



Course Description
Woodstock School's GAP Semester in the Himalaya
HANIFL CENTRE
WOODSTOCK SCHOOL
MUSSOORIE • UTTARAKHAND • 248179 • INDIA

The mission of the Hanifl Centre is to provide a world class outdoor and environmental education program that develops responsible citizens by exploring and celebrating the Himalayan environment through physical activity, art, literature, environmental ethics and leadership training.

In keeping with the above mission, Woodstock School's Hanifl Centre has developed a GAP Semester that focuses on outdoor and environmental studies in the Himalaya. This 90-day semester is a great way to immerse yourself in the culture, natural history and human history of the area, in addition to gaining an appreciation of the livelihood and socio-economic issues that face villages in remote parts of the Himalaya.

The Hanifl Centre with its classrooms, dormitory, kitchen, and dining facilities is an ideal base camp. Woodstock School's extensive library, climbing wall, swimming pool and gym will provide plenty of opportunities to hone the mind and body as you transition between the programs of the semester.

The Highlights of the semester are:

- 2 weeks at Woodstock School to learn Hindi and an exposure to Indian culture
 - 2 weeks in the Lahul-Spiti area of Himachal Pradesh trekking, service projects and travel
 - 2 week at Woodstock School, with classes on Wilderness First aid and the Anthropology of this area
 - 3 weeks in the Garhwal area of Uttarakhand, trekking and learning outdoor living skills
 - 3 weeks in the Kumaon-Garhwal area of Uttarakhand with service-learning, wildlife and rafting
 - 1 week of travelling from each area to the other, observing lifestyles of rural India
- ✓ Group size of 12-15 students with 2 teachers.
 - ✓ Develop life-long friendships with students from other parts of the world
 - ✓ Certificates of completion from NOLS for the first aid course and from NIM for mountaineering
 - ✓ Woodstock School's GAP Semester graduation certificate

The semester begins in New Delhi where you will be met by our staff. You will travel by train to Dehradun and taxi to Mussoorie to reach Woodstock School and the Hanifl Centre. During the first two weeks, you will stay at the Hanifl centre and take classes that will lay the foundation for the rest of the semester. Learning conversational Hindi at the world renowned Landour Language School, taking a course in wilderness first aid, and taking classes on Indian philosophy and culture will keep you busy. You will also spend time climbing and swimming in the school's new state-of-the-art gymnasium, getting physically fit for the semester.

Next, you will travel to the town of Kaza in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Here you will immerse yourself in construction work of a village home or greenhouse for a monastery. In the evenings you will learn more about the primarily Buddhist culture of this area and socio economics issues of this high altitude, remote landscape. Taking a break from construction, you will go on a hike for a couple of days and stay with the local people in a Home Stay setting. Visiting the 1000 year old Tabo monastery, and Ki Gompha (monastery) will be some of the highlights.

You will then return to the Hanifl Centre for a week to rest and take classes on the Anthropology and socio-economic issues that face this area. Field trips combined with classroom lectures with experts in this field will be the highlight of this section. The next section will take you to the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, (NIM) who will guide you on a high altitude trek. NIM is India's premier institute for mountaineering training will run a special course for Woodstock's GAP Semester. This ensures a smaller group size and more personalized coaching. By the end of the course, you will have learned sufficient skills to look after yourself and be safe in a Himalayan environment. Each student will also get a certificate of completion from the NIM.

Returning to the Hanifl Centre for a day of rest and down time will be followed by travel to the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand. In this area, you will first be engaged in service projects at villages and learn about environmental/village forestry issues that affect them. You will volunteer time at a local school, (pre-school – 4th grade), work in an experimental farm on organic agriculture, visit with local women's self help groups to understand the importance of savings and credit and visit a weaving centre to learn about the local patterns that are used.

Next, you will spend time at a camp on the outskirts of the world famous Corbett National Park (India's first national park), with naturalists and wildlife experts. Discussions about the pros and cons of wildlife tourism, learning about human-animal conflict, forest management issues, will be interspersed with birding trips and going on game drives to spot the tiger, elephant and other animals. The last few days will be spent whitewater rafting on the Ganges, a river that is revered by Hindus. Apart from rafting skills that you will learn, discussions will revolve around the pros and cons of hydro projects on the river, pollution issues and about the mythology associated with the Ganges,

You will return to the Hanifl Centre for the last time to clean and return equipment, complete evaluations, graduation and banquet to celebrate the completion of the semester. You return to New Delhi on the second to last day of the semester for some shopping and sightseeing, if possible. The next morning, after a short briefing on "travelling in India" and help with last minute travel plans, the GAP Semester will end at noon.

Suggested Reading:

- Aitken, B. (2003). *Riding the Ranges: Travels on my Motorcycle*. Penguin Books
- Aitken, B. (2003). *Footloose in the Himalaya*. Sangam Books
- Alter, S. (2001). *Sacred Waters. A pilgrimage up the Ganges to the source of Hindu culture*. Harcourt
- Alter, S. (2008). *All the Way to Heaven*. Penguin Books
- Bumiller, E. (1991). *May you be the mother of a hundred sons: A journey among the women of India*.
- Cameron J. (1974). *An Indian Summer*. McGraw-Hill Companies
- Corbett, J. (1991). *My India*. Safari press Inc.
- Frazer, A. (1991). *Chasing the monsoon. A modern pilgrimage through India*. Knopf Publishing group
- Guha, R. (2006). *How much should a person consume? Environmentalism in India and the US*. Univ of C Press
- Kala, D.C. (1999). *Jim Corbett of Kumaon*. (2nd edition) Sangam Books
- LaPierre, D. & L. Collins. (2000) *Freedom at Midnight* (New edition) South Asia Books
- Mistry, R. (1996) *A Fine Balance*. Knopf Publishing group
- Moraes, D. (Ed) (2001). *The Penguin Book of Indian Journeys*. Viking books
- Mukerji, K. (2006). *The Lost World of Hindustani Music*. Penguin books
- Noble, C. (1998). *Over High Passes. Journey with the Gaddis of Himachal*
- Ali, S. (2007). *The fall of a Sparrow*. Oxford University Press
- Ali, S. (2003). *The books of Indian birds*. (13th ed). Oxford University Press
- Corbett, J. (1993). *Man-eaters of Kumaon*. Oxford University Press
- Prater, S.H. (1990). *The book of Indian animals*. Oxford University Press