

International Education Center

Study Abroad



Let the world be your classroom

Savannah State University

Study Abroad Handbook

2011-2012

Acknowledgement

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Important Contacts

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Letter to Study Abroad Students

Dear Study Abroad Student:

On behalf of Savannah State University and the International Education Center, I congratulate you on your decision to study abroad. This educational opportunity will be a milestone in your maturation and intellectual growth. You have made the right decision.

Study abroad is one of the best means to transform students in a positive way. In addition to knowledge you will acquire from the course, you have gained valuable international and intercultural experiences that will certainly provide you a competitive advantage over your peers.

As you embark upon this learning opportunity, please have an open mind and appreciate cultural differences. Cultures elsewhere view the world entirely different than Americans. For example, Americans view “black” as symbolic for mourning, however, Chinese view “white” as symbolic for mourning. Americans view certain animals as pets, but in some countries what we view as a pet is considered food, for example cows are considered sacred in India. When traveling and interacting with people do not make value judgments based on American standards. Seeing the world through other people’s lenses may also help you reflect on ways through which you can help build a more peaceful world.

Once you return to the United States, please remain internationally engaged through various activities such as the Model United Nations, local and national conferences that focus on international issues.

I would like to seize this opportunity to thank your parents, relatives, friends, or sponsors who played some role in your decision to study abroad. Many years from now, you will appreciate their contribution in shaping positively your life.

Have a safe trip and share with us your fond memories upon your return.

Sincerely,

Emmanuel Naniuzeyi, Ph.D.
Director of the International Education Center
Savannah State University

Payments Schedule and relevant information

1. **October 17- February 28:** The International Education Center accepts applications with \$100.00 non-refundable deposit. Upon payment of this deposit, a Study Abroad Handbook will be given to the applicant.
2. **December 1:** All students without passports will be reminded to submit their applications for passports.
3. **October- December:** Students must make payments totaling at least \$500.00 including their deposits by December 31.
4. **January-April:** Students must make payments bringing their total balances to \$2,000.00 by April 31.
5. **February 28:** This is the last day to apply for study abroad. However, students must make a total payment of at least \$1,000.00 in February and another payment of \$1,000 by April 31.
6. **1st week of May:** Purchase of airplane tickets.
7. **June 15:** The full balance of study abroad program is due.
8. **June 25:** Orientation sessions will be held for study abroad students and their parents.

Pre-Departure Checklist

Please do the following:

- Read this handbook thoroughly.
- Attend the pre-departure orientation.
- Meet with your academic advisor to ensure that you will earn appropriate credits for the courses you plan to take abroad.
- Meet with the Study Abroad Faculty Advisor.
- If you need financial aid, please make an appointment with the Financial Aid Counselor so that your financial aid can be applied to your account.
- Maintain your health coverage while you are abroad.
- Apply for your passport.
- If required, apply for student visa. International students must see the Director of the International Education Center.
- Get appropriate health information about the country during the pre-departure orientation. The International Education Center will obtain all the necessary information from the Center for Disease Control.
- Determine the amount of money you will take with you.
- Make copies of all important documents and leave a copy of each document with International Education Center and another copy should be given to the professor traveling with you.
- Learn about your responsibility and the non-reimbursement policy in situations resulting from a student's negligence.
- Sign the non-liability form prior departure.
- Fill out the evaluation form upon returning to the USA.

On- Campus Orientation

To help students prepare for studying abroad, the Director of the International Education Center and the professor traveling with students will conduct a series of two or three workshops on campus. During the orientation, students will obtain information about:

- History, politics, geography of the country and the culture of the people.
- Travel inside the country, visa, health, housing, transfer of credits for transient students etc.
- Currency and exchange rate.
- The contact information abroad.
- What to do in case of emergency.

This orientation will also allow students to meet other participants so that they can get acquainted with each other before the trip.

Attendance of this orientation is mandatory and parents, relatives, friends, spouses are encouraged to attend. The Director of the International Education center will remain in contact with the parents to keep them posted about the whereabouts of their loved ones.

Credits for your study abroad courses

Courses taken abroad can be used as substitutes for a required courses or electives. It can also be used as a general elective. To ensure that proper credits will be granted, students must meet with their academic advisors prior to registering for the course. The International Education Center will work with your respective departments to ensure that your graduation will not be delayed as a result of studying abroad. Therefore, the credits earned in your study abroad courses will be applied toward your graduation requirements.

Registration and payment of Tuition and Fees

Taking a course abroad requires that you register for it. You can register for up to 6 credit hours. Once you have registered for spring or summer 2012, you will need to pay the tuition for either one class or two classes. Making tuition payments is totally different from making fee payments.

