Fieldwork is an important part of a geographer’s training and development. As such, we are proud to offer all our undergraduate students the opportunity to participate in an international field trip in their second year of study.

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The enclosed information is drawn from field trip handbooks distributed to undergraduate participants in the 2018/19 session. It is intended to give you an understanding of the aims and objectives of our field trips.
Kerala, India

BSc Environmental Policy with Economics
BSc Environment & Development
BSc Geography with Economics
Tailored Research Agendas and Itineraries for Economic and Environmental Geographers

In March 2019 we embarked on our first field trip to Kerala, which is situated on the southern coast of India. Once students arrive in Kerala, they split off according to programme. Our environmental geographers focus on research themes including indigenous cultures and rights to nature, organic farming in the context of international markets, and issues of labour and migration. Meanwhile, our economic geographers explore inequality and poverty, infrastructure and economic development, global trade, and more.

Some of the below information is split according to programme, while other parts are generic to both Kerala field trips.

BSc Environment and Development; BSc Environmental Policy with Economics

The field trip visits the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in south India, and will transect a section of the Western Ghats from Munnar to Thekaddy, before heading to the Kerala Backwaters and Fort Cochin. Kerala provides a rich and fascinating introduction to South Asian landscapes and culture, both new and old. Kochi (Cochin) has been an important centre of global trade and exchange for many centuries, and this history is evident through the influence of Arabic, Jewish, Chinese, Portuguese, British and non-Keralan Indian cultures on the urban landscape. Rural Kerala is equally fascinating, with a range of traditional industries, fishing and agriculture, and a well-developed tourist industry. The Western Ghats mountains separate Kerala from Tamil Nadu and are important for agro-forestry products such as tea, cardamom, and other spices. South of Kochi is the complex agro-ecological system of the 'backwaters' – a chain of lagoons, lakes and canals along the length of Kerala. Kerala is often described as a success story of economic development – the so called 'Kerala model' - with high levels of literacy and life expectancy, despite its relatively low per capita income.

With around 120–140 rainy days per year, Kerala has a wet and maritime tropical climate influenced by the seasonal heavy monsoonal rains. Around 65% of the rainfall occurs from June to August corresponding to the Southwest monsoon, and the rest from September to December corresponding to Northeast monsoon. Mean annual temperatures range from 25.0–27.5 °C in the coastal lowlands to 20.0–22.5 °C in the eastern highlands. Tamil Nadu is mostly dependent on monsoon rains, and thereby is prone to droughts when the monsoons fail. The climate of the state ranges from dry sub-humid to semi-arid. Currently, over 25% of India’s 15,000 plant species are to be found in Kerala. Kerala’s fauna are notable for their diversity and high rates of endemism and includes 102 species of mammals (56 of which are endemic), 476 species of birds, 202 species of freshwater fishes, 169 species of reptiles (139 of them endemic), and 89 species of amphibians (86 endemic). The Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot that straddles Kerala and Tamil Nadu consists of a wide range of biomes including stunted ‘shola’ cloud forests, montane rainforests, Deccan thorn scrub, dry deciduous and dry broadleaf forests.
Research themes

Topic 1: Labour, migration, and communities

Labour in India operates primarily through the informal sector, meaning that labour is not well-regulated and often functions outside of state oversight. This labour has no ‘safety nets’ and workers may work seasonally for daily wages. Estimates are that 90% of India’s workforce is in the informal sector, although this also includes categories beyond day labourers, such as small entrepreneurs. Agricultural and manual labor is often filled by communities that have historically provided agricultural work as well as by migrants from other parts of India and South Asia. Our visits to farms and plantations will provide us with a glimpse of South India’s labour landscape: where do people come from, what have their families historically done for work, and what are their hopes?

