



ANDES LEADERSHIP SEMESTER

COURSE PREPARATION MANUAL

WELCOME

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WELCOME

The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled. –Plutarch

Welcome to Dragons and HMI and the Andes Leadership Semester (ALS)! We are thrilled that you've elected to join us for this exciting collaborative program. This Course Preparation Manual is intended to introduce you to the core values of both organizations, outline the program components that will define your course itinerary, and help you prepare for the journey that lies ahead. We've included our shared philosophies, principles for responsible travel, and resources to help you make the most of your semester. Together, we hope that this manual will lay the foundation for a conversation that begins with questions about your packing list and grows into a world of inquiry about yourself, the world, and your place within it.

The Course Preparation Manual (CPM) is a compilation of our experiences abroad as travelers and instructors. There is quite a bit of information contained in these pages, and we don't expect you to absorb it all at once. If you begin to feel overwhelmed, don't worry. This CPM will act as a guide to help you navigate through the pre-course process. If you have any questions about aspects of the pre-course process or course specifics not addressed in the manual, HMI or Dragons administrators are always available to answer questions and offer suggestions.

Our philosophy towards travel is best summarized by three hopes that we hold for you: carry only what you need, learn and unlearn on your own, and avoid traveling with misconceptions and unnecessary fears. We hope the advice to follow will help you safely prepare for your journey, while leaving you open enough to be touched by the heartbeat and soul of the country in which you will travel.

PART I: OUR CORE VALUES

Both Where There Be Dragons and the High Mountain Institute have been providing experiential educational programming for over twenty years. We are excited to unite and leverage the strengths of each organization in this collaborative program to provide an advanced progression for students to build on their previous experience and leadership.

Dragons Mission Statement

Through remote, authentic, and immersive experiences, which benefit from deep and sustained personal connections to people and place, Dragons courses expose participants to a complex range of human relationships and cultivate opportunities for exploration of self, skill-building, leadership training, and development of global citizenship.

HMI Mission Statement

The High Mountain Institute engages students with the natural world. Our school boldly unites rigorous intellectual inquiry, experiential learning, wilderness expeditions, and shared responsibility in a strong community. Our students realize their potential – as leaders, independent thinkers, and thoughtful citizens.

Traveler vs. Tourist

The traveler sees what he sees; the tourist sees what he came to see. –Gilbert K. Chesterton

Both HMI and Dragons feel it is important to distinguish between travelers and tourists. Tourists take their accustomed style of life with them wherever they go. Tourists travel on predictable itineraries, collectively maintaining their “otherness,” curate an idealized version of the landscape, and tend to exoticize different cultures rather than engaging with people and sharing common bonds.

Travelers, on the other hand, adjust to the idiosyncrasies that each new environment and culture presents. Rather than simply touring a *destination*, they challenge themselves to develop a personal connection to the *place* and to engage with the nuances of the land, people, and cultures they encounter with curiosity, empathy, and adaptability. *Travelers* learn by allowing themselves to be vulnerable and opening their minds to the myriad possibilities that exist in the world.

Moving through a country as a tourist may allow for a sense of comfort and security, but we believe that buffering yourself from the spontaneity of adventure and the natural rhythm of another culture limits the authenticity of the experience and the transformative power it offers.

As an advanced course for those with significant previous experience in extended, rugged travel in a small cohort of peers, the Andes Leadership Semester asks you to accept a greater

responsibility for the progression of the semester, daily logistical needs, leading your peers, and ultimately, for your own experience. We ask that you try to set your preconceptions aside and embark on this journey with an ethos of openness, flexibility, and enthusiasm for the possibilities it offers.

Traveling Light

Leave space for treasures you find on the road. And resist that last minute urge to throw something in. Remember: memories travel best of all – and they take up no space. –Michelle Meyer

There are endless benefits, both literal and metaphorical, to packing light. Of particular note is the ease of mobility and the opportunity to experience a non-attached lifestyle. It's a chance to free yourself from the attachment to things. Packing light opens up space around you, which allows you to move fluidly in your new environment and to be present with the people and places that you encounter. In many ways, the lighter you pack, the more equipped you will be to adapt to the extraordinary experiences of travel in this ever-changing world.

On a practical level, traveling light allows small groups to easily transfer from one mode of transportation to another — on and off buses, trains, tuk-tuks, tractors, yaks, burros, and boats. It's very important that you can fit all of your belongings into one backpack (and a daypack) that you are comfortable carrying by yourself.

On a philosophical level, patience and an open mind are the most essential things you will carry. In the spirit of simple in means, rich in ends, we try to release all the noise and baggage of our frantic lives, living simply and filling our days with rich and authentic adventures, challenges, and relationships.

In this Course Preparation Manual, we provide you with a Clothing and Equipment List to help you prepare for the course. We also indicate what items are available in-country. If you have any questions about items not included on the list, you can reach out to one of the course administrators.

Traveling “Close to the Ground”

Certainly, travel is more than the seeing of sights; it is a change that goes on, deep and permanent, in the ideas of living. –Miriam Beard

As part of being travelers rather than tourists, this course emphasizes traveling “close to the ground.” This means living and moving as locals do wherever possible, in a way that is both safe and responsible. For example, we stay in homestays rather than tourist hotels to interact with communities on an intimate and personal level. We eat at local restaurants to experience authentic cuisine rather than creations made for tourists.

By adapting to the customs and culture of local communities, we've found that community members and those we meet unexpectedly “on the road” feel a deep sense of respect and admiration for the courage and curiosity of our students. Our willingness to open ourselves up to the world engenders a welcoming spirit in those who invite us into their lives. We believe

supporting local economies is a responsible way of maintaining the cultural integrity of the communities in which we travel.

Flexibility

Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in Nature, nor do children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure.

Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all. –Helen Keller

It is impossible to fully predict how your course might unfold. We adhere to a travel philosophy that values flexibility in our daily schedule and an open-minded attitude. This mindset allows us to take advantage of unexpected learning opportunities as they arise (attending village festivals, weddings, funerals) and helps us manage the unavoidable setbacks of off-the-beaten-path travel. Synchronizing our movement with the pace of local culture can feel challenging at times, but this is part of the learning process. The more you surrender to the pace of the experience, the more profound and immersive your course will inevitably become.

A Community of Shared Responsibility

We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community. – Dorothy Day

We place a strong emphasis on building a vibrant and positive community within the group. A healthy and supportive course community is the foundation that allows each participant to engage with other course components in more meaningful ways – with resilience, an open mind, and optimism.

Your group will likely consist of 8-12 students and three instructors. Traveling in a small group opens up a number of unique opportunities. For one, it enables students and instructors to build close personal relationships. This provides an important support network on course, and oftentimes the network extends far beyond course end. From a learning standpoint, traveling with a small group enables instructors to further customize the course itinerary to address specific student interests. Logistically, it allows each group to be more agile when navigating local transportation, allowing us to get off-the-beaten-path and be less conspicuous as we wind through local markets or attend a community event.

The first step in building this healthy community is for each member to conscientiously engage in the group experience. This is what we think of as “a community of shared responsibility.” It isn’t simply HMI and Where There Be Dragons and their staff who are responsible for making this course successful; rather, each individual – staff and students alike – accept that their demeanor and actions impact the experience of the whole community and actively work toward promoting a positive experience for everyone: themselves, their peers, and the group as a whole. Proactive communication, attention to punctuality, personal responsibility, and a general consideration for the needs of others will greatly contribute to the success of your experience.

This also means that we ask you to take on more responsibilities on a day-to-day level than you might expect. This includes daily chores to clean the spaces we use, cooking meals for the group, and helping out with other basic duties. This creates a culture in which everyone has

ownership over the success of day-to-day life, and everyone has an opportunity to have a large impact on the community. Even more importantly, we believe that many of these duties that in other areas of life might be considered boring, or even used as punishments, can be fun and worth taking a lot of pride in.

Finally, at various points throughout the ALS, we will facilitate more focused activities and discussions on questions about community, identity, values, and sense of purpose. Most basically, these serve to promote the continued health and growth of the course community. They also help frame and reflect on how we engage with the other communities with which we interact throughout our travels. Lastly, they are meant to help you transfer the learning you gain from this experiment in community living to other aspects of your life.

Transference

It is important that your experience on this course does not happen in a vacuum; rather, we hope you can transfer skills and ideas learned in one setting to another within the semester and from this isolated experience on the course to the rest of your life. For example, hiking and camping with a small group of peers in the backcountry can help you gain tools to improve your homestay experience. In turn, living as a guest in another family's home and local community may help you understand what kinds of values you hold about family and community life more broadly.

At various points in the course, we will provide structure times for reflection and discussion about this idea in more specific ways, and more broadly, we hope that you will think about your experience on this course as a launching point for goals, values, and passions that will continue to motivate and inspire you in future endeavors.

PART II: PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Overview of Program Components

The Andes Leadership Semester is built on the synthesis of program components from both HMI and Dragons courses – the integration of outdoor adventure with cultural exploration. These 8 program components are designed to deliver a comprehensive engagement *with the place, with the group, and with yourself*. Some of these components are specific activities, while others are broader themes that you'll consider throughout the various experiences you have along your journey.

Outdoor Adventure

In every walk with nature one receives more than he seeks. –John Muir

Central to the Andes Leadership semester is extended experience and practice in outdoor skills. The course goes into great depth to advance your wilderness travel and rock climbing skills, with the goal of moving you toward excellence and independence. Whether hiking through a breathtaking glacial valley in Patagonia or climbing newly developed routes in Peru, you practice these skills throughout the semester, encountering different environments and challenges, providing both a breadth and depth of experience. We also believe exploring the countries we visit through outdoor travel provides opportunities to connect with the natural beauty, to access remote villages, and to challenge ourselves physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Rugged Travel

Heroes take journeys, confront dragons, and discover the treasure of their true selves. –Carol Pearson

Sometimes getting “off-the-beaten-path” requires the use of creative modes of transport and a willingness to rest your head in some unusual places for a night’s sleep. Traveling in yak caravans, piling onto the back of a tractor, staying in small lodges, monasteries, yurts, or camping beneath the stars—these aren’t necessarily the most comfortable ways to travel, but they are often the most unforgettable experiences. Ultimately, you will remember the fantastic people and places that you encountered far more than the discomfort of getting to them.

During the course, you will spend extended time in each location you visit, and it is important to see the time spent traveling between these places as an integral part of the experience. It often takes long hours to get to remote locations seldom visited by outsiders. Time spent on buses or trains can be cathartic as a means to reflect and absorb the contours of the country and your station within it. Rugged travel helps facilitate a greater understanding of the gulf between central and peripheral areas, the relative isolation of various regions, and the ways in which locals move (or don’t move) within their own country. The journey and the destination are integrally related.

Homestay

I am part of all that I have met. –Alfred Lord Tennyson

During our time in Peru, students will participate in a homestay. It is an incredible honor to be welcomed into someone else's home and find yourself eating, sleeping, working, and living as the family does, oftentimes helping out with daily chores, playing with your homestay siblings, or chatting with your parents over meals. This portion of the course offers an unparalleled window into the local culture. The trust you build with your homestay family will allow you to have more in-depth conversations about history, politics or daily life; it may afford you the opportunity to participate in local celebrations or family rituals; and it will allow you to build a deeper, perhaps intangible, understanding of how it feels to live within that particular culture.

