

COMM 4589: Innovation and Consumption in India and the UAE (Delhi, Agra, Mumbai, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi)

Term: January 2019

Time: January 1, 2019 through January 12, 2019

Faculty: Supra Sarker, Professor of Commerce

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Course Coordinator: TBD

Prerequisites

1. Faculty's permission
2. A GPA of at least 3.0 at the University of Virginia (exceptions granted infrequently)

Course Description

The course offers a short but immersive experience to students interested in learning about the nature of innovations and the consumption preferences in two countries (India in South Asia, and United Arab Emirates in the Middle East) that are important (business) partners of the West, including the US. The scope of the course is, by design, broad. The program will consist of informative visits, focusing on innovations and/or consumption patterns, with local entrepreneurial firms, global/multinational firms, and when possible, government agencies. Students will be exposed to elements of innovation and consumption cultures of India and the UAE, and to relevant trends in a number of industries or sectors. An enduring theme in the program will be to learn about developing and maintaining professional relationships with firms/personnel from India and the UAE. Intertwined with the professional experiences, the program will feature the cultural experiences, including The Desert Safari in the Arabian Desert, visits to the top of Burj Khalifa (in Dubai), Masdar City and the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque (Abu Dhabi), Taj Mahal (in Agra), and Old Delhi, and the many sights, sounds, and tastes of Dubai, Mumbai, and New Delhi. This rich mix of experiences will hopefully enable the participant to appreciate the past, present, and in some cases, visions of the future of the two countries, and to reflect on their potential for creating value in the global economy.

Readings

Required Readings (everyone):

1. Radjou, N. and Prabhu, J. *Frugal Innovation: How to do better with less*, Profile Books, London, 2016.
2. Kumar, R., and Sethi, A. K. *Doing Business in India*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2005.
3. Walsh, J. *Cultural Smart! UAE*, Kuperard, London, 2007.

One of the four readings below (assignments below):

1. Rehman, A. A. *Dubai & Co: Global Strategies for Doing Business in the Gulf States*, McGraw Hill
2. Bijapurkar, R. *A Never-Before World: Tracking the Evolution of Consumer India*, Penguin Books India, paperback edition, 2014.
3. Nydell, M. K. *Understanding Arabs: A Contemporary Guide to Arab Society* (5th edition), Nicholas Brealey Publishing, Boston, 2014.
4. Pant, H. V *Indian Foreign Policy: An Overview*, Manchester University Press, 2016 (paperback).
5. Krane, J. *City of Gold: Dubai and the Dream of Capitalism*, St. Martin's Press, 2010 (paperback)

These 5 readings and their summaries must be completed prior to the start of the course on Jan 1.

Additional course readings will be posted on the Blackboard class site by December 20.

Course Objectives

1. Develop a better understanding of the business environment in India (specifically New Delhi) and UAE (Dubai).
2. Explore how culture and socio-economic factors influence the business environment especially with respect to how certain products/services are developed or consumed.
3. Enhance skills in analyzing economic and non-economic factors that affect innovations and consumption in different national environments
4. Learn about sectors such as information technology, consulting, human resources, manufacturing, finance, and hospitality in the two countries with a focus on innovation
5. Gain an appreciation of challenges and joys of working with professionals based in the UAE and India.

Course Structure

Students will learn about business, with a focus on innovations and consumption patterns, culture, and the socio-economic context via group discussions and outside experiential learning. There will be several speakers and company visits. Active participation in the form of constructive and thoughtful comments and questions will play an important role in the overall learning. The final grade in the course will be based on the following components:

Summaries/presentations of readings:	25%
Experiential blog posts:	15%
Reflection white paper:	25%
In-class engagement (professionalism, attitude with colleagues, instructor, coordinator, hosts, etc., thank you notes, questions for companies, representing UVa to alumni and stakeholders, evidence of learning about the culture and organizations visited, etc.)	35%

Class Deliverables and Conduct

Expectations and review of readings. The assigned books must be read prior to arriving in India. These readings will provide you a background on innovation and some elements of culture and the business environment in India and the UAE.

Each student will be required to prepare a 2 page summary (single spaced 11 font) for each of the three required readings listed above. We will refer to the knowledge in these books throughout the trip.

In addition, each student is required to write a 4-5 page (single spaced 11 font) summary of one of the books (see assignments below). You may use the last page of your document for your personal commentary or reactions. Also, please prepare a few power point slides to summarize this material (about 10) in collaboration with others who have been assigned the same book. The last slide may have some discussion questions. The goal of this summary and slides is to provide your colleagues with a reasonable understanding of what the book is about, and to highlight some of the interesting facts/ideas/insights that you think are worth knowing and potentially valuable in our trip or for our group.