Topic 2: International markets and organic farming

Organic farming certifications require strict adherence to agricultural and labor standards, dictating how and with what inputs farms manage their land. Production standards are not designed for specific places, ecosystems or local economies; instead they seek to standardize what it means for something to be ‘organic’, so that all organic products that they certify ascribe to the same requirements. This often has direct impacts on local farming economies, labour patterns and traditional agricultural practices, re-shaping local farms through these standardisation practices. Our visits to organic farms and plantations will allow us to learn about how organic farming certification has changed local agricultural practices and how this impacts local communities.

Topic 3: Indigenous cultures and rights to nature

Protected areas in India are home to indigenous communities, referred to as Scheduled Tribe or Adivasi (“Scheduled Tribe” is used to describe groups that the government of India has officially designated as historically disadvantaged; they are often discussed together with “Scheduled Castes” in government policy). According to India’s 2011 census, Adivasi make up 8.6% of the population, over 100 million people. We will be able to learn more about the relationship between Adivasi communities and protected areas during our visits to two different Tiger Reserves. Some potential topics for further exploration include how the indigenous community is involved in ecosystem protection, special rights for use of forests, and questions of political representation.

Topic 4: Protected areas and human-wildlife conflict

We will be visiting a number of protected areas during the trip. While this will be a fantastic opportunity to spot some wildlife, you will also have the opportunity to talk with protected area rangers and indigenous villagers about their opinions on protected areas and ‘charismatic megafauna’. We will visit Chinnar Tiger Reserve, Periyar Tiger Reserve, and our trip will cross many smaller species-specific protected areas (e.g. the Marayoor sandalwood forest). India plans to expand conservation zones and protected areas over the coming decades. Kerala plans to expand forested area in the Western Ghats by 9% through forest regeneration and afforestation. Is this the best use of land for providing the maximum benefit to the people of the Western Ghats, Kerala, and India?
### Itinerary

#### Day 1 (Saturday 23 March 2019)
Travelling from London to Cochin, via Abu Dhabi

#### Day 2 (Sunday 24 March 2019)
Arrival: Cloud forests and introduction to agro-forestry/pesticides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM:</th>
<th>PM:</th>
<th>eve:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrival of Flight EY246, Cochin Airport, 08:35</td>
<td>Short hike around cloud forest and agro-forest landscape.</td>
<td>Dinner and free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer to Munnar hotel (this is a long journey and the first opportunity to deploy observational skills).</td>
<td>Opportunity for Q&amp;A with cardamom farmers and/or workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to forest survey techniques</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Day 3 (Monday 25 March 2019)
Ecotourism, Indian glamping, and the Western Ghats landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM:</th>
<th>PM:</th>
<th>eve:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hike up to Ghats ridge</td>
<td>Visit to tea plantation and factory</td>
<td>Dinner, discussion and reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for Q&amp;A with local ‘ecotourism’ guide</td>
<td>Opportunity for discussion with plantation directors and workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Day 4 (Tuesday 26 March 2019)
Chinnar Tiger Reserve: human-animal conflicts, indigenous rights to ecosystem services

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM:</th>
<th>PM:</th>
<th>eve:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early start (be prepared) and journey to Chinnar Tiger Reserve</td>
<td>Continue trek to indigenous village inside protected area. Opportunity for Q&amp;A.</td>
<td>Transfer back to hotel, beautiful landscapes, observation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trek to wildlife observation tower. Opportunity for Q&amp;A with reserve guards.</td>
<td>Dinner, reflection and bonfire gathering.</td>
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</table>