Given the fact that study abroad must cover fees associated with air and ground transportation, excursions, meals, lodging, admission to museums or touristic places, and insurance, study abroad students must pay what are called program fees. These fees vary according to the cost of living of the country. Therefore, the business office will create two accounts for the student: one account for your tuition and another account for your program fees. The total cost of your study abroad covers your tuition and your program fees.

The International Education Center will schedule a payment plan that will clearly establish the deadline. Also, a deposit will be required at the time of application. This deposit will reflect your commitment to study abroad. Also, a nonrefundable application fee of \$100.00 will be required at the time of application. This fee will reflect your commitment to the study abroad program.

Program Policies and Regulations

All students accepted to study abroad must be in good academic standing. If you are placed on academic probation prior to departure, you will be withdrawn from the program. You must also be in good standing in terms of your record of student conduct. Participants are given a large degree of social and academic freedom. As members of a foreign community, however, you

must be sensitive to and strive to conform to local customs. You are, of course, subject to all laws of the country where you will be studying.

Note: The International Education Center (IEC) reserves the right to dismiss from the group any individual who, in the judgment of the program director, fails to meet his or her academic obligations and/or whose conduct is detrimental to the group or the program.

Alcohol and/or Drugs

The possession, use, or sale of controlled substances (including marijuana) is a violation of SSU Code of Conduct. In addition, the laws and punishments for drug-related offenses are generally more severe abroad. The U.S. Consulate or Embassy in the country cannot intercede with local officials on your behalf. As a visitor in another country you are subject local laws.

Problems with alcohol can be as devastating as those with illegal drugs. Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol abroad carries with it implicit risks of injury, impairment, and vulnerability. Remember you are in a foreign country.

Note: Students who violate drug laws or consume excessive amounts of alcohol will be dismissed from the program, at their own expense.

Study Abroad Code of Conduct Guidelines

1. Possession and/or use of drugs (controlled substances) as defined by the State of Georgia are prohibited regardless of the laws of the host country or countries where the program takes place. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, the student will be terminated from the programs and sent home at his/her own expense.

2. Excessive alcohol use is prohibited. Violation of a host country's laws regarding alcohol use and/or possession is also prohibited. Students accused of violating these alcohol policies will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, the student will be terminated

from the program and sent home at his/her own expense. Excessive alcohol use includes but is not limited to the following:

- a) Consumption of alcohol to the extent that the student requires medical intervention or transport.
- b) Endangering self or others while under the influence of alcohol.
- c) Causing property damage while under the influence of alcohol.
- d) Causing a disruption to the program's educational mission while under the influence of alcohol.
- e) Causing a disruption to the community while under the influence of alcohol.
- f) Any incident of alcohol consumption that demonstrates a pattern of alcohol abuse.

3. Students are prohibited from damaging or destroying facilities or property. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.

4. Fighting is strictly prohibited. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation for the policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/ her own expense.

5. Theft of property is strictly prohibited. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.

6. Students who travel on weekends without faculty members are required to provide their destinations, probable time of return, and contact information, if available. Failure to do so is a violation of policy. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.

7. No person shall subject another person to unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.

8. No student shall act in a manner that can reasonably be expected to disturb the academic pursuits of others or infringe upon the privacy, rights, or privileges of others, or the health or

safety of him/ herself or other persons. Students accused of violation this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.

9. If a student has violated a rule but has been allowed to remain in the program, the director will have the SSU International Education Center contact the student's parent(s), or guardian (emergency contact) to obtain their assistance in correcting the student's behavior and to inform the parent(s) that the student will be terminated from the program on the next violation.

Other Penalties for Violations

1. Once a student has violated a rule, but been allowed to remain in the program at the discretion of the director, if a second violation of any rule occurs then the student will meet with the program director to explain his/her actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, the student will be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.

2. If a student has been terminated from the program, the director will have the SSU International Education Center contact the student's parent(s) or guardian (emergency contact) who will be notified within 24 hours of the termination that the student is no longer enrolled in the program and has been asked to return home at his/her own expense.

Documentation

1. Whenever a student is accused of violation these SSU study abroad program policies he/she will have the opportunity to meet with the program director to explain his/her actions before a decision is made as to his/her responsibility for the violation(s). The program director should document in writing the policy the student is alleged to have violated, a summary of the evidence that is available concerning the matter, the decision the program director makes concerning the allegation, and any sanction(s) applied to the student. This written documentation should be sent within 24 hours of the decision (email or fax) to the SSU International Education Center. The Education Abroad Office will forward this documentation to the SSU Office of Judiciary Programs if the student is enrolled at Savannah State University or to the student conduct office.

