GHP 296: Field Trip to Nepal
Winter Session, January 2020

Instructor Information
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Credits
2.50 credits

Course Description
The purpose of this course is to expose public health students and practitioners to the topic of the epidemiological and nutrition transitions in rapidly developing countries. The course includes extended field visits to various institutions/sites that are dealing with agriculture, nutrition, and the provision of health care to address the growing non-communicable disease (NCD) burden in Nepal.

Nepal is a landlocked nation between the two most populous countries in the world: India and China. According to the World Bank (2017), the population of Nepal is 29.3 million and life expectancy at birth is 70.3 years. It is one of 34 low-income economies (GNI per capita of $995 or less) around the world, and is largely agrarian with 71% of the population employed in agriculture (compared to the global average of 26%) and 81% of the population living in rural areas (compared to the global average of 45%). As with many rapidly developing countries, the health system in Nepal largely consists of various disease-centric vertical programs, though this is posed to change in the coming years owing to a multi-sectoral government commitment to universal health coverage.

Nepal is a prime example of a country undergoing the epidemiological transition. Under-5 mortality has dropped dramatically since 1990 (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2019), and the top 3 causes of death today are heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and stroke. Malnutrition and dietary risks are the #1 and #3 risk factors driving the most death and disability in Nepal. For example, according to a nationally representative cross-sectional survey conducted by the Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC), Government of Nepal, in 2013 using the WHO STEPwise approach to Surveillance (STEPS) of NCDs instrument, nearly 100% of the Nepali adult population consumes less than five servings of fruits and vegetables combined per day. **This course will therefore focus on the nutrition transition as an underlying driver of the epidemiological transition, and food**
system-based approaches to promoting healthy, sustainable diets for the prevention of NCDs.

The topics that will be covered include the following:

- Epidemiological transition and global burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)
- Underlying causes of the epidemiological transition, with a particular emphasis on the nutrition transition
- Implementation of health services for NCDs in Nepal
- Strategies for improving the sustainability and healthfulness of food systems in Nepal and other low- and middle-income countries
- Roles within and outside the health sector in policy reform to improve public health

Pre-Requisites
There are no formal pre-requisites for this course. However, students who are interested in joining must apply and attend two required pre-departure meetings.

Learning Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe historical, economic, political, social and cultural factors that have shaped the epidemiological transition in Nepal.
2. Understand the varying factors giving rise to Nepal’s epidemiological transition.
3. Compare approaches used to improve the sustainability and healthfulness of food systems and explain the trade-offs between these approaches.
4. Develop effective communication and collaboration skills.
5. Formulate recommendations for implementation of partner organizations’ projects, as well as broader policymakers.

Course Readings
- Required:


The following three articles relate to critical perspectives of US students participating in short-term global experiences and are meant to stimulate further discussion before, during, and after the trip:


Course Structure
This is a field-based course conducted in Nepal. We will visit multiple institutions/sites throughout the country.

Grading, Progress and Performance
The final grade for this course will be based on:

- Attendance at required pre-departure meetings (5%)
- Active engagement during field visits (50%)
- Daily field visit reflections (25%)
- Final trip report (20%)

Attendance at required pre-departure meetings
Students should send a list of their top 3 learning goals for the course to the course TA by 5:00 PM on Friday, November 1.

Students who are unable to attend required pre-departure meetings should notify the instructor immediately regarding making up for these meetings. We will be discussing very important information relating to trip logistics and safety as well as providing students with an overview of Nepali culture and public health that will be necessary to maximize the students’ learning experience in-country.

Active engagement during field visits
Students should arrive in Nepal prepared to ask questions, share their viewpoints in constructive and respectful ways, and otherwise actively engage with our in-country hosts, keeping in mind the significant amount of time and effort that our hosts put into planning this trip.

Specifically, engagement during field visits will be graded as follows:
- 40-50%: Always contributes to discussions by asking thoughtful questions; challenging assumptions whilst respecting diverse perspectives; reflecting on historical, economic, political, social and cultural factors; and drawing from readings/scientific evidence.
- 20-39%: Sometimes contributes to discussions by asking thoughtful questions; challenging assumptions whilst respecting diverse perspectives; reflecting on historical, economic, political, social and cultural factors; and drawing from readings/scientific evidence.
- 0-19%: Rarely contributes to discussions by asking thoughtful questions; challenging assumptions whilst respecting diverse perspectives; reflecting on historical, economic, political, social and cultural factors; and drawing from readings/scientific evidence.

**Daily field visit reflections**
Students will submit daily impressions/reflections on field visits via Canvas. These may include pictures. Exceptions will be made when WiFi is not available. Students will receive full credit (25%) if all required reflections are appropriate and submitted on-time.

**Final trip report**
Students will use their daily field visit reflections to compile a final trip report. Suggested components of the report include but are not limited to: overview of Nepali context, summary of the itinerary, background on the host organizations and research projects, overall impressions/reflections on the trip, suggestions for course modifications, and recommendations for partner organizations' programs. This report will be shared with our in-country hosts. It should be submitted to the course TA before students depart Nepal (Friday, January 24).

**Harvard Chan Policies and Expectations**

**Inclusivity Statement**
Diversity and inclusiveness are fundamental to public health education and practice. Students are encouraged to have an open mind and respect differences of all kinds. I share responsibility with you for creating a learning climate that is hospitable to all perspectives and cultures. When interacting with other students in this course, the instructors, the TA, and our generous in-country hosts, keep in mind the following suggestions:

- Avoid generalizing your view as being a universal truth
- Withhold unsolicited personal judgments
- Ask questions from the standpoint of curiosity as opposed to arguing or debating a point of view
- Speak personal viewpoints in constructive and respectful ways
- Be willing to examine and grapple with how personal assumptions shape your “truths”

**Bias Related Incident Reporting**
The Harvard Chan School believes all members of our community should be able to study and work in an environment where they feel safe and respected. As a mechanism to promote an inclusive community, we have created an anonymous bias-related incident reporting system. If you have experienced bias, please submit a report here so that the administration can track and address concerns as they arise and to better support members of the Harvard Chan community.

**Title IX**
The following policy applies to all Harvard University students, faculty, staff, appointees, or third parties: [Harvard University Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment Policy](#). Procedures [For Complaints Against a Faculty Member](#) Procedures [For Complaints Against Non-Faculty Academic Appointees](#)

**Academic Integrity**
Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Harvard University and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health School’s standards of Academic Integrity. All work submitted to meet course requirements is expected to be a student’s own work. In the preparation of work submitted to meet course requirements, students should always take great care to distinguish their own ideas and knowledge from information derived from sources.

Students must assume that collaboration in the completion of assignments is prohibited unless explicitly specified. Students must acknowledge any collaboration and its extent in all submitted work. This requirement applies to collaboration on editing as well as collaboration on substance.

Should academic misconduct occur, the student(s) may be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Handbook. See the [Student Handbook](#) for additional policies related to academic integrity and disciplinary actions.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**
Harvard University provides academic accommodations to students with disabilities. Any requests for academic accommodations should ideally be made before the first week of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students must register with the Local Disability Coordinator in the Office for Student Affairs to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Contact Colleen Cronin [ccronin@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:ccronin@hsph.harvard.edu) in all cases, including temporary disabilities.

**Religious Holidays, Absence Due to**
According to Chapter 151c, Section 2B, of the General Laws of Massachusetts, any student in an educational or vocational training institution, other than a religious or denominational training institution, who is unable, because of his or her religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or requirement which he or she may have missed because of such absence on any particular day, provided that such makeup examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon the School. See the [student handbook](#) for more information.

**Grade of Absence from Examination**
A student who cannot attend a regularly scheduled examination must request permission for an alternate examination from the instructor in advance of the examination. See the [student handbook](#) for more information.