During homestays, students are often placed individually with a local family within walking distance from their co-participants and instructors. On a typical day, students eat breakfast with their homestay family before gathering in a central location for language lessons, workshops and group activities. Afterwards, students return home to spend the afternoon and evening with their family. In order to encourage students to expand their comfort zone while still feeling supported, instructors balance the time focused on group learning with opportunities for independent exploration during homestays.

Language Study

[He] who does not know another language does not know his own. –Goethe

Language skills are not a prerequisite for the Andes Leadership Semester; we will provide materials to help you get started on learning and practicing the language of the places in which you will be traveling. Instructors will give lessons to teach you the basics to get around by yourself. The more you practice, the more you learn, and the more independent you will become. Even fumbled attempts to speak the language of the country in which you travel are enormously appreciated. Often a few phrases will earn you a smile, a cup of tea, or an invitation into a home.

In order to promote skill-building, confidence and independence, most courses schedule informal daily language lessons in the early stages of the course. For those students who arrive with some language background, instructors provide more advanced language immersion opportunities.

Learning Service

*A bodhisattva is someone who has compassion within herself or himself and who is able to make another person smile or help someone suffer less. Every one of us is capable of this. –
Thich Nhat Hanh*

Learning service is a very deliberate action during the course. It is an opportunity to give back to communities that make our experiences abroad possible. Rather than adhering to a philosophy of community service which suggests that we have the experience and knowledge, we engage

in learning service. The term learning service represents our philosophy that instead of imposing ourselves on a community, we come to learn from the extensive expertise and knowledge of our hosts and to ultimately act as responsible contributors to their self-identified needs. This approach frames each opportunity as an educational experience, rather than as an opportunity to broadly “do good” without consideration of our service work’s efficacy.

Mindful of our intentions, students work closely with local mentors to contribute to a new or existing community initiative. We believe that effective, collaborative service work begins when students are guided to ask the right questions:

- Was the project initiated by the community, and is there community ownership?
- Does the project value community empowerment education over infrastructure development?
- Was the project initiated due to actual community needs or for the ease of integrating unskilled workers (us) into the tasks?
- What is the lifespan of the project, and how will it evolve once outsiders leave?

We offer students the unique opportunity to learn from local leaders, practice language skills, and gain firsthand insight into the complexities of another culture. Service projects may involve physical labor, teaching, advocacy or volunteering at a local NGO.

Nature and Society

Eternal vigilance is the price of eternal development. –Gordon B. Hinckley

What variables contribute to a high quality of life? How does privilege shape our sense of global responsibility? When can we afford to protect our dwindling resources? How do we balance competing values and interests in our decisions about natural resources? These questions are central to the conversation about how humans and the societies we form interact with the elements of nature in the 21st century. Students explore the social, political, and environmental history of the places we travel in efforts to understand the challenges of sustainable development. Through this curriculum, students will be challenged to consider their own relationship to important global issues and their capacity as leaders to address them.

Independent Study Projects (ISPs)

It is beyond a doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience. –Immanuel Kant

During the final sections of the semester, students will be paired with local mentors and are able to explore their chosen intellectual question or an artisanal craft through interviews, academic research and personal engagement. Anything is possible, and as a student, the ISP is a great way to tailor the course to meet your specific interests. We’ve had students study topics as diverse as the impact of exploratory oil drilling in the Amazon and the thousand and one uses of bamboo in Laos. If you take the opportunity seriously, this is a great way to develop place-based expertise, conduct unprecedented fieldwork, and hone your communication skills. If you

have specific thematic interests, let your instructors know and they will work to make connections and provide resources for you.

Comparative Religion & Philosophy

*We cannot live in a world that is not our own, in a world that is interpreted for us by others.
An interpreted world is not a home. –Hildegard of Bingen*

In many parts of the world, humans rely on a set of spiritual beliefs to interpret their daily reality. Our Instructors help students explore the belief systems of their host culture, exposing them to an alternate set of values and faith. Over time, students gain insight into culturally specific worldviews by living with homestay families, visiting religious monuments, observing local rituals, and reading relevant texts. Such examinations tend to spark internal conversations and inspire students to ask important conversations, like “Who am I, and why do I matter?”

PART III: HEALTH, SAFETY, COMMUNICATION & TRAVEL

Pre-Course Communication

The ALS administrative staff and course instructors will post updates regarding course preparation and development on the Yak Board: yak.wheretherebedragons.com.

Communication with Home during the Course

Our philosophy is to use technology very deliberately as a tool to improve our experience and not as entertainment. In the spirit of “simple in means” and prioritizing engagement in our immediate surroundings, we ask students to challenge themselves to leave their phones, tablets, and computers at home. If you choose to bring a phone or tablet, especially for travel-day needs, we ask you to make a commitment to not use communication technology outside of specific times and for specific purposes. In this case, we also ask that you only bring one device that can serve multiple purposes.

We strongly encourage students to not bring their personal laptops, as they will be challenging to travel with and may be damaged due to the rugged nature of travel.

During the backcountry portions of your course, you will not have access to phone or Internet service, and our expectation is that you will use your phone only for taking photos and for no other reasons. During these times, friends and family should not expect to hear from you.

During the non-backcountry portions of the semester, we will strive to schedule regular opportunities for you to update your friends and family on your adventures. Outside of these scheduled times, we expect that you will not use your phone other than as a camera unless it is an emergency. You should understand that, fundamentally, you’ll use your phone and generally be in touch with people outside the course much less than during other times in your life, and we encourage you to let others know this before the course begins.

Due to the inconsistent access to communication, we encourage families to remember that no news is good news and to be prepared not to hear from you for extended periods of time. Our administrative staff will send email updates to families every few weeks. Friends and family can also check HMI and Where There Be Dragons Facebook page, Instagram feed, and the HMI [blog](#) and Dragons [Yak Board](#) for additional updates.

Emergency Communication

Where There Be Dragons staff will be handling all emergency communications during the course. Dragons’ administrative staff has established specific emergency communication protocols for all courses. Our office maintains regular communication with groups in the field and each instructor team carries cell phones and, in some cases, satellite phones for the purpose of emergency communication. Still, all families and participants must understand that there will be times when groups will be out of reach and may not have immediate access to

communications. When groups are out of cell range, instructors may be required to hike to a hill-station phone or to contact our local operators to relay a message. While communication links such as these are most often available, they will only be utilized in the event of an emergency.

In the event that a parent needs to contact a student in the field, our administration will coordinate that communication. Throughout the season our office is open 9:00-5:00 MST, Monday to Friday. If parents call outside of office hours, they can leave a message and someone from the office will return the call as soon as possible.

Our telephone number is 800-982-9203 or 303-413-0822, Ext. 130

Important Note for Parent Travel

If parents plan on being away from home during the student's course, we ask that they send us their itinerary with phone numbers so that we may locate them in the event of an emergency. Parent contact information can be sent by email: info@wheretherebedragons.com.

Contract & Red Rules

Defining clear expectations is the backbone of creating a healthy and safe group experience. At the start of each course, the student group creates a contract and community expectations to establish and outline common goals and guidelines for the course. Group contracts have included sections ranging from logistical and safety measures like "always let somebody know where you are" to fun challenges like "try a new food every day," or "get to know somebody a little bit better every day." Many groups also choose to complement "Red Rules" with "Yellow" and "Green Rules," which are more akin to self-set guidelines. Examples of Yellow Rules include: "be culturally sensitive" or "no talking behind other people's backs." A Green Rule may be even lighter, like: "use a new vocabulary phrase every day."

The only element of the group contract that we require is the acknowledgment and acceptance of a set of safety measures called Red Rules. The breaking of any Red Rule can endanger personal and group safety and may result in a student being sent home.

Andes Leadership Semester Red Rules Include:

1. Sexual intimacy, or exclusive relationships, between group members or with other travelers or local people
2. Any activity which brings a participant into contact with things that may poison her/his blood (ie. piercing, tattoos)
3. Use of any recreational drug
4. Use of alcohol
5. Use of forbidden modes of transportation (i.e. motorcycles)
6. Abuse (physical, emotional, verbal) of self, other students, instructors, or communities

Inoculations & Health Resource Information

We do not have required immunizations other than those mandated by host countries, where applicable. However, we do strongly recommend that all travelers have current routine vaccinations, per CDC recommendations. Please remember that many of the places we travel have different exposure risks and may not have consistent vaccination standards. Arriving with current vaccinations helps to ensure your own health and safety as well as to minimize potential risks posed to the communities we visit.

Once abroad, students will be introduced to a variety of new germs. Pre-exposure inoculations and prophylactic medications, as well as natural remedies, can significantly lessen the chance of becoming ill.

Choosing pre-exposure inoculations is a personal decision that can be best informed by a professional physician trained in travel medicine. Questions to consider are the prevalence of an illness, the threat that an illness may pose, the threat that pre-exposure inoculation may pose, the risks associated with not getting pre-exposure, treatment of the illness, and finally, the cost of pre-exposure treatments. It is recommended that all students visit a physician who specializes in travel medicine. Most inoculations can be received up to three weeks before departure. We advise you to make an appointment with a travel medical specialist as soon as possible.

Having researched potential ailments across all of our Program Areas, we present the following list of illnesses that may be prevalent in the communities to which you will travel. Please do not accept this list as your only source of information, as it is just an overview of health considerations. Consider this list part of the conversation, to be incorporated with other research and to inform the conversation with your travel physician. Some of these inoculations may be covered by your medical insurance policy, but you must obtain them through your physician. Travel medicine is generally not covered by insurance. Some HMOs offer significantly discounted inoculations at a flat fee.

Furthermore, we are providing additional resource materials, such as websites to visit, numbers to call, and a guidebook, which contains excellent information on illnesses. Please discuss your findings with a physician who specializes in travel medicine (see the websites www.astmh.org and www.istm.org for a complete listing of clinics near you).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please note that neither Dragons/HMI instructors nor administrators are licensed or qualified to provide any recommendations regarding inoculations. Please do not solicit additional recommendations from us in any way. Please seek advice from a trained and licensed travel physician.

Tetanus

Tetanus (lockjaw) is a preventable but life-threatening bacterial infection that causes muscle spasms, difficulty opening the mouth (lockjaw), difficulty swallowing, and seizures. Tetanus bacteria are usually found in dirt and soil; they typically enter the body through a wound or cut. Proper vaccination prevents tetanus. Before age 6, children receive a tetanus vaccination along with other regularly scheduled immunizations. People older than 6 years should have a tetanus booster shot every 10 years; in adults, the tetanus booster is combined with the diphtheria

booster in a single shot (the Td booster). Check with your physician if you're up to date or could have the booster covered by insurance.

