an opportunity to share and discuss their experiences, and allow students who share similar perspectives to study specific issues in greater depth. Students will continue to write reflections on their experiences.
- Before leaving India, students will fly north for a short visit to New Delhi and Agra, where they will have the opportunity to visit important historic and cultural sites and to witness a few of the cultural, religious, dietary, and economic differences between north and south India.
- The final part of the program will take place after return from India. Over the summer, students will write their final papers, synthesizing their internship experiences with the academic portions of the course.

POTENTIAL FIELD VISIT SITES:

The field sites we will visit may include:

- Sumanahalli: Leprosy and AIDS rehabilitation and education center.
<http://www.sumanahalli.net/>
- Vimochana: An internationally-recognized organization advocating for women's rights and working with women and families in India and abroad.
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Vimochana/1561258520809742>
- Brothers Integrated Rural Development Society (BIRDS): a social program of the Sacred Heart Brothers Society to serve marginalized communities in rural Karnataka.
<http://www.birdsbangalore.org/>
- BOSCO Yuvodaya Bangalore: An orphanage and advocacy center for street kids and refugees.
<http://www.boscoban.org/>
- Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy: A non-profit organization focusing on urban renewal, civic issues, and citizen participation.
<http://www.janaagraha.org/>
- Janaastu: A non-profit organization centered in Bangalore to provide open-source technology and computer expertise addressing environmental, social, and economic concerns.
<http://janastu.org/home/index.html>
- Mahiti: A startup-style technology organization based in Bangalore providing technology solutions for economic development, education, and sanitation.
<https://www.mahiti.org/>

CREDIT: Students receive the equivalent of one Holy Cross credit that can be used to satisfy the **Cross-Cultural** Common Area Requirement. Economics majors may use the course as a 200-level elective to count towards the graduation requirements for the ECON major. The course may be used to fulfill CSCI 328 “Computer Science Ethics”, which counts towards the requirements of the CSCI major and minor.

HOUSING: Students (and faculty) will be lodged in double rooms with an attached bathroom, at the Indian Social Institute. The Indian Social Institute is an education center maintained by the Society of Jesus. It is a gated compound in a residential area of Bangalore. Meals will be provided on-site in the Institute’s canteen.

COSTS: The *estimated* cost for the Bangalore program is *approximately \$7,000-\$7,500*.

INCLUDES: round-trip airfare, fieldtrips and local travel, room, all meals). **NOT INCLUDED:** passport and visa expenses, personal expenses. *Very limited* financial aid is available for this program.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Friday, November 15, 2020 via the online application system at <https://sa.holycross.edu>

FURTHER INFORMATION: Contact Prof. Walsh at kwalsh@holycross.edu, Prof. Matheson at vmatheso@holycross.edu, Prof. Anderton at canderto@holycross.edu, Study Abroad Director Prof. Brit Smith at bsmith@holycross.edu, email studyabr@holycross.edu, or contact the Study Abroad office in Smith Hall 216 or by phone at 508-793-3082.

DATES AND PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE