

The Full Sensory Experience of india

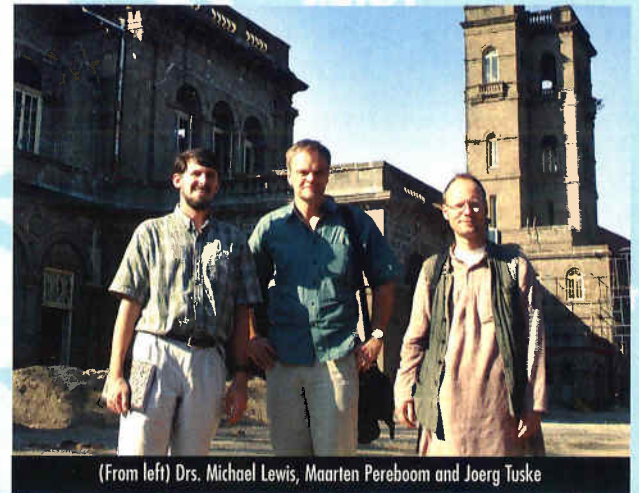
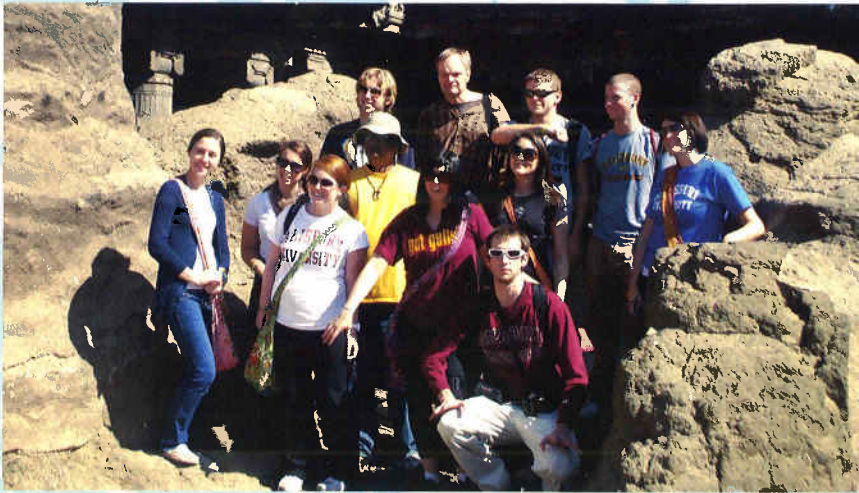
By Dr. Maarten Pereboom, Fulton School of Liberal Arts Dean
Photos: Dr. Maarten Pereboom

During winter term in January 2011, three groups from the Fulton School of Liberal Arts, along with two students and a faculty member from the Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies, travelled to India. Drs. Michael Lewis (History-Environmental Studies) and Joerg Tuske (Philosophy) took their groups to Pune, a city of 2.5 million well-known for its university, while Drs. Andrew Sharma (Communication Arts) and Ed Robeck (Teacher Education) took their students to Mumbai, India's financial and entertainment capital with

an area population of over 20 million. With all this student and faculty interest in India, I decided to join these two groups to explore opportunities for longer study abroad options for our students in this vibrant, vast and fascinating country.

Looking at a map, I would have to say we saw only a small part of the country: Pune and Mumbai are about 120 miles apart, in the western state of Maharashtra. But you don't have to travel very far in this ancient civilization with a population of over one billion to

experience a great deal. I flew to Mumbai (the official name of the city still known by many as Bombay) and met with those two groups first. Some of the students had never been out of the United-States before, and I commended them for "going hard" with their first international experience. Though Mumbai is a modern city with all the amenities that Westerners would expect, extreme poverty presents itself everywhere, and, as one might imagine in the world's fourth largest city, it is crowded. As a historian, I was eager to see parts of the



(From left) Drs. Michael Lewis, Maarten Pereboom and Joerg Tuske



city that evoked the days when India was the "jewel" in Britain's imperial "crown," such as the Gateway to India on the Arabian Sea.

I travelled with the two Mumbai groups to Aurangabad, and from there we visited Ellora and Ajantha, two groups of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain temples carved out of the rock over 1,000 years ago. From there we travelled on to Pune, where I would meet up with the other two groups. In the days of the British Empire, Pune served as a summer retreat from

the more torrid coastal climate, so it too retains evidence of the Colonial period as it enjoys its share of India's contemporary economic growth. It attracted its share of hippies in the day when the Beatles made India fashionable in popular culture. With a big university and lots of affiliated colleges, Pune is a cosmopolitan university town where I could easily imagine spending a semester. The Fulton School already has semester-long programs available in Ecuador, Estonia and China, allowing students to pursue minors in Latin American,

European and East Asian studies for roughly what it costs to spend a semester in Salisbury, plus the plane ticket. Our goal is to add India to our list of available programs in the next few years. In the meantime, January term courses in 2012 and 2013 allow more Salisbury University students to experience the beauty, culture and contrasts of this extraordinary part of the world.