The summaries should be written assuming that your readers have not read the book. I will ask individuals assigned a book to talk in greater detail to the group during our meetings about the book they have reviewed. You may use the slides then. Please email the slides to everyone, since projection equipment may not be available. Here are the assignments:

- Bijapurkar, R. *A Never-Before World: Tracking the Evolution of Consumer India*, Penguin Books India, paperback edition, 2014 (**Abhijith, Hanks**)
- Nydell, M. K. *Understanding Arabs: A Contemporary Guide to Arab Society* (5th edition), Nicholas Brealey Publishing, Boston, 2014. (**Adrienne, Amro**)
- Pant, H. V *Indian Foreign Policy: An Overview*, Manchester University Press, 2016 (paperback). (**Catherine, Niya, Tara**)
- Krane, J. *City of Gold: Dubai and the Dream of Capitalism*, St. Martin's Press, 2010 (paperback) (**Parabhkiran, Stephen White**)
- Alfaki, I. and Ahmed, A. *From Oil to Knowledge: Transforming the United Arab Emirates into a Knowledge-Based Economy*, Taylor and Francis, 2016. (**Darshdeep, Stephen Ross, John Collins**)
- Storti, C. *Speaking of India: Bridging the Communication Gap When Working with Indians*, Intercultural Press, an imprint of Nicholas Brealey Publishing, Boston, 2015 (**Sabrina, Van**)

The books are all available in amazon.com. You can of course get them from any vendor you wish. You can also share or rent the books to cut costs.

Please email me your summaries and slides by **December 26**, and I will forward to members of our class.

Experiential blog posts. These posts aim to create an active learning environment throughout the class duration. The posts will provide a forum to document key moments with words and pictures and also to contemplate meanings of these experiences. Hopefully, this blog will be a keepsake as a memoir of your

trip. I expect students to post at least two blog posts for each city (Delhi and Dubai). Each blog post should include at least a couple of paragraph of text. I encourage you to also use photos to capture your learning experiences. These blogs should be emailed to me. Blog posts for Delhi and Dubai are due on January 8 and January 15 respectively.

Reflection white paper. This paper should synthesize professional takeaways from the class. Use this paper as an opportunity to think across your set of experiences and critically evaluate how they fit into general theme of innovation and value creation in the global economy. This is also an opportunity to address your actual experiences versus your expectations, and to think deeply about the questions you may often encounter: “So, how was India?” or “How was UAE?” “In what ways did you find the firms you interacted with innovative?” “How would it be to do business with firms in these countries?” or “How would it be to be an expat in these countries?” This paper should be no longer than 2000 words and is due by January 24.

In-class engagement. Attendance and on-time arrival is expected of students at all scheduled meetings and events. To ensure this, it is very important that all students be ready to leave the hotel at the scheduled time of departure. We will be hosted by leading firms and executives and I expect all students to represent the University in a respectful and professional manner. Furthermore, I expect every student to be actively involved in discussions on a regular basis. In addition to reviewing readings, company websites, and book summaries, you should develop original insights into companies and topics. This requires you to seek out and read potentially relevant material and reflect on it prior to each visit or meeting. I recommend that each of you has 2-3 meaningful questions prepared for each company or panel. I urge you to keep in mind that we are going as a group and while each of us may have individual goals and priorities, we are all obliged to help maintain a lively, positive, and inclusive atmosphere in our group.

Honor. Students enrolled in this class are expected to abide by the standards of University of Virginia’s Honor Code. All work submitted for grading must be pledged.

Visit Schedule and Course Logistics (more detailed schedules will be provided in Delhi)

January 1 (Tuesday night): Arrival in Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi Airport
Jan 2 (Wednesday): Orientation (9-11 am), discussion of readings on India, etc. This will be followed by a Half day Guided Sightseeing Tour of New Delhi), and a Welcome Dinner
Jan 3 (Thursday): Company Visits
Jan 4 (Friday): Company Visits
Jan 5 (Saturday): Day Trip to Agra (Taj Mahal, Akshardham Temple)
Jan 6 (Sunday): Flight to Mumbai
Jan 7 (Monday): Company Visits
Jan 8 (Tuesday): Company Visits in morning, afternoon flight to Dubai
Jan 9 (Wednesday): Guided Sightseeing Tour of Dubai City, including visit to the top of Burj Khalifa (world’s tallest building!), visit to cultural center and local dinner
Jan 10 (Thursday): Company visits
Jan 11 (Friday): Same day Excursion to Abu Dhabi with Lunch (visit to cultural sites such as Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and Masdar City)

Jan 12 (Saturday): Reflections (9 am to 11 am); afternoon free time or camel ride; evening: Farewell Dhow Cruise Dinner.

Jan 13 (very early, so no hotel available for Jan 12 evening) Departure to the US from Dubai

We may have additional events in the evenings. I will provide you with a more detailed program mid-to-late December.