Student Statement of Responsibility

1. I acknowledge that participation in a study abroad program involves some risk of injury, illness, or loss of personal property. I have read the hand out on the Responsibilities of Participants and understand that I am responsible for my day-to-day choices and

behaviors regarding my own health and safety before and during the program. I have also read the hand out and understand the Rules of Behavior set for the program.

2. I understand that as an American citizen in a foreign country, I will be subject to the laws of that country. I understand that being charged with any infraction of the laws of the host country is grounds for immediate expulsion from the program, without refund. In addition, I understand that should I have any legal problems in the host country that I will be responsible for any legal costs incurred as a result.
3. I agree that I , along with the my parents or guardian, will be fully responsible for any and all expenses, including transportation costs, associated with or in any way related to my medical care. I will be responsible for bringing a supply and administering any prescribed medications. I further certify that, to the best of my knowledge, I am in good health and physically capable of undertaking an intensive program of foreign study; any medical or health-related problems have been explicitly described to the program director.
4. I agree that in the event that I become detached from the group due to failure to meet the group at an assigned time, I will bear all responsibility to seek out, contact and reach the group at its next available destination. I understand that I will bear all the costs involved in contacting and reaching the group.
5. I agree that I shall be subject to the supervision and authority of the faculty in charge and to the standards of conduct stipulated by the faculty in charge. I further acknowledge that the supervising faculty, have the sole authority to make decisions regarding the continued participation of any individual in the program whose conduct may necessitate disciplinary action.
6. I understand that if my participation in the program is terminated by the program director, I will be dismissed from the program with no refund of fees. If I am dismissed before the completion of the program, I agree that I, along with my parents or guardian, will be responsible for any and all costs and expenses associated with my return home. I also understand that if I leave the program voluntarily for any reason, including illness, I will be responsible for any and all costs and expenses associated with my return home and that there will be no refund of any fees.
7. I authorize SSU to communicate in emergency situations with the contact person(s) provided in my application materials.
8. I understand that during free time within the period of the program and after the period of the program I may elect to travel independently at my own expense. I agree to inform a supervising faculty member of my travel plans and understand that neither SSU nor

program staff are responsible for me while I am traveling independently during such free time.

Signature of Participant

Date

Name of Participant (Print)

Health Considerations

Health: Travelers should be in good health before going on an overseas trip. If you need any prescription medication, take it with you in a clearly marked container. Carry prescriptions with you to avoid possible problems going through customs. Get your doctor to write the prescription for the generic drug as the brand name may be different in other countries. If you wear glasses, it is usually beneficial to carry a spare pair. An alternative is to carry a prescription for eye glasses with you so it is possible to have a pair of glasses made if the need arises.

Vaccination may be required for study abroad in some countries. For up-to-date information on health condition where you will be studying, we recommend accessing the Centers for Disease Control website at: www.cdc.gov/travel. Other useful sites for health and travel tip include the following: www.tripprep.com and www.hthstudents.com. You should consult your doctor to make an informed decision regarding any immunizations or other medications you may want/ need to obtain before traveling. Some of these immunizations may involve a series of two shots and therefore you should arrange an appointment with your doctor approximately two months prior to departure. Before you leave the United States be sure to provide the study abroad program with a copy of important medical/ health information that a physician might need in the event that you become ill. For example: eyeglass prescriptions, prescribed medication, whether or not you are diabetic, have allergies, and your blood type. You should bring medications to treat any known pre-conditions, such as asthma and take proper precautions to avoid an attack. It is suggested that you have an annual check-up with your family doctor before you leave to go abroad.

Note: The CDC recommends that all travelers review their status of the following inoculations:

Tetanus

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis B

For more information see: Centers for Disease Control,
<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/travel.html>

Immunizations: At least 4-6 weeks prior to departure, contact your doctor, clinic, state health department, or the clinic at SSU's Student Health Center regarding immunizations and medication.

Water:

In areas with poor sanitation only the following beverages may be safe to drink: Boiled water, hot beverages, such as coffee or tea, made with boiled water, canned or bottled carbonated beverages. Ice may be made from unsafe water and should be avoided. It is safer to drink from a can or bottle of beverage than to drink from a container that was not known to be clean and dry. Where water is contaminated, travelers should not brush their teeth with tap water.