Diphtheria

An acute bacterial disease affecting mucous membranes or the skin. Diphtheria can lead to breathing problems, paralysis, heart failure, or death. Frequent washing & keeping the skin dry will prevent skin infection. The throat infection is prevented by a vaccination. DTaP is recommended over the older DTP for both diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis. The Td booster is a single injection that contains vaccines for tetanus and diphtheria. You should continue to get a Td booster every 10 years throughout life.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). Hepatitis A usually causes temporary liver inflammation. It is spread by ingestion of food or water contaminated by the feces of an infected person and can be easily prevented with vaccination (Havrix or VAQTA). Hep A is among the most common vaccine-preventable infections acquired during travel, but rarely fatal in young people. It mostly occurs during community-wide outbreaks in the West but is endemic throughout much of the world. A vaccine is the most effective means of preventing hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection. The vaccine provides 94% to 100% protection if you receive both of the shots in the vaccination series.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is caused by a virus that attacks the liver. The virus, which is called hepatitis B virus (HBV), can cause lifelong infection, cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death. HBV is spread when blood or body fluids from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected. The vaccine is readily available at your doctor's office or local health clinic and is considered one of the safest and most effective vaccines ever made. Three doses are generally required to complete the hepatitis B vaccine series. Usually, the first injection is given at any given time, the second injection at least one month after the first dose, and the third injection six to twelve months after the first dose.

Typhoid

Typhoid fever is a bacterial infection that can develop after a person eats or drinks contaminated food, milk, or water. Outbreaks of typhoid fever sometimes occur after natural disasters (such as fires, hurricanes, and earthquakes) when drinking water becomes contaminated with sewage. Symptoms of typhoid fever include fever, chills, cough, red rash on the abdomen, watery diarrhea, a slow heart rate, and low blood pressure. Typhoid fever can be treated with antibiotics; left untreated, it can be fatal. The vaccination is useful, but not totally effective and medical help must be sought even if vaccinated. There is an oral typhoid vaccine and a single-dose injectable vaccine that produces fewer side effects than the older two-dose injectable vaccine. Both vaccines are equally effective and offer 65% to 75% protection against the disease. The oral vaccine (Vivotif) consists of four capsules that are taken every other day over a one-week period. The oral vaccine can be given either as a first-time dose or as a booster dose. The protection should last about 5 years, at which time another booster dose would be needed if traveling again.

Meningococcal Meningitis

Some forms of bacterial meningitis are contagious. The bacteria are spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions (i.e., coughing, kissing). Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as things like the common cold or the flu and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. Vaccination through serum antibodies such as antibiotic rifampicin is recommended for travel to certain parts of Africa. Before considering this inoculation, look into the incidence of meningitis in the areas to which you will travel. Bacterial meningitis can be treated with a number of effective antibiotics. It is important, however, that treatment be started early in the course of the disease.

Polio

Polio is an infectious disease caused by a virus that lives in the throat and intestinal tract. It is spread through person-to-person contact with the stool of an infected person, often via contaminated water. One booster during adulthood is recommended to maintain immunity after childhood vaccination. Polio is still present in many developing countries in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Check with your physician to see if you're up to date. If not, the shot should be covered by insurance.

Rabies

Rabies is a uniformly fatal disease transmitted by the bite of a rabid animal. Dogs are the most common carriers of rabies. Rabies pre-exposure vaccine exists and is effective, but even with these vaccines, exposure to rabies requires follow-up therapy. The pre-exposure vaccination does not eliminate the need for additional therapy after a rabies exposure; however, it simplifies therapy by eliminating the need for human rabies immune globulin (HRIG). HRIG, suggested by the CDC as part of the post-exposure treatment, is not available in many developing countries, and families of un-inoculated students who wish to treat potential exposure with HRIG may have to evacuate to a country where HRIG is available. Students who have been inoculated with pre-exposure vaccine will most likely not need to evacuate the country if bitten. Students who have not been inoculated with pre-exposure vaccine and who require evacuation will incur evacuation costs not covered by Dragons/HMI. Rabies pre-exposure vaccine involves a series of shots which need to be started at least 1 month before departure. Please plan accordingly.

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis is a bacterial disease usually affecting the lungs (pulmonary TB) caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. A 100% effective vaccine for TB does not exist. Although the WHO recommends TB vaccination, it is not thought to be effective in preventing disease in adults. People with inactive TB infection must complete the prescribed course of medicine, which usually involves taking isoniazid for 9 months. The treatment of an active infection of TB usually requires three or more drugs; the exact medication plan must be determined by a physician. There is a risk of exposure in many of the areas in which we travel and the symptoms are not always obvious, therefore it is recommended to get a TB skin or blood test 6-8 weeks after you return from your travels if your travel included high risk exposures, such as work in crowded conditions or in a TB clinic.

Cholera

Cholera is an acute, diarrheal illness caused by infection of the intestine with the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*. The infection is often mild or without symptoms, but sometimes it can be severe. A person may get cholera by drinking water contaminated with the cholera bacterium. In an epidemic, the source of the contamination is usually the feces of an infected person. The disease can spread rapidly in areas with inadequate treatment of sewage and drinking water. At present, the manufacture and sale of the only licensed cholera vaccine in the United States has been discontinued. It has not been recommended for travelers because of the brief and incomplete immunity it offers. No cholera vaccination requirements exist for entry or exit in any country. The risk for cholera is very low for U.S. travelers visiting areas with epidemic cholera. When simple precautions are observed, contracting the disease is unlikely (www.cdc.gov). It can be easily treated with the prompt use of appropriate antibiotics.

Measles

This highly contagious virus normally grows in the cells that line the back of the throat and in the cells that line the lungs. The MMR vaccine prevents measles and two other viral diseases — mumps and rubella. These three vaccines are safe given together. MMR is an attenuated (weakened) live virus vaccine. This means that after injection, the viruses grow, and cause a harmless infection in the vaccinated person with very few, if any, symptoms. The person's immune system fights the infection caused by these weakened viruses and immunity develops which lasts throughout that person's life. More than 95% of the people who receive a single dose of MMR will develop immunity to all three viruses. A second gives immunity to almost all of those who did not respond to the first dose. These vaccines are usually given in childhood but your vaccination history should be confirmed as outbreaks are common in resource-poor settings.

Yellow Fever

Yellow fever virus, a flavivirus, is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes. Illness ranges in severity from a self-limited febrile illness to severe hepatitis and hemorrhagic fever. Yellow fever disease is diagnosed based on symptoms, physical findings, laboratory testing, and the possibility of exposure to infected mosquitoes. There is no specific treatment for yellow fever; care is based on symptoms. Steps to prevent yellow fever include use of insect repellent, protective clothing, and vaccination. Yellow fever occurs in tropical regions of Africa and in parts of South America. Yellow fever is a very rare cause of illness for U.S. travelers. The vaccine should be received at least 1 month prior to departure and is valid for 10 years, at which time a booster shot may be required. This course travels between countries that have mandatory vaccination requirements. Please know that the yellow fever vaccination or medical waiver may be required in order to travel between Bolivia and Peru during this semester. Please consult your physician for more information.

Zika

Zika virus is an emerging global health concern and is spread mostly by the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito (*Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus*). These mosquitoes bite during the day and night. Zika can be passed from a [pregnant woman](#) to her fetus. Infection during pregnancy can cause certain birth defects. There is no vaccine or medicine for Zika. Local mosquito-borne Zika virus transmission has been reported in regions of Peru and Argentina. The mosquitoes that spread Zika usually do not live at altitudes above 6,500 feet because of environmental conditions.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All Andes Leadership students are advised to minimize threats of mosquito and other insect-borne illness by applying effective repellent to the entire body daily, and by covering as much exposed skin as possible with protective clothing.

Medical Resources

- The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (<http://www.astmh.org>): Extremely comprehensive listing of travel clinics abroad, a Q&A section and other useful resources.
- The Center for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov/travel): This site has information categorized by country and disease. They will give you recommendations on vaccinations for the country you will be traveling to, and provide updated information on recent disease outbreaks. You can also call the CDC for a free booklet on international travel at (202) 512-1800.<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>
- The World Health Organization (www.who.org): This site contains updated information on disease out-breaks, and vaccination requirements for every country.<http://www.who.org/>
- The International Society of Travel Medicine (www.istm.org): This site has a great listing of travel clinics and other useful information.

Useful contacts for health and inoculation recommendations can also be found at your State Health Department or Peace Corp Volunteer office at (800) 424-8580.

Resource Materials in Print

- Manual of Travel Medicine and Health, Robert Steffen and Hubert L. Dupont, MD
- A Comprehensive Guide to Wilderness and Travel Medicine, Eric Weiss and Rod Nickell.
- Staying Healthy in Asia, Africa and Latin America, Dirk G. Shroeder.

Medical & Evacuation Policy

–Please Read Carefully–

Students will be automatically enrolled to receive emergency evacuation and supplemental healthcare coverage through International SOS.

International SOS provides emergency medical evacuation coverage as well as 24-hour medical consultation with medical professionals around the globe. They are a known industry leader in this work and we have found their services to be incredibly helpful in both emergency and non-emergency situations. Organizationally, working with a single provider allows for efficient decision making in emergency situations. It also facilitates the complex logistics of international medical care and transportation, allows for our instructors to readily consult with medical experts and logisticians, and allows for consistent care and services across program areas. As we cannot readily assess the quality of other providers, we strongly recommend that students do enroll with ISOS. If they choose to not to enroll with ISOS, they do forfeit all of these ISOS

benefits and should know that it may make for more challenging and potentially less efficient decision making in emergency medical situations. If you have been invoiced for the group policy but prefer not to be covered, please notify HMI in order to receive a reimbursement.

Insurance Synopsis for Andes Leadership Semester Participants

Our policy with International SOS offers Emergency Evacuation and Worldwide Assistance.

This coverage includes:

- Emergency Evacuation (up to \$1 million in coverage)
- 24 Hour access to ISOS physicians for medical advice, referrals, and emergency assistance
- Medically supervised repatriation (up to \$1 million in coverage)
- Access to members-only website with up-to-date country guides, and travel, health, and medical information
- Medical and Dental referrals
- Access to ISOS clinics staffed with highly trained medical personnel (does not include fees for actual medical services)
- Transportation for a family member to join a patient, and accommodation (up to \$2,500 – restrictions & fees may apply)
- Travel arrangements after an evacuation (up to \$2,500)
- Claims assistance
- Emergency translation and interpreter services (extra fees applicable)
- Lost document advice and assistance (extra fees applicable)
- Medical expenses guarantee, cost review and payment, and medical monitoring (extra fees applicable)
- Dispatch of prescription medication and medical equipment (extra fees applicable)

Please note that even with this coverage, the participant and his/her family is responsible for payment of all medical care and treatment of participants at the time of service. Please make sure you have arranged for sufficient money and for a reliable method of paying for medical emergencies on short notice while overseas (for more information, please refer to the “Spending Money” section in this manual).

It is the responsibility of the participant and the participant’s family to know the details and exclusions of the policy. All claims and disputes should be directed to the insurance providers themselves. Where There Be Dragons can assist any participant in resolving claims, but Dragons is not an active partner in the policies themselves.

Common Questions Regarding the Medical & Evacuation Policy

Q: How will on-course medical care be handled, and what happens in the event of a medical emergency?

