

NIRMAN Programs in Varanasi, India

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Why India? Why Varanasi? Why NIRMAN?

NIRMAN's College Program in India is located in Varanasi, with travel to other cities. It has courses and sessions of different lengths, described below. It is unique in its combination of intellectual, field, service and creative work.

Why Varanasi? Varanasi is perhaps the one place in India that may be called a microcosm of India. It presents within it the whole spectrum of Indian history, from the ancient to the modern. It is a case study of India's pluralism, a centre of pilgrimage for Hindus, the home of the silk industry run by Muslim weavers, and a sacred site for Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains. It is located on the banks of the holy Ganga and a pilgrimage site of unmatched importance. It is the home of the Banaras *gharana* or school of classical music (vocal, sitar, sarod, violin, flute, sarangi, shehnai, and tabla) and dance (kathak) and is equally famous for its folk music and Bhojpuri culture. Varanasi is the city of artisans and an everyday culture of bonhomie as well as a profound philosophy of life. *Now* Banaras has new contemporary importance as the parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Modi.

What is special about NIRMAN's programs of study? NIRMAN's programs emphasise an anthropological, developmental, and creative approach. Students are invited to understand the modern and the global in a traditional society and bridge the meaningless dichotomy of 'old' and 'new.' The experience of studying in Varanasi itself is one of bridging: students walk in crooked lanes and meet artisans and boatmen, and learn how to make sense of these experiences in the classroom with their professors. They explore India as part of a unified world, while going deep into the rootedness of Indian people in their religions, languages, and cultures. Together with their coursework they do development work on the ground with a local organisation. Most uniquely, they are taught an Indian art in a way specially designed to make them experience India as an insider. Students are required to take at least one course in languages, one in the Social Sciences and Humanities, and one in the Arts, and to do an internship that includes learning and research.

NIRMAN has had over 250 students so far in its programs in Varanasi, with travel to Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Udaipur, Kolkata, Lucknow, and Mussoorie. Our alumni have returned with a strong academic base, ethnographic skills, Hindi language competency, a critical grasp of global issues in local contexts, and a love of learning.

NIRMAN's faculty: consists of some of the foremost professors, independent scholars, intellectuals and artists of Varanasi. The program is designed and led by Professor Nita Kumar, author of **The Artisans of Banaras** (Princeton, 1988); **Friends, Brothers and Informants** (Berkeley, 1992); **Lessons from Schools: the History of Education in Banaras** (Sage, 2000), **The Politics of Gender, Community and Modernity** (Oxford, 2007), and many other books and articles in history, anthropology, gender studies, and education.

Duration, Credits, and Fees

I. Three/Four Week Program (in July, August, October, or December-January; dates upon request)

One Full Academic Credit: To obtain **one full credit**, students have 3 hours of instructional contact per day, five times per week for 3 weeks, or a total of 45 hours. Some part of this requirement is replaced by educational field trips where instruction is carried on.

II. Eight/Ten Week Program in India (June-Aug, Sept-Nov, Oct-Dec; dates upon request)

Two Full Academic Credits: To earn two full credits during an eight-week or a ten-week summer program, students take a seminar course together with either one more course or practicum, or choose a seminar course with a required practicum component tied to it. The seminar courses meet for 45 instructional contact hours each, inclusive of excursions or cultural activities, and the practicum component consists of designed practical work for the same duration.

This program has an “orientation” and a “de-orientation” during the first and last week of the program, allowing students to become oriented to the new environment, and have sufficient time to complete final papers and assignments and reflect on their learning, at the program's conclusion.

III. One Semester, one Quarter, or two-Quarter long Programs in India (Aug/Sept-Nov/Dec; Jan-April; dates upon request)

Three Full Academic Credits: To earn three (3) full credits during a ten week quarter, the student chooses three courses from our list of courses, each worth a single credit. Each course meets for 45 contact hours, as given above.

Four Full Academic Credits: To earn four (4) full credits during a sixteen week semester, the student chooses four courses from our list of courses, each worth a single credit. Each course meets for 45 contact hours, as given above.

Six Full Academic Credits: To earn six (6) full credits during a twenty week two-quarter session, the student chooses six courses from our list of courses, each worth a single credit. Each course meets for 45 contact hours, as given above.

All the above programs include access to the **internet, computing resources, and a scholarly library**. One or two field trips may be offered during the program, scheduled during the week or on the weekends at the professor's discretion.

Fees

Tuition Costs: are calculated on the basis of credits. In 2017 the costs are \$2000 per course, for one credit (according to some colleges, equivalent to three credits according to others.)

Living costs: are calculated on a weekly basis, and include cafeteria privileges, residence, two weeks of home stays, guidance and translation, security, and orientation. In 2017 the costs are \$275 per week.

Travel costs: students are required to choose any three of five available trips in each session, at a cost of \$1200 for all.

NIRMAN Programs are open to all qualified undergraduates in good standing, enrolled full time in an accredited American College or university. Students must have completed at least one year and have a GPA of 3.00. The application form is available online (www.nirman.info) and all the accompanying materials are specified. The complete application should be sent to NIRMAN by email to contact@nirman.info Admission decisions will be announced within the following week or earlier.