Food:

Food should be selected with care. Any raw food could be contaminated, particularly in areas of poor sanitation. Foods of particular concern include: salads, uncooked vegetables and fruit, unpasteurized milk and milk products, raw meat, and shellfish. If you peel fruit yourself, it is generally safe. Food that has been cooked and is still hot is generally safe.

Eating Habits:

While studying abroad, you're eating and drinking habits will be different than what you are used to back home. Here are some simple precautions/rules you should follow in order to reduce the risk of illness:

- * Always wash your hands before eating.
- * Drink plenty of fluids so as not to become dehydrated!
- * **Drink only boiled or bottled water.**

*** Avoid food that has not been thoroughly cooked (like salad).**

Contaminated food and drink are the major sources of stomach or intestinal illnesses while traveling.

TRAVELER'S DIARRHEA:

The typical symptoms of traveler's diarrhea (TD) are diarrhea, nausea, bloating, urgency, and malaise. TD usually lasts from 3 to 7 days. It is rarely life threatening. The best ways to prevent TD is by paying meticulous attention to choice of food and beverage and wash your hands frequently.

If you do become ill with traveler's diarrhea, treatment usually requires only simple replacement of fluids and salts. This best achieved by use of an oral re-hydration solution such as World Health Organization Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) solution. ORS is prepared by adding a packet to boiled or treated water. Packet instructions should be checked carefully to ensure that the salts are added to the correct volume of safe water. Antidiarrheal, such as Lomotil or Immodium, can decrease the number of diarrheal stools, but can cause complication for persons with serious infections.

Most episodes of TD resolve in a few days. Travelers should seek medical help if diarrhea is severe, bloody, or does not resolve within a few days, or if it is accompanied by fever/chills, or if the traveler is unable to keep up their fluid intake and becomes further dehydrated.

First-Aid Kit:

Especially if you're traveling extensively or going to remote areas, consider taking along the following: insect repellent, water disinfectant, thermometer, Band-Aids moleskin for blisters, Pepto-Bismol or Imodium for diarrhea, antacid, aspirin or substitute, cold and cough medication, mild laxative, sunscreen, sunburn medication, anti-fungal/anti-itch medication, anti-bacterial cream or spray, tweezers, and a bee sting kit (if you're allergic).

Dealing with jet lag:

- ❖ Drink lots of fluids: water, juice, soft drinks (without caffeine).
- ❖ Avoid alcohol.
- ❖ Eat lightly.
- ❖ Get up and walk around at least once an hour.
- ❖ Try to get plenty of sleep before departure.
- ❖ Anticipate a day of adjustment for each time zone you cross.
- ❖ To prevent jet lag: Three days in advance of your trip, start shifting your activities as if you are already in the new time zone. Alter your eating habits as follows:
 - ❖ Three days prior: Feast day, with three full meals; make breakfast and lunch high in protein, dinner high in carbohydrates.
 - ❖ Two days prior: Fast day, with low calories and low carbohydrates (soups and salads), with caffeine only in the afternoon.
 - ❖ One day prior: Feast day (see above).
 - ❖ Day of departure: Fast day, with lots of liquids
 - ❖ On arrival: If you arrive in the morning, eat a high-protein meal; if you arrive in the evening, eat a high-carbohydrate meal.

Financial Aid

Study abroad students can use their financial aid to cover the fees associated with study abroad. Therefore, a meeting with the Financial Aid Advisor is required. The latter will use the FASFA

information to determine your need. The Financial Aid Counselor will also determine how the HOPE scholarship can be applied to your study abroad trip.

Before meeting with the Financial Aid Counselor, make an assessment of the total cost of your study abroad (tuition plus program fees). Note that a deposit of \$300.00 will be required 3 weeks after submitting your application. Payment of tuition and program fees must be completed by May 31st for the four- week summer session and by June 15th for the spring session.

Refund Policy

If for any reason the student is unable to travel, he/she will get back the full amount of his/her deposit (not the non-refundable \$100.00 application fee). As far as the tuition payment is concerned, the student will be subject to the school's policy regarding withdrawal from class. The program fees will be reimbursed if the non- participation in the program was due to circumstance beyond the student's control. Such circumstances may include sickness or death in the family. In any case, the Director of the International Education Center will assess the circumstances on case by case basis. There will be no refund in situations caused by the student's negligence, such as being late at the boarding area, not showing up for excursions etc. Furthermore, the airplane ticket is the student's property. Missing a flight cannot involve the institution. The Airline Company has specific policies regarding missing the flight and the student must deal with the Airline Company or the travel agency.

Study Abroad Scholarship

The International Education Center is committed to helping students gain international intercultural experiences through the study abroad program. In order to help students who are in financial need, an application for a scholarship can be submitted to the Study Abroad Advisory Committee through the International Education Center. The Committee will determine the amount of scholarship on the basis of merit and need for each applicant.