#### Day 5 (Wednesday 27 March 2019)
Dams, flooding, and agricultural jeep tour

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM:</th>
<th>PM:</th>
<th>eve:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Another early start. Journey through the Ghats to Thekaddy.</td>
<td>Thali lunch in Thekaddy, followed by jeep discovery tour of the Tamil Nadil lowlands.</td>
<td>Dinner and free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit to the Idukki arch dam. Discussion of the recent floods.</td>
<td>Observations of difference between Tamil Nadu and Keralan farmscapes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Day 6 (Thursday 28 March 2019)
Periyar Tiger Reserve: human-animal conflicts, indigenous rights to fishing, spice agriculture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM:</th>
<th>eve:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very early start (you should be used to it by now). Travel to Periyar Tiger Reserve</td>
<td>Dinner and free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn hike (maximises chance of seeing wildlife)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM:</td>
<td>Opportunity for Q&amp;A with indigenous rangers</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free time after late breakfast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit to organic spice farm (award winning for best practice)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eve:</td>
<td>Spa &amp; souvenir shopping, dinner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Day 7 (Friday 29 March 2019)**

The Kerala Backwaters: conflicting demands on ecosystem services (fishing, rice, and tourism).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM:</th>
<th>Journey down from the hills towards the Kerala backwaters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit rice paddy fields and houseboat cruise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM:</td>
<td>Houseboat cruise across the backwaters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer to Backwaters hotel and free time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eve:</td>
<td>Dinner with Geography with Econ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare group presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Day 8 (Saturday 30 March 2019)**

Student presentations and free time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM:</th>
<th>Joint presentation session with students from all BSc programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback and fieldtrip de-brief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM:</td>
<td>Optional transfers to Alleppey beach, Fort Cochin historic centre, or Ernakulam malls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eve:</td>
<td>Transfer to Ernakulam hotel and free time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Day 9 (Sunday 31 March 2019)**

Depart Cochin for London.
BSc Geography with Economics

The field trip visits the state of Kerala in south India, and will be based in the area around Kochi (formerly Cohn). Kerala provides a rich and fascinating introduction to South Asian landscapes and culture, both new and old. Kerala is often described as a success story of economic development – the so called ‘Kerala model’ - with high levels of literacy and life expectancy, despite its relatively low per capita income. The introductory briefings will give you some initial insights into the area, its history and development. But in order to get the most from this field course, you should do your utmost to familiarise yourself with the area before your departure. This means looking through the supporting materials in the appendices to this handbook and the library.

Kochi is a major port city and has been an important centre of global trade and exchange for many centuries. This history is evident through the influence of Arabic, Jewish, Chinese, Portuguese, British and non-Keralan Indian cultures on the urban landscape. Today, the city remains firmly embedded in dynamic global networks, with international trade, tourism, and labour migration to the Gulf states being important parts of the local economy. Kochi provides an ideal environment to study the economic geography of a rapidly growing and developing city and its surroundings. The city has undergone rapid change in recent years with many major infrastructure projects, the development of the port, the creation of a ‘special economic zone’ to facilitate business, and science parks aimed promoting high-tech clusters and innovation. You will have the opportunity to consider the impacts of these changes, through observation in the field and interviews with leaders of major established industrial firms and new businesses in the area.

Rural Kerala is equally fascinating, with a range of traditional industries, fishing and agriculture, and a well-developed tourist industry. South of Kochi is the complex agro-ecological system of the ‘backwaters’ – a chain of lagoons, lakes and canals along the length of Kerala.

Research themes

Inequality and poverty

Despite high rates of economic growth in the last few years, India is a low-income country. According to world bank figures, 21% of its population earn less than $1.9 dollars a day (in 2011, the latest figures from the World Bank).

Kerala has relatively low levels of poverty within the country (around 8% are below the poverty line) but has the highest level of (consumption) inequality over all.

Research on this topic will explore the causes, consequences, manifestations and circumstances of income inequality and poverty in the Cochin region.

Examples of research contacts and opportunities: Kochouseph Chittilappilly foundation, observation, female associations, urban and village residents.
Infrastructure and economic development

Kerala has seen substantial changes in infrastructure over the past decades, ranging from new roads and mass transit systems to large scale works on the Cochin port. Challenges exist, with road congestion being a very salient issue. Research on this topic will consider issues of infrastructure, potential impacts on the local economy and impacts on households.