A: All ALS instructor teams will travel with a comprehensive and well-supplied medical kit that will enable them to tend to minor illnesses and injuries. If there is a significant medical problem,

course instructors will be in direct communication with International SOS – our medical evacuation and services provider – and they will work with dispatchers and doctors to arrange immediate treatment in a recognized regional center of medical excellence.

Q: How exactly does ISOS evacuation insurance work?

A: Here's how medical treatment and, if necessary, an evacuation would work: Typically, we receive an initial diagnosis at the closest and most reliable medical facility and confer with Western physicians through ISOS to determine if the facility is recognized for proper diagnosis and treatment. If there is reason to believe that a more thorough evaluation is necessary, we will evacuate to the nearest large city with the best medical facility or travel to another country if necessary. If a student is incapacitated and needs immediate treatment or evacuation, SOS will dispatch a helicopter or flight-for-life plane and will send English-speaking medical professionals. Finally, if treatment is best served in the US or another Western country, ISOS will evacuate the patient to that country.

Our experience with ISOS has been excellent. We have found them to be extremely capable, thorough, and quick to act. For students with coverage, costs associated with medical evacuation will be covered by ISOS, with no further bill to the student or family; however, medical costs incurred once a student arrives at a medical facility are NOT covered by International SOS. The student will be required to pay up-front for medical costs. It is not the responsibility of Dragons/HMI to cover medical costs. In the event that money is required by the in-country medical facility and this money cannot be easily transferred by the student or family, we can and will make this money available. If Dragons/HMI covers these costs up-front, it will be the family's responsibility to reimburse the Dragons/HMI office upon first request. During medical care, program staff will strive to collect all relevant bills and medical receipts so that the papers can later be submitted to primary or secondary insurance companies for reimbursement. All claims and disputes should be directed to the insurance providers themselves.

Medications

Please do not bring non-prescription medications. In order to monitor your health, as well as reduce pack weight, we would like course staff to administer all non-prescription medications. We have a full selection of over the counter medications including ibuprofen, cold medication, Pepto-Bismol, and similar over-the-counter medications as need be. If you have specific non-prescription medications that you take regularly, please communicate this to us.

Prescription medications

Students will be responsible for carrying and administering their own prescription medications during the entirety of the program.

We encourage you to bring enough of your prescription medications for the entire time you are outside the US. Your medications may not be available in all the destinations we travel.

Please do not begin new prescription medications just before the program begins. It can be difficult for people to judge whether or not they are experiencing side effects from new medications while they are in a new environment (especially one as taxing as ours). Therefore, our physician-advisor strongly recommends that students **not** begin new medications just prior to the beginning of or during HMI Gap. If it is important for you to do so, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can discuss any new medications with our physician-advisor.

Please do not discontinue use of prescription medications just before starting the program without thoughtful consideration with your doctor. For similar reasons as noted above, we encourage students to consult their doctor before discontinuing any prescription medications before your course begins. If you do discontinue any prescriptions, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can discuss this with our physician-advisor.

Students with a current prescription should take the medication as prescribed. Students should not discontinue, self-titrate off, or take the medication in any way other than as prescribed.

Supplemental Medications

Supplemental medications such as broad-spectrum antibiotics are often prescribed to travelers. If you bring supplemental medications, please be sure to bring a copy of the prescription along with clearly written instructions for the administration of the medication. We require that you fill out a "Medications" form in the General Medication History and Information for any medication for which you have a prescription, whether you actually take the medication or not.

If students regularly take medications for allergies or chronic health problems, they should bring extra dosage. Students with known severe allergies that may cause anaphylaxis should bring with them a minimum of 2 anaphylactic kits. Also, students with prescription glasses should bring an extra pair, and students with contacts should bring extras along with a pair of glasses and extra solution (availability varies from country to country).

All medications brought on course will be reviewed prior to course departure, and instructors will work with the student to manage their medications. If you have questions about this, please phone the office.

Money

Participants will need money for personal expenses such as souvenirs, snacks, laundry, gifts, entry visas, and airport taxes. We suggest having access to \$50-75 per week on an ATM card and bringing some cash for back-up in crisp, new bills (folded, torn, or worn bills will often not be accepted abroad). ATMs are increasingly common in South America, and this is the most reliable way to obtain local currency. Traveler's Checks are difficult to exchange in Peru and not recommended for this program.

IMPORTANT: If relying on an ATM card, we recommend that students send themselves an email containing the PIN information, and notify the issuing bank of upcoming travel to South America. Be sure to bring either a MasterCard or Visa, as AmEx is not widely accepted in Peru.

Please do not plan on sending additional money by wire or in the mail. With our busy schedule, it will be too difficult to arrange a pick up.

NOTE ON EMERGENCY \$: The ISOS is an outstanding evacuation policy that will cover emergency response and evacuation costs; however, medical costs incurred once a student arrives at a medical facility are NOT covered by our emergency provider. If overseas medical treatment is required, the student/family will be required to pay up-front for medical care. Students are strongly advised to travel with an “emergency use only” credit card so that they may reliably cover medical emergencies on short notice while overseas. Another good option would be to have an “emergency stipend” in the debit account for those who plan on accessing their money via ATMs. You may also consider a travel insurance policy to cover other travel-related expenses, including emergency medical treatment, trip cancellation/interruption (including tuition insurance), and travel assistance. Please contact us at gap@hminet.org if you are interested in travel insurance options.

Travel Information

The Andes Leadership Semester officially begins at the airport in Balmaceda, Chile and ends in Cusco, Peru. Course instructors will meet you at the airport in Balmaceda and travel with you to the hostel (in Chile Chico, approximately 80 miles south of Balmaceda) where we will conduct our initial program orientation and prepare for the first backpacking expedition.

Travel from Balmaceda to Chile Chico is involved and includes a bus ride and a ferry, all of which we have arranged in advance. It is very important that you arrive before the time indicated below. Please note that travel from the US to Balmaceda typically takes 16-30 hours, so you will most likely have to book a flight that leaves one day before the beginning of the course. You may consider leaving even earlier, especially if you are excited to spend some time traveling independently in Chile before the course begins.

ARRIVAL:

You should plan to arrive at the Balmaceda airport (BBA) before 2pm on the day your course starts. Please see [this page](#) for the specific course dates.

DEPARTURE:

You should plan to depart from the Cusco airport (BBA) any time on the day your course ends. Please see [this page](#) for the specific course dates.

Booking Your Travel

We work with STA Travel, a travel agency that specializes in educational programming, to help students make their flight arrangements. STA can help students book flights from their city of origin to Balmaceda at the start of the course and the return to the US. As we have worked with STA to choose a “recommended itinerary,” students who purchase this itinerary will likely be flying with other students on the course.

Students are welcome to arrive in Chile earlier than the course start date and travel independently; however, HMI cannot offer any advice or support nor accept any responsibility prior to the course start.

The group will travel together from Puerto Montt, Chile to Cusco, Peru during on **March 15, 2019**.

The course officially ends the morning of the last day of the program. Students may also choose to purchase a later return flight and travel independently after the program concludes.

We will send you more detailed instructions on how to book your international travel by September 15th. Please do not book your international flights before this date.

You are responsible for purchasing your international travel by December 1st and should expect to pay \$1700 – \$2100 total. Depending on the exact details of your travel itinerary, like the origin/destination at the beginning/end of the course or a different date of a return flight, the cost of your travel may be greater than this estimate.

Special Travel Considerations

- Please ensure that your passport is valid and DOES NOT EXPIRE during the time that we will be abroad
- The US State Department publishes extensive recommendations for US citizens traveling abroad. Please visit and read thoroughly the following websites for more information about traveling in [Chile](#), [Argentina](#), and [Peru](#).

PART IV: COURSE PREPARATION

Checklist & Miscellaneous Information

Please do not be overwhelmed by all that you need to do. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Becca Schild, 719-486-8200 x115 or rschild@hminet.org.

Things to do

- () Physical Exam (Exam must have been completed within 12 months of the **start** of the Andes Leadership Semester)
- () Make Travel Plans by December 1st (please review the Travel section)
- () Review the packing list and make a list of items that you need
- () Shopping (please review the equipment information carefully. If you plan to rent any items, we appreciate knowing in advance if possible.)
- () Get in Shape! (Start by reading the Pre-Course Physical Fitness page)
- () Pack! (See the Packing List)

All the student/parent information and tuition paid in full is due by December 1, 2018. We appreciate receiving this as soon as possible.

Information we will send you soon:

- () Travel Information
- () Course itinerary – click [here](#) for a sample itinerary
- () Registration information for Western State Colorado University (only necessary if you intend to enroll for college credit)

Pre-Course Physical Fitness

Given the physically demanding nature of this course, it is important that you arrive in good physical condition. Shortly after students arrive, we head out on a wilderness expedition. You will not have time to "get into shape" once the course starts.

The vast majority of injuries that happen, especially in the first three weeks, are direct results of individuals not being in good physical condition. The likelihood of sprains and strains is dramatically increased by poor fitness. In addition, our wilderness expeditions may take us above 10,000 feet in elevation. Poor physical fitness increases the chance that an individual will experience the deleterious effects of high altitude. Again, good basic fitness can decrease the likelihood of injury and assist in acclimatization.

There are two important aspects to physical fitness. The first is cardiopulmonary efficiency. This simply requires that you be physically active for extended periods of time (30-45 min) **4 or more times per week**, for several months. This level of activity will greatly improve your general

endurance. If you are not currently active, you should begin slowly and gradually increase the intensity of exercise. A good rule of thumb for endurance training is that you should be able to talk freely (bring a friend to talk with) for most of the time you exercise. It is also valuable to incorporate short periods of higher intensity effort for 10-20% of your workout.

The second part of physical fitness is task-specific strength. Most of the activity during the course centers on rock climbing and backpacking. Swimming will help to increase your cardiopulmonary efficiency, but will not strengthen your arms and legs appropriately for rock climbing and carrying a backpack. At least half of your training should be task related; i.e. training that uses your legs over uneven terrain and training to build upper body strength. A recommended training schedule is climbing at a gym 1-2 days a week and going for brisk trail hikes with a backpack 1-2 days a week.

Your fitness training should **begin at least 6 weeks before attending the Andes Leaders Semester**. If you are playing a sport, that may help your cardiopulmonary efficiency but you will also need to get out and do task specific activities several times a week.

Our expectations of physical fitness are not intended to scare you. We simply want you to know that physical training before your arrival will greatly increase your enjoyment, particularly at the beginning of the course. It is much easier to enjoy the view or study the map carefully if you are not gasping for breath. If you have questions or would like assistance creating a training plan, please call us anytime.

Suggested Readings and Resources

The following list is a selection of resources about Patagonia and Peru. We recommend that you choose a few books that interest you and pack one or two in your backpack. Please note that we travel with a small library of books and some of these titles can be purchased in In-country.

Brokoff, Barry, with Pablo Neruda and Stephen Kessler. *Machu Picchu*.

A handsomely-produced celebration of the famed Inca site featuring photography by Barry Brokoff accompanied by a new translation of Neruda's epic poem. With 12 color, 4 bronzetone and 46 duotone photographs which communicate the mystery and intrigue of the site nestled in the cloud forest.

