

My Experiences at Department of English, University of Delhi



My time at the University of Delhi's Department of English between August and December 2016 proved as pleasant an experience as it was educational. With courses in postcolonial literatures and cosmopolitanism(s) the curriculum neatly tied in with the exchange program's wider focus on "Writing the Cosmopolitan Imagination". What has been especially motivating to see that despite the structural differences between the Universities of Delhi and Potsdam, the MPhil program here and the courses at my own department share a crucial assumption about the workings of knowledge – namely that knowledge is produced through joint intellectual enquiry. In this way, the students' opinions and arguments come to bear on the course and help shape its trajectory. In no small part has this very positive experience of the way classes are conducted been rendered possible through the efforts of the professors at the Department. Likewise, they have been instrumental in expanding my horizon as well as focusing my own research interests.

Realizing that discussion is critical in any academic endeavor, it does not come as a surprise that what has made my stay a particularly rewarding experience were my fellow students and the commentary they provided not only pertaining to the course topics but also in regard to India's national and international politics. It is in this way that I have come to understand Indian politics and culture much better than I ever could have from afar.

This observation remains just as true when looking beyond the immediate course environment. Having been accommodated in the university's International Students' House, discussions about politics, culture, and justice initiated in the courses would be continued in and around the hostel. The composition of the residents with majorities hailing from East and South Asia as well as East and West Africa quite naturally brought new positions and arguments into play. This egalitarian discussion culture was made possible by the sense of community that developed among the residents in their 'home away from home'.

- Florian Schybilski, Institute of English and American Studies, University of Potsdam