Examples of research contacts and opportunities: Observation, large businesses operating in the region (Abad group), medium enterprises and start-ups (NeST, Active Logica).

Entrepreneurs and business environment

Kerala has a GDP per capita above the Indian average and growth rates continue to be strong, albeit starting from a relatively low initial level. The economy of Kerala is mostly devoted to the tertiary sector, though there is a substantial manufacturing base. During our trip, we will have opportunities to meet with different actors in local business, from owners of large corporate conglomerates, to small IT start-ups. This will provide opportunities to discuss the business environments, its main challenges and its growing sectors.

Examples of research contacts and opportunities: V-guard (Kochouseph Chittilappilly), Active Logica, Infopark, NeST Group.

High-tech and IT

As elsewhere in India, the IT sector in Kerala has become increasingly important in recent years, with increases in both employment in this sector and value added. The sector is populated both by large established players and by a rich set of smaller start-ups. In addition, policies targeted to promote the development of the sector through tax breaks and office space subsidies, in technological hubs such as Infopark. Students conducting research on this topic can discuss the origins, spatial structure, prospects and problems of this sector.

Examples of research contacts and opportunities: NeST Group, Active Logica, Infopark.

Trade

Cochin has been an important centre for global trade for centuries. During India’s recent period of economic liberalisation, international trade networks have grown. Several of the successful local businesses we encounter are specialised in selling their goods or services abroad. There are many recent trade-related investments in infrastructure, such as the new container and oil terminals in Cochin. Students looking into this topic will answer questions on the impact of trade on the local economy, its characteristics and prospects for the following decades.

Examples of research contacts and opportunities: NeST Group, Ram Coir Mills, Abad Group, fishing industry.

Role of the state and policy

The local policy context in Kerala is characterised by numerous overlapping policy initiatives by a traditionally interventionist state government. Simultaneously, state capacity is somewhat limited by institutional deficiencies. During the trip we will be meeting with numerous private and public actors, which will help us gain a general view of the role of the
local, state and national governments in shaping local economic decisions. This presents a large field of opportunities for research.

Examples of research contacts and opportunities: Kudumbashree, Start-ups, Infopark, other businesses.

Contacts and visits

This list is provisional, but provides a list of some of the firms and organisations you will have an opportunity to visit. These connections will be set up by our local organiser.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Abad Group            | Leading local business with operations in the hotel, fishing and building development industries | https://www.abadhotels.com/  
http://abadfisheries.com/  
https://www.abadbuilders.com/about |
<p>| ActiveLogica          | Start up health and fitness software development company                     | <a href="http://activelogica.com/wordpress/">http://activelogica.com/wordpress/</a>                                      |
| Kochouseph Chittilappilly | Billionaire local industrialist and philanthropist, CEO of V-Guard Industries | <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kochouseph_Chittilappilly">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kochouseph_Chittilappilly</a>                 |
| Kudumbashree program | Village representatives of the Kerala state poverty eradication programme   | <a href="http://www.kudumbashree.org/">http://www.kudumbashree.org/</a>                                            |
| NeST Group            | Electronics, software and information technology business organisation       | <a href="http://sfotechnologies.net/about-us/nest-group/">http://sfotechnologies.net/about-us/nest-group/</a>                         |
| RAM Coir Mills        | Traditional manufacturing firm making doormats from coir (coconut fibre), but with international market and diversified portfolio | <a href="https://ramcoir.com/">https://ramcoir.com/</a>                                                    |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Itinerary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Saturday 23 March 2019</td>
<td>Travelling from London to Cochin, via Abu Dhabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sunday 24 March 2019</td>
<td>Arrival and Orientation Day 1: Kochi Urban Agglomeration Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AM:</td>
<td>Arrival of Flight EY246, Cochin Airport, 08:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PM:</td>
<td>Transfer to Cochin hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eve:</td>
<td>Tour of Goshree Island bridges, Marine Drive, and overview of port developments from Basilica of Our Lady of Ransom, Vallarpadam Island.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free time in Fort Cochin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Monday 25 March 2019</td>
<td>Orientation Day 2: The urban and peri-urban economic environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AM:</td>
<td>Visit Kakkanad Infopark and Startup Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PM:</td>
<td>Meet tech startup companies, opportunity for Q&amp;A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eve:</td>
<td>Transfer to Kumarakom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Backwaters sunset cruise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eve:</td>
<td>Reflection and free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tuesday 26 March 2019</td>
<td>Orientation Day 3: Traditional and rural industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AM:</td>
<td>Ram Coir Mills tour: from cottage industry artisans to multi-million dollar exporters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PM:</td>
<td>Opportunity for Q&amp;A with directors and workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eve:</td>
<td>Fishing villages and the fishing industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students work on planned project work and make brief presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wednesday 27 March 2019</td>
<td>Student Group Project Day 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AM:</td>
<td>Final planning with assistance from staff and local guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PM:</td>
<td>Students depart for project destinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eve:</td>
<td>Selected optional talks and Q&amp;A sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fieldwork write-up and planning for Day 2, with support from staff members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thursday 28 March 2019</td>
<td>Student Group Project Day 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AM:</td>
<td>Students depart for project destinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PM:</td>
<td>Selected optional talks and Q&amp;A sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eve:</td>
<td>Fieldwork write-up and reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Friday 29 March 2019</td>
<td>Orientation Day 4: A transect through the Western Ghats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AM:</td>
<td>Journey into the Western Ghat hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PM:</td>
<td>Observations from mini-bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tour of spice and tea plantations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Opportunity for Q&A with agro-businesses and eco-tourist representatives