Chatwin, Bruce. *In Patagonia*. A travelers account of exploring Patagonia in the 1970s.

Cordes, Kelly. *The Tower: A Chronicle of Climbing and Controversy on Cerro Torre*. A riveting account of the legends and drama surrounding the history of ascents of Cerro Torre, considered to be Patagonia's most beautiful peak.

Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden*.

A thought-provoking, critical look at the West's well-intentioned but highly flawed approach to foreign aid and international development. Readers will come away with a clear sense of how orthodox methods of poverty reduction do not help, and can sometimes worsen, conditions of poverty.

Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*.

This is an excellent, incredibly thorough primer on the history of Latin America. It focuses on the effect of imperial Europe, then the United States, on the economies, politics and cultures of its citizens.

Guevara, Che. *Motorcycle Diaries: A Journey around South America*.

These travel diaries capture the essence and exuberance of the young legend, Che Guevara. In January 1952, Che set out from Buenos Aires to explore South America on an ancient Norton motorcycle. He encounters an extraordinary range of people -- from native Indians to copper miners, lepers and tourists -- experiencing hardships and adventures that informed much of his later life.

Holligan de Diaz-Limaco, Jane. *Peru In Focus*.

A basic introduction to Peru for newcomers to the country and region.

Janusek, John Wayne. *Identity and Power in the Ancient Andes: Tiwanaku Cities through Time*

The result of ten years of research, this book explores the origins, development, and collapse of this ancient state through the lenses of social identities and power relations.

Kane, Joe. *Running the Amazon*.

An exciting and insightful personal account of an expedition from the source of the Amazon (high in the Peruvian Andes) to the Atlantic. Much of the action takes place in Peru.

Kirk, Robin. *The Monkey's Paw: New Chronicles from Peru*.

A multi-faceted portrait of the nation in the 1980s and 1990s as shown through interviews of journalist Robin Kirk. She focuses on how the Shining Path guerilla movement affected the country, and how the aftershocks are still felt in Peru today.

Kolata, Alan L. *Valley of the Spirits: A Journey into the Lost Realm of the Aymara*

A journey into the spirit and history of the Aymara people of Bolivia and Peru, both in their emergence thousands of years ago in the Lake Titicaca region and their continued struggle for

representation and cultural preservation. Perhaps the only English-language account of the cosmology and traditions of the Aymara and by a renowned Tiahuanacan scholar.

Mann, Charles C. *1491: New Revelations Of The Americas Before Columbus*.

An excellent re-creation of the landscapes and cultures of the Americas before their collision with Europe. Expertly researched and presented, this is the type of book that throws aside assumptions and myth long held about the ideas of “wilderness” and “indigenous”. Its scope is broad, from the agricultural loci of Bolivia and Mesoamerica to the vast expanse of the Amazon and even to current research at the southern end of the world, in Patagonia. The result is a story that has the potential to turn our worldview on its head.

Mann, Charles C. *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*.

A follow up to Mann’s book 1491, this book explores the dramatic global changes that took place after the “discovery” of the new world, from the spread of people and ideas to diseases and plants that transformed the modern world. A fascinating account of a collision of cultures, ideas, and organisms that continues to define important contemporary disputes from immigration to trade policy to globalization.

Matthiessen, Barry. *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*.

A classic, superb and true-to-life novel about the conflict between the forces of “development,” evangelization, and indigenous peoples.

McDonald, Bernadette, Editor. *Extreme Landscapes: The Lure of Mountain Spaces*.

Essays and accounts ranging in subject from culture, spirituality, and psychology from renowned writers, adventurers, and scientists who share a passion for extreme environments.

Parris, Matthew. *Inca Kola*.

A hilarious, tongue-in-cheek account of the backpacking author’s travels in Peru.

Schneebaum, Tobias. *Keep the River on Your Right*.

A true autobiographical account of a Manhattan painter’s foray into the Peruvian Amazon and his life for a year with a remote tribe during the first half of the 20th Century. This adventure is most notorious for his exposure to, practice of, and reflections on cannibalism. It is now available as a documentary DVD as well.

Shah, Tahir. *Trail of Feathers*.

Seeks to uncover what lays behind the “birdmen” legends in the Peruvian desert, eventually leading the author into the remote Amazon. It’s an amusing, insightful look into Peruvian culture, beliefs and peoples.

Simpson, Joe. *Touching the Void*.

A true, harrowing account of a mountaineer who survived a terrifying accident in Peru’s Cordillera Huayhuash. This is also a film.

Starn, Orin et. al. *The Peru Reader, History, Culture, Politics*.

A lively anthology on the history and culture of Peru that ranges from historical accounts to modern analysis. It’s a comprehensive introduction to the country, with selections made by a panel of Peruvian and foreign experts.

Thomson, Hugh. *The White Rock*.

An explorer’s search for Inca archaeological sites throughout the Peruvian Andes, ending at Machu Picchu. It includes a lot of background about earlier travelers and explorers.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. *The Storyteller*.

Part mystery, part fictional biography, part travelogue, part ethnological study, this intriguing tale draws the reader into its onion-like structure. A masterful novel by Peru’s most renowned author.

Clothing and Equipment List

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- 1) Typically, students bring more than they need. We have very limited capacity for luggage and storage during the semester. Your large backpack (at least 75 liters) and one small duffel or travel bag should easily hold all your belongings!
- 2) We spend a lot of time during the ALS living out of our backpacks. We are able to carry everything we need for weeks at a time. As a result, when we return from the field, a few additional items feel like real luxuries. So in the spirit of "simple in means, rich in ends," please limit the quantity of stuff you bring with you. At the same time, failure to bring the right equipment will directly impact your ability to get the most out of your experience.
- 3) The emphasis for the course is on comfortable, practical, appropriate clothing that demonstrates respect for our varied learning environments and the communities we visit. All clothes should be clean, neat, and in good repair. Some of the places we travel may have more conservative views on what is considered appropriate attire. Out of respect for these communities, please avoid bringing particularly provocative and/or revealing clothing. We ask students not to bring or wear shorts that do not cover the mid-thigh, notably tight clothes, and/or clothing with labels or images that could be considered offensive.
- 4) We will be traveling through many different climates during the semester. The areas we go are all known for having highly variable and challenging weather. You should generally be prepared for weather to change dramatically and be more severe than general climate descriptions might convey. During any given semester, you will likely experience conditions as cold as 20°F (or possibly colder) and as warm as 80°F (and possibly warmer). In addition, our courses have experienced strong winds (gusting upwards of 70mph), significant snowfall (2 feet or more), periods of heavy rain that last several days, as well as hot, dry conditions with very strong sunlight (Please note that Patagonia has a very thin ozone cover, and the sun can be extremely intense). We have thought very carefully through the equipment we recommend to help you to take excellent care of yourself and continue participating fully in all course activities through these extreme weather variations.
- 5) You will have a chance to do laundry once each week that we are not in the field, so you should probably bring about 7 days' worth of socks and underwear. However, you do not need to bring a week's worth of casual/travel clothes as you can wear the same item several times before needing to wash it.
- 6) You will need all of the items on this list for the semester. It is very important that you can wear all of your layers at the same time. If you cannot wear them at the same time, your clothing will be too tight and constrict blood flow, and therefore not keep you warm. Your sizes may need to be progressively larger in size to accommodate this. Lightweight and compressible clothing and equipment will make your pack lighter and easier to pack.
- 7) Please put your name on your belongings, as everyone will be bringing similar equipment.

PACKING AND EQUIPMENT LIST (Part 1)

BACKPACK AND OTHER STORAGE BAGS

- Backpack at least 75 cubic liters (Please read the Equipment Information page very carefully.)
- 3 Heavy Duty Trash Compactor or Contractor plastic bags
- Medium travel duffel (45-70 liters) OR crag pack (45-70 liters to bring during climbing or work days)
- 1-2 Small Stuff Sacks (These help you organize items in your pack. These are optional.)
- Zip-Lock® Bags (1 Gallon size, to protect cameras, books and toiletries in your backpack.)

SLEEPING GEAR

- Sleeping Bag (synthetic, 0 degree) (Please read the Equipment Information page very carefully.)
- Compression Stuff Sack (large stuff sack with 3-4 straps, used to compress your sleeping bag)
- Sleeping Pad, full length (Closed cell foam pad or Therm-A-Rest®.)
- Sleeping Pad Stuff Sack (optional)

BOOTS AND FOOTWEAR

- Hiking Boots (Please read the Boot Fitting Information page very carefully.)
- Wool or Synthetic Socks: 5-6 pairs
- Gaiters (full-length, long)
- Running Shoes and/or Approach Shoes
- Athletic Socks (to wear with your running shoes/sneakers): 4-6 pairs
- Rock Climbing Shoes (These should be comfortable enough to wear on long climbing days, up to 8 hours. You are welcome to bring 2 pairs of climbing shoes if you wish to accommodate varied climbing terrain).
- Sandals, optional (ideally, ones with straps such as Chacos)

LOWER BODY LAYERS

- Shorts (nylon, athletic, and/or hiking/climbing shorts): 2-3
- Climbing Pants (durable, stretchy, cotton is acceptable): 1-2
- Casual Pants (jeans, slacks for travel and in-town days): 1-2
- Expedition or Mid-weight Long Underwear Bottoms (Patagonia Capilene®, other synthetic, or wool)
- Puffy Pants (recommended, such as Black Diamond Stance Belay Pants) or expedition-weight fleece pants
- Wind Pants (synthetic, such as Patagonia Tribune Pants, could be used as climbing pants)
- Rain Pants (such as Patagonia Rain Shadow Pants)
- Underwear (Cotton underwear is better than nylon for women. Most women prefer sports bras): 7

UPPER BODY LAYERS

- Cotton T-shirts/Tank Tops: 3-4
- Nicer Shirts (for in-town and travel days): 1-2
- Sweatshirt or Long-sleeve Cotton Shirt (optional): 1
- Synthetic T-shirts to hike in (such as Patagonia silk weight t-shirt or a cotton shirt): 1-2
- Long-Sleeve Sun-Shirt (old collared button down works really well)
- Expedition or Mid-Weight Long Underwear Top (such as Patagonia R1 or Capilene®)
- Fleece Pullover, or Fleece Jacket (such as Patagonia R2, other synthetic, or wool)
- Expedition weight Synthetic “puffy” or Down Jacket (such as Black Diamond Stance Belay Parka)
- Hooded Rain Jacket (such as Patagonia Rain Shadow)
- Wind layer (such as Patagonia Houdini) - optional

Packing and Equipment List (Part 2)

HEAD LAYERS

- Wool, Fleece, or Synthetic Hat
- Sun Hat (we recommend a full coverage hat as the sun is very intense, but a baseball hat will work).
- Sunglasses (lenses must block 100% UV rays. If you wear glasses instead of contacts, we recommend prescription sunglasses.)
- Case for Sunglasses (optional)
- Eye Glass / Sunglass Retainer Strap
- Prescription Glasses and Contacts (If you wear them, bring a spare pair as back-up)