Health and Accident Insurance

Students are advised to keep their health insurance while going abroad. In addition to their personal insurance, additional coverage will be required. This additional coverage will cover issues that relate to health or loss of luggage.

Student Waiver for Educational and Cultural Trips

All students traveling in or outside the United States must sign a liability form provided by the office of Student Affairs. The form clearly indicates that “Savannah State University encourages student to strengthen their education and cultural competencies through participation in University sponsored off-campus events. When students travel to and from University sanctioned events in a University owned or leased vehicle, or privately owned vehicle, Savannah State University requires you to assume all liability for your personal safety and well- being”. In any case, The International Education Center and professors traveling with students will make the safety of students one of their most important priorities.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment, although clearly prohibited by law in the U.S., is subject to cultural interpretation in some other countries. In cultures where males have traditionally held most of the power and women have been relatively powerless, verbal suggestion and even touching of women by men, which we would consider inappropriate in the U.S., may be tolerated. This does not mean it is acceptable. If you experience what you would consider to be sexual harassment, you should immediately report it to your program director. Your program director will then keep the Office of International Services and Programs informed of the situation.

Dealing with Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault

Cultural norms vary regarding what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behavior. You cannot assume that behavior that is considered acceptable in the U.S. will be viewed similarly abroad. Suggestive catcalling and aggressive advances by men in social situations might be the norm in some locations. How you deal with these situations and how you behave generally can increase or decrease your risk of sexual assault.

Being informed, exercising good judgment, and taking appropriate precautions can reduce the risk of sexual assault. Talk with your Program Director and do some research about cultural norms as they relate to dating. It is important to know that North American women are often stereotyped as being promiscuous, and this may be reinforced by styles of dress and the general friendliness of U.S. women. While the majority of cases involve women, sexual harassment or assaults can also happen to men. In some countries, the concept of date rape is almost unknown and, in some settings, your behavior prior to an assault may be more important than the number of times you say no. There is no 100% way to prevent sexual assault, but consider these guidelines:

- Remain sober. This allows you to judge situations and react if needed.
- Dress conservatively.
- Employ the buddy system (it's always good to have friends watching out for you).
- Take care of yourself on a date: Be prepared to pay your own way, have access to a phone, arrange for transportation, and consider dressing in a way that allows you to move freely and quickly.
- Make your intentions clear.
- Trust your instincts; listen to your inner voice and act on it if you feel uncomfortable and can safely remove yourself from the situation.
- Ask yourself, "Am I able to say 'no'?" And "Am I comfortable with what is happening?"
- If you don't like what someone is doing, you can reject the activity without rejecting the person.
- Get out of the situation as soon as you sense danger or feel afraid.
- To avoid stranger rape, try to walk on well-lighted streets; avoid standing in shadows.
- Look confident and strong and ignore inappropriate remarks from strangers.
- If an assault is attempted, consider your options to find an escape.
- Last, but NOT least, if something does happen remember that it is **not your fault**, no matter what you did or didn't do; it is the perpetrator's fault.

Remember that you are not alone, so seek help from your Program Director or a responsible person at the host institution.

Study Abroad, Travel Safety, It's Up to You!

Before you leave:

- Make sure your passport is valid for 6 months past the projected date of your return.
- Take only the credit cards and personal identification you will actually need.
- Keep a copy of your credit cards, passport and traveler's checks separate from these items.
- Obtain enough prescription medication to last until you return home. Carry medicine in its original container. Take a copy of your prescription.
- Notify your medical insurance company of your overseas travel. Obtain instruction on filing claims.
- If you have any medical conditions get a medical bracelet.
- Place a luggage tag on the outside of your suitcases. The tag should be the closure type that does not show your name or any U.S. affiliation on the outside. Also place a card with your information on the inside of the suitcase.

- Obtain the cell phone number of the faculty or staff member accompanying the trip or host representative meeting you at your destination.
- Register with the U.S. Embassy.

At the airport (Increased security at airports requires new travel attitudes):

- Check in early; some overseas airlines will not allow you to board if you are late. Contact the airline for exact times. Plan connecting flights so a delay will not cause you to miss your overseas flight.
- All carry-on luggage is subject to search. DO NOT change items from one bag to another while waiting for security or customs. Do exactly what they tell you.
- Keep your luggage with you at all times; do not allow anyone else to watch it for you. Do not set your luggage, purse, etc. at your feet.
- Wait for your flight past the security checkpoint. Only passengers are allowed in these areas. Dress casually and do not wear expensive jewelry.
- Do not leave your personal items unattended on the plane. Items could be stolen in flight.
- Remember “3-1-1” for carry-ons: 3.4 ounce bottle or less (by volume); 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. 3.4 oz. container size is a security measure.
- There are a number of recent changes that the TSA (Transportation Security Administration) has made regarding what can and cannot be taken on a flight. Please check www.tsa.gov for the most up to date information including rules on liquids, electronics, etc.

