

UVA IN INDIA: Urban Transformations

Exploring Sustainability Past + Present



GS GS 3530 + ARCH 3550/5500 | University of Virginia | J-term 2024 | travel dates: January 2-15, 2024

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Overview: Currently 56% of the world's human population of 8.1 billion live in cities. As the largest and most permanent physical artifacts created by our species, cities are the perfect place to explore the past, present, and future of human settlement, architecture, landscape, culture, and sustainability. This course examines processes of environmental change through a sustainability lens. India is an ideal case study—a culturally diverse nation with 18% of the world's human population, complex history, and rapidly urbanizing present. We will explore how constructed environments have been transformed due to environmental, aesthetic, and socio-economic forces in Delhi, Mathura, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, and Gurugram. We will study the sustainability challenges that all global cities face—climate change, the need for shelter, water, food, energy, transport, and waste management, environmental and heritage conservation, environmental justice, and how to imagine and design for a more sustainable future.

Learning Objectives: Students will learn about human-environmental transformations from historical to contemporary settlements in India, with a focus on understanding both past and current sustainable strategies for urban density, public space, building types, rainwater collection/storage, solar orientation, shade, plantings and microclimates, and natural materials. Students will gain significant intercultural experiences through structured visits and interactions with host country nationals, including Delhi professionals and faculty and students from O.P. Jindal Global University.

Enrollment: The program is open to all UVA students and there are no pre-requisite or language requirements. We expect that Global Studies, History, Religion, Politics, Anthropology, Art, Archaeology, Environmental Thought & Practice, MESALC, Environmental Science, and School of Architecture students will be interested given the interdisciplinary focus on sustainability of culture, design, and the constructed environment.

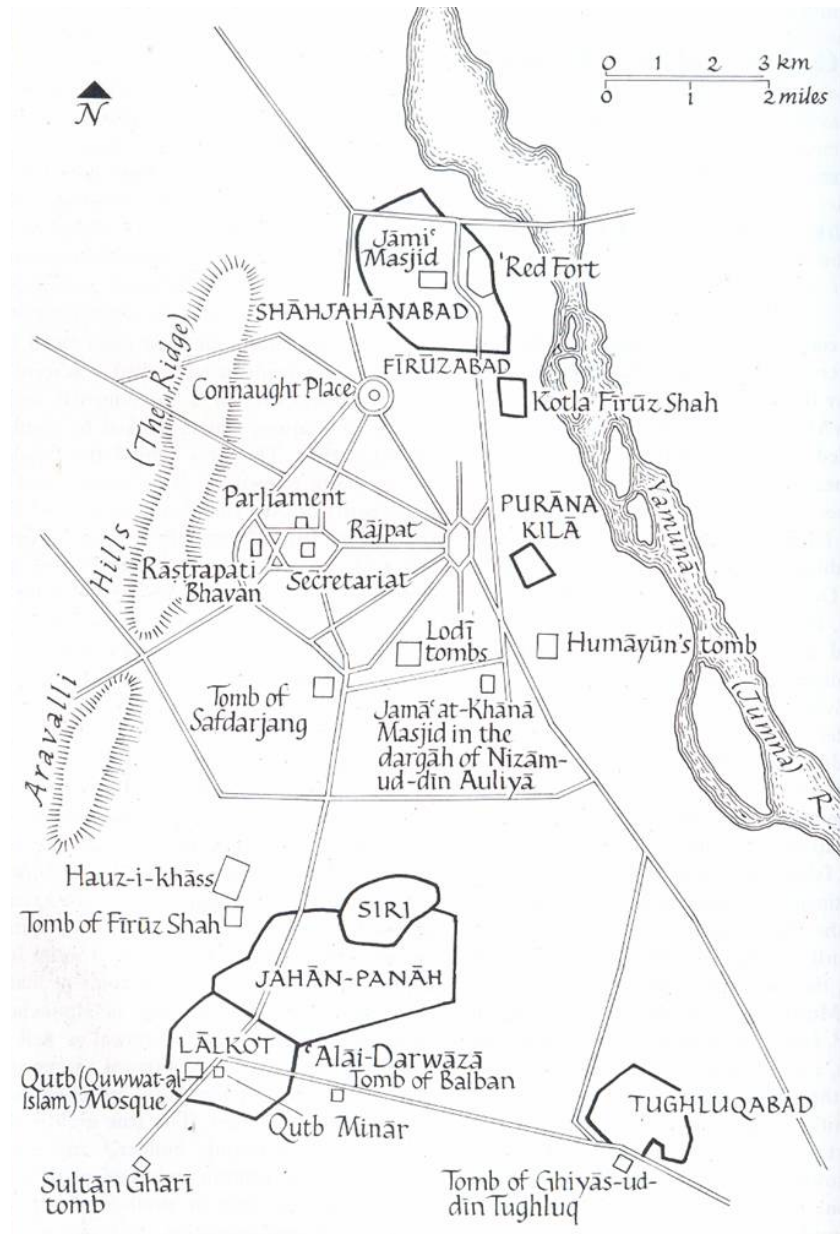
Daily Course Plan: A typical day includes 8 contact hours of academic field visits. Daily experiential learning includes an on-site talk by the UVA instructor, Delhi-based professionals, or JGU professors, reading discussion, and student research presentations. We will be in India for 11 full days and 11 hotel nights. Students will have a free day + free afternoon/evenings in Delhi to explore. All breakfasts provided in hotels. All lunches provided, except on free day + US-India travel days. 4 program dinners provided and other Delhi dinners on your own.

Assessment: Course requirements and weight in the final grade:

- 30% *Research Paper* - select a topic related to a physical place we'll visit in India and complete before travel.
Undergrads: 5-page paper (≈2,500 w), Graduates: 10-page paper (≈5,000 w), both single-spaced.
Verbal Presentation - brief research overview (15 min) to the class on-site.
- 30% *Academic Field Journal or Sketchbook* (as appropriate to discipline)
- 20% *Reading Discussions* - on-site, complete readings before class day, pdfs posted on Canvas in December.
- 20% *Active Participation* - in 2 pre-departure seminars, 1 post-travel meeting, and all activities in India.
Demonstrate kindness, collegiality, and patience during our travels.

Academic Partners + Professional contributors in India

- O.P. Jindal Global University, School of Art & Architecture and School of Environment & Sustainability
- Harsh Jain, Harsh Vardhad Jain Architects, Juggernaut (practicing architect in Delhi, UVA M.Arch 2013 grad)
- Arun Rewal, Arun Rewal Associates (practicing architect in Delhi, MIT '92 Master of City Planning grad)
- Tarun Kumar, Studio Next (practicing architect in Delhi, Univ of Wisconsin M.Arch 2000 grad) www.studionext.co.in



The Seven Cities of Delhi

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