HAND LAYERS

- Mid-Weight Fleece or Wool Gloves
- Work gloves and/or belay gloves

MISCELLANEOUS PERSONAL GEAR

- Passport: The most important thing on the list! Please also bring 2 passport copies.
- Student ID Card: [The International Student ID Card](#), or ISIC, provides significant discounts at Peruvian archeological sites. A high school or college ID will also work, but not necessary if you do not have a valid student ID.
- Security Wallet/Belt: You'll want to keep your passport, ATM card, and other valuables in a secure wallet or belt that's well-attached to your body. Eagle Creek makes good products.
- Headlamp (lightweight and durable LED model, such as Petzl® Tikka or Black Diamond® Cosmo)
- Notebook and pens
- 2 1-Liter Water Bottles (wide mouth liter bottles)
- Half-liter Nalgene® water bottle for use as a cup (preferable to have a cup that seals)
- Plastic Bowl (16 oz. Nalgene® Lexan wide mouth container with lid or similar Tupperware®)
- Lexan or Plastic Spoon (No knife or fork needed.)
- Water Purification System: You will be purifying most of your water, and adequate water purification is a must. SteriPens are a good option. They use UV-light rather than chemicals to neutralize harmful contaminants in water. We recommend the models that have an internal rechargeable battery (be sure to bring extra batteries for older models). If you bring a SteriPen, you will also need an additional purification system for back up. We recommend either Polar Pure (iodine-based) or AquaMira (chlorine-based) in addition to a SteriPen. If you do not bring a SteriPen, chlorine-based purification is preferable to iodine for extended use. PLEASE NOTE THAT WATER FILTERS ARE NOT PARTICULARLY USEFUL GIVEN THE VARIETY OF ENVIRONMENTS WE WILL BE TRAVELING THROUGH. Be sure to test your SteriPen before the program, and ensure it is compatible with your water bottles (wide-mouthed).
- Lip balm (SPF 15 or greater)
- Sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater)
- Bandanas (2)
- Lighters (2-3 small disposable lighters work fine.)
- Toiletries: Basic toiletries are easily available in-country, so don't bring big bottles. If there are specialty items you want, consider bringing a supply of these items for the whole course. For women, feminine hygiene products (pads and tampons) are available in-country, but bring a small supply (or consider a Diva/Moon Cup). As for soap, Dr. Bronner's makes incredibly versatile biodegradable soap that can be used to wash yourself, your dishware, even your hair. This is especially good for camping, so as to avoid polluting the areas we visit.
- Towel
- Watch (waterproof athletic type; should have an alarm on your watch)
- Personal prescription medication(s) (must be listed on student's medical form)
- Camera and Extra Film (Avoid heavy lenses. 35mm compact cameras or single use cameras are usually sufficient.)
- Extra Camera Batteries
- Personal Climbing Harness (Please make sure it is in great condition and know that we may ask you to replace it if it does not meet our safety standards. Some good, inexpensive harnesses are the Black Diamond Momentum or Primrose harness.)

- ❑ Chalk bag

THINGS TO BRING ONLY IF YOU ALREADY OWN THEM

- ❑ Climbing Helmet (we will provide helmets, but if you prefer to bring your own, make sure it is in great condition and know that we may ask you to not use it if it does not fit our safety standards).
- ❑ Belay Device (we will provide belay devices, but if you prefer to bring your own, make sure it is in great condition and know that we may ask you to not use it if it does not fit our safety standards).
- ❑ Camelback or other Hydration Pack, optional

OPTIONAL

- ❑ Books to read
- ❑ Small pillow
- ❑ Crazy Creek
- ❑ Umbrella: great for both rain and sun!
- ❑ Small backpack padlock: This can be purchased in South America, but it can be useful to have a way to secure your bags
- ❑ Play cards, dice, travel games
- ❑ Duct tape: wrap around your water bottle, and pull it off as you need it
- ❑ Probiotics: probiotics are essential for digestive health. Consider bringing a supply for daily use on the trip. Jarrow makes a complex probiotic in pill-form that does not need to be refrigerated.
- ❑ Ear plugs

Shopping Tips

One of our mantras is "simple in means, rich in ends," and we encourage students not to spend a lot of money on new equipment. One could easily spend thousands of dollars, shopping blindly for all of the equipment needed for the ALS. Instead, consider borrowing gear from friends and family and hunt for sales online.

In addition to the above suggestions, there are plenty of retail stores & web sites that offer good deals. There are many good stores out there. Try local shops that carry brand names such as Black Diamond®, Mont-Bell®, Patagonia®, and North Face® etc. We also recommend considering some of the following national stores:

Backcountry.com

www.backcountry.com

We've partnered with Backcountry.com to provide a great resource for equipment purchasing and questions. HMI students receive 15% off MSRP (some exclusions apply). In order to receive the discount, or if you have any gear related questions, please contact Nick Wrzesinski at the below email or phone number and mention you are enrolled in an HMI program. Ben also serves as a resource to help you purchase the right equipment, and we encourage you to reach out to him with questions as you purchase your gear.

Nick Wrzesinski
Customer Account Manager
nwrzesinski@backcountry.com
801-746-7564

Black Diamond**www.blackdiamondequipment.com**

They offer mail-order service and many outdoor stores sell their products. Their clothing and equipment are very well designed. Black Diamond has been very generous to HMI, so please support them as much as you can.

REI**www.rei.com**

You can find REI stores around the country, or use their mail-order services. They have a wide selection of reliable clothing and equipment and have an excellent return/exchange policy.

EMS**www.ems.com**

There are many EMS stores around the country, especially on the east coast.

Sierra Trading Post**www.sierratradingpost.com**

They offer discounts on factory seconds, closeouts, and overstocked items from many companies. This is a great catalog to double-check before paying more elsewhere.

Please pay careful attention to our description of each item you will need, and be sure to follow our guidelines when considering a substitute. If you are confused or unsure, give us a call at 719-486-8200. Feel free to call us directly from a store, and we will talk with you and/or the sales clerk. Ask for Becca at ext. 115 or Justin at ext. 111. Remember, the sales staff people are usually educated by sales reps from the equipment manufacturers. Our descriptions are informed by the significant field experience of the our faculty working with students on backcountry expeditions to the places we actually go.

Clothing Details

Please pay careful attention to our description of the following items you will need, and be sure to follow our guidelines when considering a substitute.

THE ART OF LAYERING

Having the proper clothing on your Semester expeditions is the key to your comfort. By using the "layering" principle, you will be comfortable in a wide variety of conditions. The secret to this approach is to wear just the right amount of insulation to match your workload. Insulation comes from trapped air in the fabric fibers and between each layer. The recommended fabrics will keep their loft when wet and, therefore, keep you warm. Cotton will not keep you warm. The following is the best system for your layering technique:

1. BASE LAYERS

The inner layer should be something thin and light such as a T-shirt or long underwear made of wool or a synthetic fabric such as polypropylene or Capilene®. These fabrics are effective at wicking moisture away from the skin. Cotton T-shirts are cool when hiking, but cold when wet. If you perspire heavily as you hike, it will be to your benefit to have a dry layer to put on when you stop.



Examples of base layers: Patagonia Capilene® 2 (pictured), Smartwool

Midweight NTS®, Marmot Midweight®, Arc'teryx Rho AR®

2. MID-WEIGHT INSULATION

The next layer is the insulation layer for warmth. Sweaters, shirts, pullovers, tights and pants made of polar fleece, polypropylene, or wool are the most effective insulators. An alternative 2nd layer is a lightweight synthetic fill jacket. Colder students are encouraged to bring an additional 2nd layer.

Examples of 2nd layers: Patagonia R2® or R4® (to right in black), Smartwool Wintersport®, Marmot Reactor®, Arc'teryx Delta SV®, North Face Denali® Jacket

Examples of alternative/additional 2nd layers: Patagonia Nano-puff, Mountain Hardwear Compressor Jacket (shown in red)



3. HEAVY INSULATION

Given the typically colder conditions we are camping and traveling in, we recommend bringing an expedition synthetic or down jacket and down pants. Synthetic layers are more durable than down. For pants, expedition-weight (i.e. the warmest thickness) fleece would be acceptable with additional insulation, rain, and wind pants.



Examples of heavy insulation: Stance Belay Parka and Stance Belay insulated pants.

4. OUTER LAYERS

The outer layer protects the other layers and yourself from the wind and rain. This layer includes rain gear and wind pants.

RAIN SHELL SPECIFICS

You must bring a hooded rain jacket and rain pants. Both of these items must be waterproof. Rain layers should fit over all of your other layers, so you will most likely need these in a size larger than you normally wear. Be sure the jacket comes below your waist and has a good hood. In the spring semester, this jacket will also serve as your ski jacket. For rain pants, it is very nice to be able to put them on over your boots, so look for a pair with a zippered cuff.

When buying rain gear, be careful. The outdoor clothing industry has varying ideas of what is waterproof. Some of the very lightweight nylon jackets will not keep the rain out. In addition, ponchos are not acceptable. Whatever you buy, it must be waterproof. Verify its waterproof-ness by pouring water on it or by holding the material up to your mouth and attempting to breathe through the fabric. If you cannot move air through the material, then most likely water cannot move through it either.

The bottom line: Look for rain gear that is made of coated nylon or Gore-Tex®. A synthetic shell of Gore Tex® works well as a raincoat. Gore-Tex® is expensive but highly wind and waterproof while still being somewhat breathable.



Examples of rain gear: Patagonia Rain Shadow® (shown at right), REI Ultra Light® Jacket, Arc'teryx Alpha SL® or Beta AR®, Marmot Precip®, Montbell Particle® or Versalite®

WIND/HIKING PANTS

Wind pants are lightweight, breathable, nylon pants, including soft shell hiking pants. They do not need to be waterproof. They should be large enough to wear over all of your layers. Side zippers on the legs are especially nice for putting them on and off over hiking boots.

Examples of wind/hiking pants: Patagonia Guide Pants, REI Sahara Convertible® Pants (shown at right), REI Acme® Pants, Marmot DriClime®, Arc'teryx Gamma LT® Pants



Sleeping Bags

We recommend synthetic filled sleeping bags (e.g. Quallofil®, Hollofil®, Polarguard HV®, etc). We do not recommend down sleeping bags. If they get wet, they cease to insulate and can take days in the field to dry. For this reason, we will not allow students to use down sleeping bags on expeditions and we will require them to rent one of our synthetic bags. You will want a sleeping bag that is rated to 0° F. The overall weight of your sleeping bag should be about 4 to 4 ½ pounds. If it is much heavier than that, it may not compress well in a stuff sack. It is essential that you choose a sleeping bag that has a hood to go around your head. The hood makes a big difference in keeping you warm at night.

Examples of sleeping bags: Mountain Hardwear Lamina® 0°F (shown at bottom left), Montbell Super Stretch Burrow Bag® #0 (shown at bottom right), Big Agnes Whiskey Park® 0°F, Sierra Designs Nahche® 0°F



Pack Purchasing & Fitting

EXPEDITION BACKPACKS

You will want to purchase an internal frame backpack. Your backpack should have a minimum capacity of 5000 cubic inches (75+ liters). It should also have a top pocket (often called the “brain”). The shoulder straps and hip belt should be well padded. Look for a pack that has minimal straps, zippers, and side pockets. These simply add unnecessary weight.