When you arrive:

- If possible, arrange for someone to meet you.
- Exchange some money at the airport for transportation.
- If you have not prearranged or know about ground transportation, ask an airline official. Ask about fees prior to using transportation.
- Do not engage in idle conversation with strangers, especially if they ask personal questions. Beware of individuals trying to distract you while their partner steals your bags or picks your pocket.
- If you stay in a hotel ask for a lower level room, but not the ground floor. Do not hang the “Make up Room” tag on your door; that notifies the thieves that you are not in.
- Do not leave valuables in your room. Use the hotel safe or carry them with you.

- Check for the nearest fire stairwell.
- On a train or in some hotels you may need to turn in your passport. Always ask when you can retrieve it and get it back as soon as possible.

Safety practices:

- Stay in well lit, public places
- When you go out, go with a friend.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Carry only enough money for the day.
- Know and obey local laws.
- Learn local customs and dress in a conservative manner no matter how safe you feel there is crime everywhere. Pickpocketing and theft of a purse or bag is most common. Keep your valuables in a pouch under your clothing. Wear jackets with zippers and inside pockets. Never place your jacket on the back of the chair, even if you are sitting in the chair.
- Always maintain a low-key profile, especially in places where there may be hostility toward Americans.
- Avoid restaurants or entertainment places where Americans are known to congregate.
- Avoid protest groups or other potentially volatile situations. If you find yourself close to an unruly crowd back away (so you can observe and avoid items being thrown) until you are out of range and then turn and leave the area quickly. NEVER engage in conversation with persons in these groups.
- Politely decline offers of food or drink from strangers.
- No matter where you are staying, do not open your door to a stranger.
- Never loan your house or room key to anyone.

Weekend Travel:

- Always tell someone your travel plans including your destination, hotel, dates of travel, and method of travel.
- Travel with others you know.
- Avoid travel at night. Don't sleep on public transportation.
- Do not hitchhike.
- Use reputable hotel, hostels, etc.; your safety is worth the cost.
- Check the U.S. Consular website to see if there is a travel advisory for your destination.
<http://www.travel.state.gov>

If you have a problem:

- Call your local hosts and/or program director.
- Call the U.S Embassy Consular. Obtain the number prior to traveling at: <http://www.travel.state.gov>
- If you are arrested, cooperate with local authorities and ask to call the U.S. Embassy.
- Contact SSU International Education Center.

General Precautions to Take While Traveling

Safety on the Street

Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in areas where you may be more easily victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, festivals, and crime-ridden neighborhoods.

- Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys, or poorly lit streets.
- Try not to travel alone at night.
- Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.
- Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments.
- Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.
- Avoid scam artists by being wary of strangers who approach you and offer to be your guide or sell you something at bargain prices.
- Beware of groups of vagrant children who create a distraction while picking your pocket.
- Wear the shoulder strap of your bag across your chest and walk with the bag away from the curb to avoid drive-by purse-snatchers.
- Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. Try to ask for directions only from individuals in authority.
- Know how to use a pay telephone and have the proper change or tokens on hand.
- Learn a few phrases in the local language or have them handy in written form so that you can signal your need for police or medical help.
- Make a note of emergency telephone numbers you may need: police, fire, your hotel, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.
- If you are confronted, don't fight back; give up your valuables.

Safety in your Hotel

- Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Meet visitors in the lobby.
- Do not leave money and other valuables in your hotel room while you are out. Use the hotel safe.
- If you are out late at night, let someone know when you expect to return.
- If you are alone, do not get on an elevator if there is a suspicious-looking person inside.
- Read the fire safety instructions in your hotel room. Know how to report a fire, and be sure you know where the nearest fire exits and alternate exits are located. (Count the doors between your room and the nearest exit; this could be a lifesaver if you have to crawl through a smoke-filled corridor).

Safety on Public Transportation

If a country has a pattern of tourists being targeted by criminals on public transport, that information is mentioned in the Consular Information Sheets in the section about crime.

Taxis: Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked cabs.

Trains: Well-organized, systematic robbery of passengers on trains along popular tourists' routes is a problem. It is more common at night and especially on overnight trains.

