



Fiji

Social Change and Ethnic Identity

Credits 16

Program Base Suva

Language Study Fijian

Homestay Suva, 9 weeks

Rural Visit/Homestays Fijian and Indo-Fijian villages and settlements

Educational Excursions Islands of Vanua Levu, Taveuni, Ovalau, and highlands and coastal areas of Viti Levu

Independent Study Project 4 weeks

Prerequisites None

Social Change and Ethnic Identity Seminar

PACI 3000 / 6 credits / 90 class hours

An interdisciplinary course conducted in English, with required readings, examining the complex social and economic background to the challenges facing contemporary Fiji, including changes in ethnic and religious balance and mounting transnational forces. Resources utilized in the delivery of course content include the University of the South Pacific, the Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding, the Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy, and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement. Lectures and discussions for this course generally include the following topics:

History

Settlement of the Pacific and Fiji; prehistory and oral traditions; Fijian linguistic and cultural divisions; European perceptions of the Pacific; British colonialism and Indian migration; politicization of ethnic communities; Indo-Fijian history; World War II and the achievement of Fijian independence.

Multicultural Anthropology

Indigenous Fijian and immigrant Indian culture and religion; Fiji's multicultural and Indo-Fijian communities; ethnic politics and social relations; the influence of religion on national identity; ceremonies and rituals.

Politics and Economics

Decolonization; Fiji's Westminster-influenced parliament and the Great Council of Chiefs; political parties and political action; the culture of political crises and coups; the constitutional process; communal land issues and industrial sugar plantations; tourism and the imagined tropics; threats to sustainable primary industries.

Social Issues, Development, and Change

Fiji at the Pacific crossroads; urbanization; squatter development youth culture; minority cultures

and special interest groups; gender roles; governmental change, citizen participation, and reconciliation; population changes; sport and national identity; contemporary Pacific art, music, and dance; Christian, Muslim, and Hindu faith-based community action.

Educational Excursions

The program includes lecture visits to historical and cultural sites on Viti Levu, including traditional villages, plantations, and museums. On a longer excursion to the island of Vanua Levu, students visit the town of Savusavu, Naviavia settlement (descendants of Blackbirders) in the highlands, and the predominantly Indo-Fijian town of Labasa for comparative social analysis. Students also take shorter excursions to Levuka and Lovoni on the island of Ovalau and to Lavena on the island of Taveuni. Two village homestays, one Fijian and one Indo-Fijian, allow students to work on language skills and participate in cultural events in different settings.

Intensive Language Study: Fijian

FJI 1000 / 4 credits / 60 class hours

Emphasis on beginning speaking and comprehension skills and field instruction. Language instructors use a variety of teaching techniques, providing students the opportunity to develop Fijian communicative skills.

Field Study Seminar

ANTH 3500 / 2 credits / 30 class hours

A course in the concepts of learning across cultures and from field experience. Introduction to the Independent Study Project. Material includes cross-cultural adaptation and skills building; project selection and refinement; appropriate methodologies; field study ethics and the World Learning/SIT Human Subjects Review Policy; developing contacts and finding resources; developing skills in observation and interviewing; gathering, organizing, and communicating data; maintaining a work journal.

Independent Study Project

ISPR 3000 / 4 credits / 120 class hours

Conducted in Suva or in another approved location appropriate to the project. Sample topic areas: a study of local protected marine areas; traditional kinship and village structure; Fijian oral histories and legends; traditional Fijian arts; the social geography of island transportation routes; the political economy of *beche-de-mer*; Sunni Muslim women in Fiji; land value systems in an island nation; the influence of race in politics; social services for marginalized communities.

Homestay

Nine weeks in Suva. Other accommodations during the program include indigenous Fijian village stays, an Indo-Fijian settlement stay, hostels, field camps, and small hotels.

The fruits of our labor from a day at the family farm.
Photo by Caleb Garone.