Regardless of what brand you purchase, please be sure the salesperson takes time to fit your backpack properly to your back. Frame size is important and will affect your comfort when you are carrying a full pack. Many companies size their packs by your height. This can work, but it is best to measure your torso length (shoulders to just above your hips). If you are a smaller person, a 5000 cubic inch pack may be too big for your frame. Purchase the biggest pack that ALSO fits your torso. As a reference, someone who is 5'10" usually uses a medium size frame. Be aware also that your waist size may differ from your frame size. When determining your waist size, measure the narrowest part of the waist (generally around where the belly button is). The waist belt does not go directly around this part of the waist, but will slide down to

balance on the hip bones. It is necessary to find a pack that fits both your torso and your waist comfortably.

There are also packs specifically designed for women. These packs are shorter in the torso, wider in the hips, and narrower in the shoulders. For smaller women in particular, it is worth trying these packs. Again, if you are a small person, choose the biggest pack that fits you (it may be a little less than 5000 cubic inches if you are five feet tall). In the end, fit is much more important than capacity, and it is fine to choose a smaller pack.

That said, don't be afraid to go big on space. It does not mean that you will carry more. It means that you will have a much easier time packing your pack, especially with cold hands. Remember, you can cinch down a pack to make it smaller, but you cannot make it bigger. (Strapping additional gear to the outside of your pack is not a good option.)

Examples of backpacks: Black Diamond Mission® 75, Osprey Aether® 85, Osprey Xinit® 105, Gregory Baltoro® 85, Gregory Deva® 85 (shown at right), Osprey Xena® 85, Arc'teryx Bora® 95



There are many other good packs out there; however, keep in mind that you should not have to spend more than \$350-\$450 on a quality pack and sub-\$300 options exist.

MEDIUM DUFFEL BAG OR CRAG PACK

We suggest a second travel bag that serves to carry all of your stuff while traveling (45-70 Liters). Alternatively, you could have a smaller "crag pack" that serves this purpose and can be used for all day activities if you don't wish to use your larger pack.

Examples of duffel bags: Patagonia Black Hole Duffel (shown right), Camp Rox Pack, or Black Diamond Demon.



Boot Fitting Information

Your hiking boots may be the most important piece of equipment you will buy. You can avoid many foot problems (blisters, cold feet, etc.) by purchasing properly fitted boots. Please take extra time and care when buying your boots. Our information on boot fitting is relatively universal. If you end up with a salesperson that does not understand these instructions, switch to someone else. (Often times, salespeople do not understand the kind of terrain and weather you will encounter during the Semester. When in doubt, follow our instructions, not that of the clerk in the store. Remember that he/she has probably never been an ALS student.)

WHAT TO BUY

You should purchase a sturdy, off-trail, backpacking boot, not a mountaineering boot. They should be a medium to heavyweight, ankle-high boot that provides good support for off-trail hiking. Please fit your boots for 1 pair of heavy socks or a liner sock and medium socks. You are likely to end up wear just wearing just a medium weight pair of socks but you may want the extra cushioning and warmth that a heavy pair of wool socks provides. In addition,



on extended backpacking trips, feet tend to swell slightly, so larger boots provide more flexibility.

We recommend the following boots: Asolo TPS 520 GV® (shown at right), Merrell Perimeter Gore-Tex®, Asolo Power Matic 200, Vasque St Elias GTX, Lowa Mauria GTX

If you find different boots of comparable quality and construction, they may be fine. Please call if you have any questions.

TIPS FOR FITTING YOUR BOOTS:

- 1) Shop for boots in the afternoon because your feet swell during the day.
- 2) Boots that are too small will cause more problems than boots that are too large. Start with a boot that is one size larger than your normal shoe size.
- 3) Boots should fit comfortably with one pair of heavy wool socks or a pair of liner socks and a medium weight pair of hiking socks. Please do not let the salesperson talk you into wearing only a thinner pair of socks. In our experience, many students who have had foot problems bought boots that were fitted with one pair of thinner socks.
- 4) Most likely, the boot that fits you best will feel a little large and look huge. When you walk around the store, your heel should lift up slightly, but not be sloppy. Your toes should have enough room to wiggle.
- 5) Once you have found a pair of boots that feel comfortable walking around the store, test them for a proper fit. Lace the boots (snug but not tight) and then kick your foot against the wall. Your toes should just nudge the front of the boot on the 3rd kick. If your toes hit on the 1st or 2nd kick, the boots are too small. (You do not want your toes to jam into the front of your boot when walking downhill.)
- 6) Finding the proper fit takes time. Please be patient. It is worth it to try on lots of different boots because different brands and models fit differently. Their internal shapes vary. Also, do not forget to try a size larger.
- 7) Remember, sizing bigger is better. As they are broken in, leather boots will actually shrink over the years.
- 8) Be aware that replacement insoles such as Super Feet® can change the way a boot fits by raising the height of your heel in the boot. It is best to try on boots with the insoles you plan on using. If you have foot problems or concerns, see a podiatrist to be accurately diagnosed and properly treated. If you do use orthotics or insoles such as Super Feet®, please bring the original insoles to your boots with you to the course.

WHAT NOT TO BUY

Please do not buy lightweight hiking boots. Remember, you want a backpacking boot that is made to support you while carrying a heavy backpack. You may be hiking off trail through terrain such as loose gravel, snow, scree, mud, streams, and tall, wet grass for 7-14 days in a row.

NEW BOOTS

Once you have new boots, there are a few things you should do: Waterproof them by putting several coats of SnoSeal® or Nikwax® on them (unless they are Gore-tex); and break in your new boots by walking or hiking in them before the course starts (see the fitness plan).

PART V: CULTURE IN PATAGONIA AND PERU

Cultural Differences

“It is not our differences that divide us.

It is our inability to recognize, accept and celebrate those differences.” –Audre Lorde

A Note on Inclusivity

Dragons and HMI welcome all participants regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or political persuasion. Our instructors are committed to fostering a healthy, supportive group culture that embraces diversity and values safety, open communication, and mutual respect for every individual.

It is important to remember that we travel in places where we may encounter views and values that differ from our own. As guests in foreign communities, we expect our students to show respect to one another, to host families, and to local customs as they would in their own country. Sometimes this means adhering to different social norms in unfamiliar and even uncomfortable ways. Our goal is to build empathy and provide a supportive environment for all our students while respecting the laws and traditions of those we meet on our travels.

Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural sensitivity is among the most important themes that we stress on this course. While traveling, it is important to keep in mind that you are a visitor and a guest, and that the historical and cultural idiosyncrasies you will experience and learn about are deep and complex. We become ambassadors for our own countries when we travel, and we will be seen as cultural representatives by many people we meet. Stereotypes may exist on both sides of the cultural divide. Remaining conscious of your actions and how they might affect the people around you will go a long way toward engendering mutual understanding and respect. We recommend that you approach your course with a genuine and unbiased desire to explore that which is unknown to you. The more willing you are to be vulnerable and open, the more likely you are to thrive.

Travel can provide a fresh perspective on our own lives, identities and cultural norms. The more willing we are to step beyond our familiar worlds, the better equipped we are to understand the places we travel and to act in a respectful manner. While it's only natural that you will make cultural mistakes, culture is neither as rigid or pliant as we might think. Social norms the world over are always in flux. In order to prepare you for your trip to South America, we've included some guiding principles on cultural cues to help you navigate in-country. As you read the following sections, please keep in mind that cultural sensitivity is especially important in rural areas where traditions are strong and there is less exposure to Western culture.

While the following is an introduction to the types of experiences you'll encounter in Patagonia and Peru, you'll also discover regional differences, unique customs and subtle societal variations. Your instructors will provide a country specific “cultural orientation” at the start of the course.

Size and Volume

North Americans tend to be “big” people – not necessarily in terms of mass, but rather in the amount of physical and audio space consumed. In many parts of Patagonia and Peru, especially in traditional highland areas of Peru, people tend to speak with less volume, allow for more silence, and use less space. Think about how your daily routines would change if you shared your bedroom with several siblings. Try sitting cross-legged instead of sprawling out in front of the TV. Try minimizing the space that your personal items occupy. Try speaking quietly. And conversely, be prepared to experience a different concept of “personal space.” You may find yourself squeezed into impossible spaces on public transportation, or that a homestay sibling crawls eagerly into your lap after you’ve just met.

We encourage you to be curious and inquisitive. Try to understand why certain customs emerge in particular ways. But bear in mind, every person, every community, and every country is unique. So while cultural norms do exist, broad generalizations can also be limiting.

Views about the Body

Within Latin American culture, people can sometimes be quite direct when referencing body type. It is common for nicknames to signify a person’s appearance in an endearing way, i.e. “flaquita” (skinny woman or girl) or “gordito” (fat man). These labels are generally not considered disrespectful, and can in fact be flattering; gaining weight, for example, can be perceived as a sign of economic success, enabling an individual to consume more meat and heavier foods. In fact, traditional indigenous clothing for women in the Andean highlands is designed to accentuate a round body-type, with multiple skirts and petticoats giving the impression of a heavier figure. While modern Patagonia and Peru have certainly been heavily influenced by Western cultural norms around body type and beauty, you may come across traditional Andean perceptions of beauty that challenge Western stereotypes. Similarly, do not be surprised if a homestay family member or local acquaintance comments endearingly on your own appearance or body type – this is usually a gesture of warmth and respect!

Greeting and Touching

In Latin America in general - the typical greeting between women and between members of the opposite sex is a kiss on the cheek. Men commonly greet each other with a handshake followed by a pat on the shoulder. Among many indigenous cultures of Latin America a handshake is preferred; feel free to take cues from your instructors or local people around you to identify the appropriate greeting.

In urban areas, public displays of affection are common, and you will often see young couples cuddling on the street or in parks and plazas. Highland indigenous communities tend to be more reserved, and in these areas you will rarely see men and women touching in public.

Views of Women and Gender Relations

Gender roles have developed uniquely in different parts of Patagonia and Peru, and are evolving in different ways. Due to the lasting influence of the Spanish conquest and colonial period, Latin American society is known for being “Machista,” meaning men have a dominant role in business and decision-making and women are often associated with caregiving responsibilities within the home. Today, these norms are being openly challenged and women assume a variety of critical roles in the public sphere. Machismo can still be observed in

different forms, and it is not unusual for men to catcall women in the street or comment on their appearance.

Being predominately Catholic, views around gender identity and LGBTQ rights tend to be quite conservative. That being said, there is a growing debate around gender diversity in Latin America, leading to increased tolerance in some spheres.