If you see your way being blocked by a stranger and another person is very close to you from behind, move away. This can happen in the corridor of the train or on the platform or station.

Do not accept food or drink from strangers. Criminals have been known to drug food or drinks offered to passengers. Criminals may also spray sleeping gas in train compartments. Where possible, lock your compartment. If it cannot be locked securely, take turns sleeping in shifts with your traveling companion. If that is not possible, stay awake. If you must sleep unprotected, tie down your luggage and secure your valuables to the extent possible.

Do not be afraid to alert authorities if you feel threatened in any way. Extra police are often assigned to ride trains on routes where crime is a serious problem.

Buses: The same type of criminal activity found on trains can be found on public buses on popular tourist routes. For example, tourists have been drugged and robbed while sleeping on buses or in bus station. In some countries, whole busloads of passengers have been held up and robbed by gangs of bandits.

Dealing with terrorism

Terrorist acts occur unpredictably, making it impossible to protect yourself absolutely. The first and best protection is to avoid travel to areas where there has been a persistent record of terrorist attacks or kidnappings.

How to reduce your risk of being a victim of a crime

- Be aware of your surroundings
- Move confidently
- Stay in well-lit, busy areas, especially after dark
- Employ the “buddy system” (don’t go anywhere alone)
- Blend in
- Dress like the locals
- Dress conservatively
- Don’t walk with maps or guidelines
- Drink responsively
- Avoid confrontations
- Avoid public demonstrations
- Become familiar with local customs
- Be aware of scams
- Carry your carry-on bag or backpack/day bag on the side away from the street so bicyclists and motorcyclists can’t snatch it.
- Keep your bag under your elbow or in your lap.
- Carry your camera with caution
- Secure your belongings when you are in youth hostels
- Do not leave bags/luggage unattended
- Take only a manageable amount of luggage

Road Safety

At an October 2000 Congressional hearing on “Safety in Study Abroad,” it was stated that the major cause of student injury or death in overseas programs is traffic accidents. According to the U.S. State Department, road travel is the greatest risk to healthy Americans abroad.

This doesn't just refer to those who drive a car but also **refers to you as a pedestrian and as a rider in a taxi or bus.**

Pedestrian safety checklist

These guidelines serve as suggestion. Each suggestion will not necessarily apply in your country or location. Be alert when traveling in a country where vehicles travel on the left side of the road.

Good habits while on the road

- Be aware of local traffic patterns. Understand local road culture.
- Be alert at intersections in countries where the traffic patterns differ from yours.
- Be alert to reckless driver behaviors (e.g. speeding, inattention to driving, disregard for pedestrians, signs and signals)
- Many countries have narrow, winding streets where visibility of pedestrians is compromised.
- At night, wear or carry something reflective or carry a light, so that motorist' attention will be attracted to you.
- At night, cross where the lights are bright and visibility is good.
- Avoid walking where you cannot be easily seen.
- Remember that the Curb Drill (Look right, look left, look right again) must be reversed in countries where you cannot be easily seen.
- Be alert for vehicles which can suddenly turn into the street.
- Walk on the sidewalk where there is one. Where there is none, walk on the road bank or on the right side of the road in single file, facing oncoming traffic.
- Always stand on the sidewalk, or at the edge of the road, not in the street while waiting to cross.
- Be just as alert and careful when crossing in groups as when alone, and do not depend on others to watch out for you.
- Always look very carefully when crossing the road from behind or in front of stationary vehicles.
- Use provisions for crossing (e.g. Police Officer, Pedestrian Crossing, and Traffic Lights).
- Look and listen for warning signals of motor vehicles especially when crossing at a bend. If possible, don't cross where there is a bend in the road.
- Cross where there is a clear view in both directions, when it can be done safely.

- Be alert for train crossings that might not be marked or obvious.
- When you exit from a vehicle, wait until it moves off before crossing.
- Do not adopt the attitude that because you have the right of way in the pedestrian crossing, you are automatically safe to cross. In many countries drivers ignore stop signs, signal lights, and pedestrian right-of-ways.
- Jaywalking may result in severe fines in various countries
- Get into or out of a vehicle on the side nearest the sidewalk or edge of the road. If you use the door on the street side, wait for a break in traffic to exit the vehicle.
- Remember most road fatalities are pedestrians.