**Final Examination Policy**
No student should be required to take more than two examinations during any one day of finals week. Students who have more than two examinations scheduled during a particular day during the final examination period may take their class schedules to the director for student affairs for assistance in arranging for an alternate time for all exams in excess of two. Please refer to the [student handbook](#) for the policy.

**Course Evaluations**
Constructive feedback from students is a valuable resource for improving teaching. The feedback should be specific, focused and respectful. It should also address aspects of the course and teaching that are positive as well as those which need improvement.

Completion of the evaluation is a requirement for each course. Your grade will not be available until you submit the evaluation. In addition, registration for future terms will be blocked until you have completed evaluations for courses in prior terms.

Guidelines for Identifying and Managing Risk

- Risk Planning – All international travel poses risks for which you should prepare, as outlined in the worldwide caution issued by the U.S. State Department.
- It is prudent to be alert and careful as you would in big cities, it is also important to take precautions with valuables. **The course organizers are taking safety precautions at all times but students travelling to Nepal do so under their own risk.**
- Risk Rating – based on State Dept., CDC, and HU recommendations
  - The U.S. State Department recommends exercising increased caution when traveling in Nepal. Do not travel alone. Remain alert to your surroundings. Avoid demonstrations and crowds. Be aware that infrastructure, government services, and medical assistance may not be up to U.S. standards.
  - The CDC recommends the following:
    - Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines before every trip. These vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot.
    - Hepatitis A vaccine: CDC recommends this vaccine because you can get hepatitis A through contaminated food or water in Nepal, regardless of where you are eating or staying.
    - Typhoid vaccine: You can get typhoid through contaminated food or water in Nepal. CDC recommends this vaccine for most travelers, especially if you are staying with friends or relatives, visiting smaller cities or rural areas, or if you are an adventurous eater.
    - Keep away from animals.
    - Prevent bug bites.
- Harvard University International Travel Policy can be found here: [https://www.globalsupport.harvard.edu/travel-tools/forms-policies/graduate-professional-student](https://www.globalsupport.harvard.edu/travel-tools/forms-policies/graduate-professional-student)
- All participants are required to register travel via the Harvard Travel Registry and complete the online **GSS travel orientation** prior to departure. These are important tools and resources to inform and to ensure you have a safe and rewarding trip abroad.
- U.S. Embassy Kathmandu
  - Telephone: +(977)(1) 423-4000 or 400-7200
  - Emergency After-Hours Telephone: +(977)(1) 400-7266,400-7269
  - Email: consktm@state.gov
- Visa: students can purchase a 30-day visa upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu ($40 USD). Must have six months remaining validity or more at time of entry and at least one blank visa page (not endorsements page).
## Course Schedule & Assessment of Student Learning

Please note, session topics and activities may be subject to change during the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Date</th>
<th>Session Topic</th>
<th>Session Objectives</th>
<th>Assessment Method(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/06/2020</td>
<td>Visit to Kathmandu Medical College and Teaching Hospital</td>
<td>1. Harvard students paired with Nepali students, introductions, ice-breaking activities</td>
<td>In-field activities</td>
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<td>Visit to SlumNCD site</td>
<td>2. Learn about organization of Nepal health care system including role of the female community health volunteer (FCHV) program (“mañila suyoemsewika”), medical education, and research priorities</td>
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<td>Tour Sinamangal private hospital and public hospital (tertiary level care)</td>
<td>3. Understand challenges of accessing healthy foods in urban centers</td>
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<td>4. Learn about community-based CVD prevention</td>
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<td>5. Discuss medical pluralism – the balance between traditional healing practices and allopathic medicine/biomedical services</td>
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<td>6. Interact with hospital superintendents and physicians, discuss what the major diseases they treat are, improvements they’ve witnessed over the years and current issues/areas for improvement</td>
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<td>01/07/2020</td>
<td>Visit to Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal Health Research Council</td>
<td>1. Learn about the management and regulation of health services at the national level</td>
<td>In-field activities</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Learn about progress in terms of implementing the Multisectoral Action Plan for Prevention and Control</td>
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Students are expected to arrive in Kathmandu by the **evening of Sunday, January 5, 2020.**
of NCDs (2014-2020) and “next steps”
3. Learn about WHO PEN (Package of Essential Noncommunicable Diseases)
4. Learn about national surveillance programs for NCDs (WHO STEPS surveys)

