

**“THE REAL INDIA”**  
**VT SUMMER STUDY IN INDIA**  
**Independent Study/Undergraduate Research Project**

RLCL 4974/4994

(another designator possible if done with faculty in another department;  
3 credits)

The independent study/undergraduate research project will be designed by an individual student with Dr. Peter Schmitthenner or another VT faculty member. Local translators will be available for students doing field research. Some projects may include a community learning component with a local NGO. Essential requirements include:

- Getting IRB approval for research involving human subjects
- Maintaining regular contact with Peter Schmitthenner (or another faculty member) on the progress of the project (at least every other week)
- Submitting a draft and final research paper of at least 20 pages incorporating field research and secondary source materials

**Possible topics include** (many of these were accomplished under a former study abroad program based in Visakhapatnam):

- Architecture: e.g., of local temples
- Arts and Crafts: e.g., regional traditional wood and lacquer ware production; cottage industry textiles
- Business: e.g., practices of an American businessman based in Vizag for nearly two decades
- Education systems in India
- History: local/regional
- Medicine: Learning about Ayurveda, an ancient Indian system of medicine; studying medical issues of rising concern in India (e.g., diabetes, HIV/AIDS)
- Music and Dance: Training in classical Indian music (instrumental or vocal) or dance
- Performance Studies: e.g., of local/regional epics (e.g., Bobbili Yuddha Katha)
- Sociological/anthropological studies: changing marriage trends; parents/families of overseas Indians
- Religion: e.g., creation stories/mythology; possession; local deities
- Women’s issues: e.g., cosmetics; pregnancy; religion, women, and rituals

**Community Learning Partner-NGO Possibilities**

Faza Foundation (see Facebook page): deals with public health issues in tribal areas, villages, and slums; economic upliftment; drug addiction

Green Vision: works in fields of environmental health, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, vulnerable children, maternal and child health, women and child development, and community outreach

Lebens Hilfe: works with the mentally challenged