

ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR

The schedule of classes and activities for each country is relatively self-contained, although the presence of the traveling Faculty Advisor throughout the journey facilitates an ongoing, cumulative learning experience for students. Thus, each new country marks a new set of topics and approaches reflecting that country's religious and cultural experience.

<u>Turkey</u>	
September 2 September 2 - October 6	Air Travel (New York to Istanbul) Program in Turkey <i>Focus: Islam, Modernization, Secularism, Cultural Heritage</i> <i>Highlights: Konya and Sufi Lodge</i>
October 7 - October 12	First Recess <i>Students may explore locations in Turkey</i>
<u>India</u>	
October 13 October 13 - November 10	Air Travel (Istanbul to Delhi) Program in India <i>Focus: Hinduism, Religious Diversity, Development</i> <i>Highlights: Varanasi, River Ganga, Sarnath, Bodh Gaya, Yoga</i>
<u>Taiwan</u>	
November 11 November 11 - November 16	Air Travel (Delhi to Taipei) Second Recess <i>Students may explore locations in Taiwan</i>
November 17 - December 22	Program in Taiwan <i>Focus: Mahayana Buddhism, Taoist Popular Religion, National Identity</i> <i>Highlights: Dharma Drum Meditation Retreat, Tzu Chi Buddhist Service Organization</i>

Keep in mind that itineraries can change in response to events in the countries to be visited, and the advice of the U.S. State Department.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

Turkey

Istanbul provides the perfect site to introduce students to themes of bridges and divides. This ancient capital of Byzantium and the Ottoman Empire sits on the border between Europe and Asia, modern and traditional, secular and religious, Christian and Muslim. After an intensive, two-week classroom introduction, supplemented by visits to some of the most important sites in the Muslim and Christian worlds, we will journey east to Konya. Here we will stay in a Sufi lodge and encounter Islam's mystical tradition under the guidance of a Mevlevi Dervish. After a short break in Cappadocia, we will travel further east to Urfa and Mardin to encounter the mix of the modern and the traditional in upper Mesopotamia. This mix includes development projects along the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, as well as religious sites and a pilgrimage route shared by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Field trips will include the most ancient religious

site on the planet (Göbekli Tepe), Abraham's path, a homestay in a Kurdish village, and Turkey's first university to teach Kurdish language and culture. The politics of cultural heritage, religious tradition, and economic development all come together here on the border of the Middle East.

India

We will begin our program in New Delhi, the capital of India. This city offers India's most important institutions of national self-representation even as it exemplifies extreme and pressing problems of development: rapid urbanization, pollution, and inequalities of wealth. After this introduction to India and a visit to the World Heritage site of the Taj Mahal, we will journey east to Varanasi. Here our program will spend almost a month in and around one of Hinduism's holiest cities. This hub of multiple pilgrimage routes sits on the Ganga, India's most sacred and most polluted river. Varanasi also lies close to Sarnath and Bodh Gaya, two of Buddhism's holiest sites. In addition to investigating the confluence of lived religion, sacred geography, and the pressures of development, students will have the opportunity of a homestay with an Indian family.

Taiwan

While based in Taipei, capital of Taiwan, we will begin our program with a field trip to sites in eastern Taiwan that will give us broad exposure to Taiwan's geography, indigenous peoples, traditional economy, popular religion, and other cultural features. Upon our return to Taipei, we will engage in an intensive two-week set of classes and site visits that will provide an academic framework for our experience of Taiwan's religions and cultures, culminating in a short stay in a Buddhist monastery. We will close the program with a two-week independent study that students will have designed over the course of the semester. Students will have the opportunity to work with numerous organizations dealing with indigenous issues, environmentalism, social service, political empowerment, and others as part of their study.

***Note: The activities listed above may change or be replaced based on developing circumstances and normal year-to-year variations.**