Visit to urban Primary Health Center
Visit to Bhaktapur Durbar Square

1. Learn about the various services provided at Primary Health Centers
2. Interact with patients and the Medical Officer
3. Discuss government programs, constraints if any, and partnerships with private sector and NGOs
4. Discuss role of primary health-care outreach clinics versus grass-roots-level health facilities and pharmacists in screening for NCD risk factors
5. Local cultural experience

Visit to Suahara II project site (Helen Keller International/USAID)

1. Learn about implementation of multi-sectoral nutrition programs

Visit to iDE site

1. Learn about integrated pest management programs in Nepal and iDE’s commercial pocket model
2. Interact with “Plant Doctors” and farmers

Travel to second field site, Dhulikhel (1 hour bus ride)

Local cultural experience (Sanskriti Farms for lunch and demonstration then hike to Thrangu Tashi Monastery and)

Visit Dhulikhel Hospital and learn about community outreach programs
Interaction with patients with diabetes and/or hypertension

1. Understand experience of local patients with diabetes and/or hypertension through participating in door-to-door follow-up
2. Understand various health related challenges faced by the district and steps being taken to effectively address them

In-field activities
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 01/13/2020 | Cervical cancer project                                               | 1. Visit outreach centers and government health posts  
2. Meet with FCHVs and learn about screening program                                                                                       |                                   |
| 01/14/2020 | Canteen intervention Workshop on NCDs (Dhulikhel Hospital)             | 1. Learn about worksite- and school-based nutrition interventions for NCD prevention  
2. Learn about food environment intervention with restaurants including measurement of food environment through direct observation |                                   |
| 01/15/2020 | Travel to third field site, Chitwan (4-hour bus ride)                  | Local cultural experience (hike in Chitwan National Park)                                                                                                                                             |                                   |
| 01/16/2020 | Visits to farmer co-op, field, and pesticide dealers                  | 1. Learn about issue of occupational exposures to pesticides in Nepal and prevention measures being implemented by Nepal Public Health Foundation  
2. Learn about integrated pest management (IPM) as an alternative to conventional agricultural practices |                                   |
| 01/17/2020 | Visit with provincial level health system stakeholders                | 1. Visit to villages, interact with stakeholders, particularly Mothers’ Group for Health  
2. Interact with municipality government to discuss impact of federalist system (since 2015) on health care system |                                   |
| 01/18/2020 | Off day – list of suggested tourist activities in Chitwan will be provided |                                                                                                                                             |                                   |
| 01/19/2020 | Travel to fourth field site, Pokhara (3 hour bus ride)                 | Local cultural experience (boating on lakes)                                                                                                                                                    |                                   |
| 01/20/2020 | Visit to Nepal Development Society                                    | Learn about the community-based management of hypertension and diabetes in Nepal (COBIN) trial                                                                                                    |                                   |

In-field activities
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>In-field activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/21/2020</td>
<td>Visit COBIN and COBIN-D intervention sites</td>
<td>Interact with patients participating in community-based NCD prevention trial</td>
<td>In-field activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/22/2020</td>
<td>Trip debriefing</td>
<td>Students will be given the morning to complete their final trip report and prepare a brief presentation</td>
<td>5-minute presentation</td>
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<td>01/23/2020</td>
<td>Off day – list of suggested tourist activities in Pokhara will be provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/24/2020</td>
<td><strong>Last day of class</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Travel to Boston</strong>&lt;br&gt;(via Pokhara or Kathmandu)</td>
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