India

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Bangalore, India: Social Justice and NGO Activism

University of Washington Honors Program Summer Study Abroad
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5-credit Spring Honors Core course at UW
12-credit Summer B Term program in Bangalore, India

http://depts.washington.edu/uwhonors/international/india/

During this month-long program, we will learn about and explore the current scene of social justice activism in Bangalore, India, through partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGO) throughout the city working on issues of urban dislocation, traffic and transportation, children’s rights, rural women, and the environment. Our program in Bangalore will help us learn about these complex issues of the city and encourage analysis that takes into account issues of history, language politics, gender relations, and theories of globalization. We hope to cultivate an interest in and appreciation of the incredible challenges that organizations and activists face in Bangalore, as well as the joys and gifts of doing this work.

Bangalore has undergone tremendous change over the past 15 years with the emergence of a transnational labor industry and rapid growth in information technology, biotech, and garment production. Internal migration as well as shifts in rural and farming communities have affected the demography of the city and produced change in neighborhoods, traffic, employment opportunities, education, and consumer culture. This means greater frustration with city infrastructure (roads, traffic congestion, pollution, water, electricity), and a vociferous debate on citizenship (who counts as a Bangalorean, what that has to do with privilege and power, what happens to those who fall beyond the scope and sight of lawmakers). Exploring the city through the framework of justice allows us to think about these complicated changes as they impact and influence all segments of society, and helps us glean a more holistic picture of what “social change” or “activism” might mean in this context.