eve: Journey back to the hotel. Students to work in groups on content for their group presentations during the journey and back at the hotel. Geography with Economics students will be joined by students on the Environment Programmes.

Day 8 (Saturday 30 March 2019)
Student presentations and free time
AM: Joint presentation session with students from all BSc programmes
      Feedback and fieldtrip de-brief
      Transfer to Fort Cochin
PM: Free time and group meal

Day 9 (Sunday 31 March 2019)
Depart Cochin for London

Cross-programme Learning Outcomes

Fieldtrip Aims and Learning Outcomes

Fieldwork is an important part of a geographer’s training and it is important to be clear about the overall aims and objectives. It is therefore important that you prepare and participate fully in order to gain maximum benefit from the trip. The old adage ‘what you get out of it depends upon what you put into it’ applies particularly to field courses. The interactions with community representatives, rangers, farmers, fishermen, etc., will be brief and often without the possibility to follow-up; so it is vitally important that you have sufficient knowledge of the background, pay careful attention, and make useful notes throughout.

Above all, the Kerala and Western Ghats field courses offer an excellent opportunity to experience a fascinating environment at first hand. Please ensure that you use this opportunity to the fullest extent!

Aims and objectives:

1. To gain understanding of how the physical, economic, political, and cultural environments of Kerala shape patterns of human activity, and the consequences of these patterns for local development.
2. To use the south Indian environment to illustrate a number of broad ideas and concepts from environmental, economic, and development geography, enabling you to relate the subject matter to your other LSE courses, and to enrich the material you have learned about in lectures, classes, and readings at LSE.
3. To enable you to assume a major part of the responsibility for your own learning experience.
4. To develop skills in problem solving, research design, interviewing (including via translators), data handling, and report/poster writing – providing valuable experience
and enhancing your research skills for your third-year studies and dissertation (if you choose to undertake one).

5. To give you experience of dealing with a variety of data sources, including library and web resources, field measurements and observations, and interview responses.

6. To provide you with practice in a number of transferable skills, such as data gathering, working individually and in teams, meeting tight deadlines, and compiling and presenting academic-standard posters. These skills will be useful in a number of other situations, including future careers.