The proliferation of North American media throughout the world - through films, music and television shows – has contributed to misrepresentations of this culture, especially regarding women. In some cases, forwardness and direct communication in simple conversation can be perceived as flirtatious and support the stereotype of foreign women as permissive. Be aware that behaviors and clothing that may be appropriate for local women might be interpreted differently when performed by a foreign woman. For example, you may see young local women wearing short skirts or tank tops in a city like Lima and Santiago, but a North American woman wearing the same outfit may be perceived as less respectable. In our experience, it is highly advisable that women dress as modestly as possible. Tight shirts, yoga pants and short skirts or shorts can be (mis)interpreted as a strong moral statement, especially in rural settings.

Learning about the gender norms in the region in which you are traveling will help open doors to deeper relationships, engender mutual understanding and help break down mutual ignorance and bias. This is not to say that all students shouldn't be open and friendly and share their own views when appropriate regarding gender norms and identity. We encourage you to simply be aware of who you are talking with and how your speech, dress and body language might be interpreted in comparison to local people.

Pointing

Pointing can be considered rude in Latin America, and people often gesture with their lips instead. If you do need to call someone over, do so with your palm facing down in a small gesture.

Health & Safety

While there are risks inherent to traveling, if we understand these risks it is possible to minimize them. The only thing that surpasses the quality of the educational experience is our attention to safety. We have an outstanding safety record because instructors know the country, the language, and the quality of local medical facilities. This enables the group to travel confidently and handle problems quickly when they arise. Instructors discuss risk with students as a component of responsible travel.

While everyone can expect to have at least one bout of diarrhea during the course, staying healthy while traveling in South America is not as difficult as you might fear. Taking care to drink purified water, paying extra close attention to personal hygiene (washing hands and clothes, cleaning fingernails, not sharing utensils or water bottles), being careful about what you eat and drink, getting enough rest, and keeping a positive attitude are all keys to staying healthy. Follow the directions of your instructors to prevent illness and to help you recover if you get sick. We advise all participants to consult a doctor specializing in travel medicine before your course and to reference the list of inoculations to consider that we have provided earlier in this manual.

Most areas that you will be traveling through will likely have a crime rate that is lower than your hometown. Still, pick-pocketing and other petty crimes are common in cities and especially in tourist areas. Just like in many Western cities, traveling alone after dark is never advised. Instructors will discuss safety guidelines with students and establish rules to promote safety on all courses. The key to safety is to be aware of your surroundings and your place within them.

Food

Exploring the local food will be a highlight of our travels. The Andes geographic diversity provides a range of local cuisines. However, in isolated Andean towns and villages, the food is oftentimes simple and repetitive. Learning about cuisine and the customs around growing, preparing, cooking, and eating meals is an adventure of its own. You will encounter foods that you haven't tried, or even considered trying. But as long as you follow health guidelines and make sure food is properly cooked, being an adventurous eater can become one of the most satisfying aspects of your course. At the same time, it will be important to maintain a balanced diet. What you eat is intrinsically linked to your health, and your diet can be directly related to your wellbeing. Supplementing your diet with sweets and soda will not keep you healthy, and most likely make the adjustment to South America more difficult.

Dietary restrictions can be accommodated for the most part on course, but students with severe restrictions or allergies should consider bringing their own backup supply of compact, concentrated foods they can eat. While the local diet is quite meat heavy, a vegetarian diet can be accommodated. Locally available protein alternatives include eggs, lentils, and quinoa.

Staying hydrated is possibly the most important thing you can do for your body while traveling, especially during the more physical portions of the semester. You will be purifying most of your water, so it is essential that you bring a reliable water purification system (see the packing list for more information).

Dress & Modesty

You will quickly notice that people in the Andes tend to dress more modestly than perhaps we are accustomed to. The way we present ourselves as individuals, and as a group, while traveling will set the tone for how we will be received by others. Rather than being restrictive, we take the position that respecting modest cultural standards goes a long way toward opening doors, making friends, and preserving cultural integrity within a host country. Please don't be offended if at some point during the course one of your instructors asks you to change into a more modest shirt or pair of pants; they are only doing so to make your experience in-country more positive. We request that students do not bring revealing tops and short shorts or skirts.

Cleanliness

Streets in South America may be dirtier than your hometown, and don't be surprised to see dogs, cows, chickens, and even people sifting through piles of trash. On the other hand, pay attention to the degree to which people take care to clean and neatly present their homes, shops, clothes, bodies and hair. Chances are, you will see few people other than the obviously destitute wearing ripped or stained clothing. Our own personal hygiene and the degree of care

we show ourselves and our belongings reflect cultural sensitivity as well. In Peru, especially, it is respectful to appear bathed and dressed in clean, neat clothing. You will be able to bathe regularly (aside from when you're on trek or in rural communities!) and hand-wash your laundry several times on-course. There will also be chances to use one of the commonly found laundry services.

Forms of Address

It is customary in Latin America to address elders with respect, using the “usted” form in communication and verb conjugation when speaking with people older than you. The informal “tú” form can be used when addressing friends, host siblings, children, and young people. You will find that close friends often address each other in Spanish as brother or sister (“hermano” or “hermana”), and you can do the same with host siblings. While in Peru you will also have the opportunity to learn the forms of address used in Quechua, the traditional language of the Incas.

Religious Etiquette

During your time in South America you may be immersed in Christian or indigenous religious cultures, and will most likely have the opportunity to visit a number of sacred ruins and places of worship. Different rules apply to different religions in different places, so follow the lead of the locals and of your instructors to avoid offending others. For example, you will see most Catholics perform rituals as they enter cathedrals but it is typically not expected that you do the same. You will likely have the opportunity to participate in a traditional Andean ceremony as well, wherein appropriate etiquette and guidelines would be explained.

Begging & Bargaining

Begging and bargaining can be difficult subjects as they can feel intrusive, and there are no set “rules.” With savvy and perseverance, you’ll emerge from your exposure to both with a larger heart and a sharper eye. As always, be aware and try to learn from local standards and practices.

In Peru it is common to see women and children, often from the countryside, begging for money in city streets. While this can be distressing to see, it underlies deeper social issues around poverty and urbanization that will be discussed during your program. During the first few days in country, your instructors will orient you to these issues and talk through our emotional response and how to respond appropriately.

Bargaining, on the other hand, is a cultural phenomenon that runs much deeper than haggling for a good price. It allows you to explore the city or town, interact with local merchants and practice your language skills. In some parts of Latin America, such as in informal markets, bargaining is common and even expected. However, in certain settings people may act offended if you do try to bargain. Your instructors will serve as valuable resources in learning about the myriad dynamics related to both begging and bargaining.

PART VI: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

“Always in the big woods when you leave familiar ground and step off alone into a new place there will be, along with the feelings of curiosity and excitement, a little nagging of dread. It is the ancient fear of the Unknown, and it is your first bond with the wilderness you are going into. What you are doing is exploring. You are undertaking the first experience, not of the place, but of yourself in that place. It is an experience of our essential loneliness; for nobody can discover the world for anybody else. It is only after we have discovered it for ourselves that it becomes a common ground and a common bond, and we cease to be alone.” –Wendell Berry, The One Inch Journey

Be Present

The thought of traveling for three months may seem like a long time now, but you’ll be surprised how quickly it passes! Try to be present in the moment and leave behind your thoughts and worries from home. While we believe that travel can provide an unequalled perspective on your daily life and routines, the experience can be diminished if you are constantly thinking about home and never separate yourself from what you left behind. Despite the temptations to reminisce about your favorite food or Netflix show, or to focus on big questions about your future, remember that everything will be right where you left it when you get back. You have dreamt about the journey and now that it’s a reality, throw your time and energy into exploring and embracing the moment.

Goals vs. Expectations

In the same way, you probably have lots of ideas and hopes about your travels. While you will be well served by setting goals and talking to people who have traveled to the country or region to which you are headed, we encourage you to read as much as you can about the areas you will be visiting and advise you not to hold on to preconceived notions that can encumber your experience.

Journaling

Even if you don’t normally keep a journal, bring one! Instructors often incorporate a number of writing assignments into the curriculum and provide time for reflection. While you’ll probably come across cool notebooks in-country, make sure to pack a thick notebook and a few good pens.

You may surprise yourself with the volume and intensity of your journaling while traveling. Every day, you will have experiences so new and amazing that you’ll be sure that you’ll never forget them, but by the end of the course -and especially after you return home - it can sometimes feel like the experience is muddled up in a distant dream. Your journal will be a tangible anthology of your experience. And it will become one of those precious mementos that allows you to reflect, process, relive and gain inspiration from the course long after you return home.

Photography

Similar to journals, images capture moments on a course that you will want to remember. There is no need to bring a fancy camera; a camera that is easy to carry and that you are comfortable using is perfect. If you are serious about photography and want to bring nice equipment, great! Just be sure it's packed in a padded, accessible case as safely as possible. If you are bringing a camera with a rechargeable battery, your access to electrical outlets may be limited. Be sure to bring extra batteries, memory cards, and the appropriate conversion plug.

Photo albums are a great way to show friends and family the inexpressible moments and people on your trip, and they can help with the transition back to life at home. A number of past students have even published their work in periodicals and Dragons/HMI materials.

Please note that our phone policy requires students to significantly limit their cell-phone use. If you intend to take photos with your phone, please show a high level of integrity with using your phone for this purpose.

Challenge Yourself

Your travels ahead will be unlike anything you've ever done. The fact that you have chosen this course says a lot about you in the first place – about your spirit of adventure, your courage, and your desire and willingness to explore. For many people, these are abstract qualities, but our courses offer a chance to put them into action, and to develop them further. Are there things in your life that you are dissatisfied with? Parts of yourself that you'd like to change? Elements of your personality that you want to recognize and strengthen? As the quote at the head of this section states, this course is a chance to leave everything behind you, both literally and figuratively. Carefully choose what you want to bring with you, set small goals for yourself every day and larger goals for the course, and work to achieve them.

You will have the opportunity to push your “comfort zone” daily. Think about what this will feel like and how you want to react. Think about times in your life when you have been challenged: how it felt, what you learned. What does it feel like to be vulnerable? In what situations have you learned and grown the most?

Share Yourself

Everyone who joins a Dragons and HMI course has his or her reasons for being there. What are yours? What do you want to share with your group? And what can you learn from your co-participants as you begin your journey together? This begins with posting a personal introduction to the Yak Board one month prior to course. Ask questions. Share your goals. Post a picture of yourself. Discuss your favorite books and articles from the pre-course Reading List. Dragons courses are all about student-centered education. Just remember to be yourself and the rest will come easily.

Final Notes

We are aware of the overwhelming nature of such a great deal of information in this manual, whether it's about our expectations of you on our course, concerns about health and safety, tasks to complete before your departure, and the particulars of the region and culture you are about to visit. If you read about the country you are visiting before the course, it may also be daunting to encounter all kinds of new names and dates and places and events. The process of understanding a culture is a never-ending exploration, so don't feel you need to arrive an expert. Ultimately, the world you encounter will have characteristics, sights, sounds, and smells unknowable to you. The preparations you make before you get there are important and will help you process some of what you see more fluidly. Ultimately, however, what is important once you arrive is to remain curious, tolerant, and open to new experiences.

We hope you enjoy your preparation time. Stay healthy, take care of yourself, and don't abuse your immune system! Most importantly, keep your heart, your mind and your eyes open!

We look forward to meeting you.