**Learning outcomes**

At the end of the field course, you should be able to:

1. Describe and explain some of the main social, economic, and environmental processes influencing the geography of Kerala and the Western Ghats.

2. Apply a range of fieldwork practices and techniques (including working through interpreters).

3. Demonstrate examples of your observational and interpretative skills.

4. Give an example of how you worked as a member of a team.

5. Explain how to plan a research project, and how to record, analyse, and present evidence and conclusions from fieldwork.

6. Practise reflective thinking.

7. Demonstrate self-reliance, the ability to overcome problems, and effective time management.

Students on both field trips complete assessed work in the field, including field research, data analysis, and presentations. Additionally, students are encouraged to record observations and reflections in their fieldwork diaries.
Havana, Cuba
BA Geography

Above: Student photos from the 2018 Havana field trip
Main Themes of the Havana Field Trip

1. **Forming, transforming & using space:** This focuses on spatial, physical transformations in the city, as they intersect with other kinds of large-scale change – in particular, the planning and production of the urban fabric, and how they have changed over time – along with Havana’s shifting nature as a transnational nexus in different eras, and through new economic emphases. The history of Havana’s iconic urban built environment is key here; core concerns include planning, housing, commerce, tourism, infrastructure, transportation, art, landscape, and public space.

2. **Rhythms & textures of the city:** Havana has long been a hub of cultural production, centring or participating in the creation and circulation of music, dance, literature, and other arts. We bring our attention to how art — in its various forms — intersects with the city, adding rhythm, texture, and a range of sensorial nuances to its built fabric as a vital human dimension. Rather thinking of the arts as independent from politics or the economy, we aim to understand interactions between these spheres.

3. **Trajectories of development:** One way of thinking about Cuban history is to consider the shifts in development models (with distinct emphases and logics) that have defined the country’s society and economy over time. With the dissolution of the Soviet bloc at the beginning of the 1990s, Cuba entered a “Special Period” marked by hardship and the need to remake the nature of development — particularly with the ongoing blockade enforced by the United States, even in moments of improved relations between the two nations. In the generation since the Special Period began, several new paths forward have been charted. We look at how these developmental trajectories manifest geographically, as social and spatial phenomena.

4. **Connections to the Caribbean & Latin America:** The links between Havana and other parts of the region are multiple and long-standing, but also actively changing. Whether in popular culture, religion, language, trade, intellectual debate, migration, or other realms, Cuba is connected to the rest of the Caribbean and Latin America (including the Latino US) through myriad circulations that leave marks on its capital city. We will explore what kind of nexus Havana has become by focusing on the nature and effects of these connections.
Assessed work and field notes

Assessed component

You must write an individual essay based on projects using qualitative methods conducted in small groups (4 persons exactly) while in Havana. These should use the transect lines assigned to each group as a starting point. The essay should be a maximum of 3,000 words (not counting bibliography or any included appendices — e.g., transcripts, materials) and must explain its methodology, as these projects are meant to exercise some of the qualitative techniques learned in Lent Term.

Developing a project

The research for your essay will be carried out in groups and could focus on some aspect of one of the Havana-based lecture themes in Weeks 7-10 of Lent Term. As an initial stage of your project, your group must carry out a minimum of two transect walks (one daytime, one in the evening) and catalogue the physical as well as human environment along these paths using geo-coded photography and other visual techniques. The more detailed topic for your essay may diverge, or lead onwards from, your specific transect line, but the transect is meant to provide local field grounding and observation for all trip participants that will further inform your projects. You should develop your own specific research question, or set of questions, in consultation with staff. This will require some discussion within your group, along with some pre-trip preparation, which is the intention of the weeks of class workshops before departure to Havana. Staff will discuss your project ideas with you before and during the field course and are open to imaginative suggestions for research topics. Groups ought to form within the same class sessions to take advantage of joint discussion and feedback in the class workshops.

Field course notebook

Required but not-marked (including transect visualisation and transect photography)

This notebook should capture your observations, considerations, and collected materials during the field course in Havana. It is a record of your (participant) observations in relation to the course themes and projects, ad hoc field exercises, interpretations, and research questions. “Notebook” is meant as collection of both physical and digital materials from the field trip. It should include written material (e.g., field notes) as well as photographs, tickets, pamphlets. For Havana, this notebook must include a finished transect visualisation of your group’s path in the city. It should also include — in digital form — a series of geo-coded photographs that document transitions in physical and human environment along the transect.
## Itinerary

### Day 1 (Saturday 17 March)
Travel from London to Havana

**PM:**
- 9:00 – Optional (and at student’s own expense), evening at Fábrica de Arte Cubano cultural centre and multimedia event space
  - Calle 26 (corner of Calle 11)
  - Entry is 3CUC/person
  - Food and beverages are also available for purchase
  - Art exhibitions (photography, film, painting), live music, and DJs

### Day 2 (Sunday 18 March)
Recover from jet lag & acclimate to Havana

**Optional excursions (at student’s own expense)**

**AM:**
- 11:00 – Habana del Este/Santa María del Mar (including beaches)
  - Meeting point is outside Property 3 (Megan’s guesthouse), at Avenida de los Presidentes 250 (at corner of Calle 13).
  - Collective taxis to Parque Central (~3CUC/person, each way), then bus from Parque Central to Habana del Este (5CUC/person, round trip).
  - This option will be guided by staff.
- Anytime during 9:00am-4:00pm – HabanaBusTour (open-air, hop-on/hop-off bus)
  - Closest departure point is Hotel Presidente, on Avenida de los Presidentes (at corner of Calzada)
  - Cost is 10CUC/person, all day.
  - Buses run every~30 minutes.
  - This option is not guided by staff (but the bus itself has an English-speaking guide).

**PM:**
- 1:00 – Callejón de Hamel (weekly Afro-Cuban street festival)
  - The small street where this occurs is named Callejón de Hamel (between Calle Espada and Calle Aramburu), in Centro Habana.
  - There is no entry fee as far as we understand as this is a public street, but food and other items will be available for purchase.

### Day 3 (Monday 19 March)

**AM:**
- 9:00 – Lecture 1 at Facultad de Geografía, Universidad de La Habana
  - Address is Calle L, número 353 (between Calle 21 and Avenida 23)
- 11:30 – Tour 1 (led by Cuba Educational Travel)

**PM:**
- 2:00-6:00 – Group projects: Transect walk 1

### Day 4 (Tuesday 20 March)

**AM:**
- 9:00 – Lecture 2 at Facultad de Geografía, Universidad de La Habana
  - Address is Calle L, número 353 (between Calle 21 and Avenida 23)
- 11:30 – Tour 2 (led by Cuba Educational Travel)

**PM:**
- 2:00-6:00 – Group projects
**Day 5 (Wednesday 21 March)**

**AM:**
- 8:00 (exact time TBC) – Depart Havana for full-day excursion to Varadero, to see more of Cuba's tourism-based model of economic development.
  - Group transportation is via private coach
  - Departure point is Hotel Presidente, on Avenida de los Presidentes (at corner of Calzada)

**PM:**
- 7pm (exact time TBC) – Depart Varadero to return to Havana
  - Departure point is Hotel Los Delfines (Avenida Playa, corner of Calle 38)

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**Day 6 (Thursday 22 March)**

Full day dedicated to group project work

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**Day 7 (Friday 23 March)**

**AM:**
- 9:00 (exact time TBC) – Lecture 3 at Facultad de Geografía, Universidad de La Habana
  - Address is Calle L, número 353 (between Calle 21 and Avenida 23)
- 11:30 - FINAL CHANCE FOR PROJECT WORK

**PM:**
- 7:00 (exact time TBC) – final group dinner (location TBC)

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**Day 8 (Saturday 24 March)**

**AM:**
- Free morning, ahead of return journey