Taxi and Bus Passenger Safety Checklist

Suggestions for Passenger Safety Checklist

- Be aware of traffic patterns and local road culture.
- Avoid overcrowded taxis.
- Be alert for reckless driving (e.g. speeding, inattention to driving, apparent drowsiness, disregard for signage and signals).
- If driver is irresponsible, get out at first safe opportunity.
- If you feel you are at risk, speak up!
- Avoid riding with drivers who seem to be under influence of alcohol or medication, or appear over-tired, irrational or distracted.
- Ride only in taxis with functional seatbelts in back seat.
- Avoid night travel, especially in rural areas.

Suggestions for Physical Safety:

- If you are unsure of which taxi companies are acceptable, inquire at the airport information desk, hotel concierge desk, shop keeper, restaurant personnel or program staff. They might also be able to help with communication problems you may encounter. Have a local write your destination for the taxi driver to read.
- Plan ahead how to get home before you go out.

- Take a business card with the phone number of a reputable minicab or taxi company, phone for taxi when you need it.
- Do not travel alone. When possible, travel in groups.
- Calling a taxi is the safest way to travel, especially at night.
- Try not to let anyone overhear you ordering a taxi. If they hear your name and destination, they may pretend to be the taxi you ordered.
- If you have ordered a taxi, wait for the driver to approach you. Ask the driver name and destination he has been given to check he is your driver. Don't get in to a taxi if you haven't ordered.
- If you must hail a taxi, spot one from a well-known reliable company. Before getting into a taxi, make sure the driver agrees to take you to your destination.
- When you get into the taxi, note the company name, code number displayed driver's name, ID and photograph if possible.
- Do not accept rides from drivers who randomly approach you.

Information on Taxi Fares

- If the driver tries to bargain instead of using the meter or claims his meter is broken, get out of the taxi.
- The key to successful bargaining is to ask the driver what the fare is before getting into the taxi. Once you sit down, you are the taxi's next fare.

Bus and Minivan Safety Checklist

- Wait for the bus in a safe place-away from the road.
- Whenever possible, avoid overcrowded buses and minivans.
- Be alert for reckless driving (e.g. speeding, inattention to driving, apparent drowsiness, disregard for signage and signals).
- Insist that the driver be reasonable or get off at the first possible safe opportunity.
- If you feel you are at risk, speak up!
- After you get off the bus take several steps out of the danger zone.
- Stand several steps away from the road while waiting for the bus.
- After getting driver's attention, cross the street in front of the bus. Never go behind the bus.
- Stay seated at all times.
- Avoid night travel, especially in rural areas.

Emergency Plan

The International Education Center will stay in touch with students, professors and the US Embassy. Before every travel, a contingency plan will be developed by the Director of the International Education Center in consultation with the State Department and the US.

Passport and Visa

A passport is required for every person traveling to any foreign country including neighboring countries Canada and Mexico. Applications for passport can be obtained at the post office or the International Education Center. Once the application is submitted to the Post Office agent, it takes about 6 weeks to receive your passport. The express service takes about 10 days but the cost is close to \$200.00 while the cost of regular service is about \$95.00 for the first time applicant. Therefore, students are encouraged to apply for a passport three to four months before the trip. Most countries require a visa for entry. Some European countries do not require visas for US citizens when their visits do not last more than three months. In any case, the Center of International Education will assist you in mailing your application for visa to appropriate embassies in Washington, DC.

Before leaving the USA, all copies of your important documents must be left with the Center for International Education. We will also provide a copy of these documents to the professor traveling with you. In case you lose your documents, we will be able to use the copies of your travel documents to help you return to the USA safely. Foreign students must meet with the Director of the International Education Center to ensure that all his travel documents including the F-1 visa are in order.

Students with Disabilities

Savannah State University strongly encourages all students to consider study abroad. The International Education Center will require that our host institutions accommodate our students with disabilities. Therefore, if you have disabilities, you should speak to the Director of the International Education Center.

Special Student Issues

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues

Attitudes toward sexuality vary greatly from country to country. Some cultures are open about homosexuality, and strong gay communities exist in many cities; however, some cultures and peoples are intolerant of different sexual preference, and strict taboos or laws against such relationships may exist. We encourage you to find out how different sexual preferences are viewed overseas and where your support may exist, so that your time overseas can be as enriching as possible. Consult your program director for more information on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues in your destination country.

Students of Color

No two student studying abroad ever have quite the same experience, even in the same programs and country. This same variety is true for students of color. Reports from the past participant vary from those who felt exhilarated by being free of the American context of race relation, to those who experienced different degrees of ‘innocent’ curiosity about their ethnicity, to those who felt familiar and new types of prejudice. Try to find others on campus that have studied abroad and can provide you with some counsel.

You’re Spending Money

The amount of money you take with you should depend on the living cost of the country. Prior to the trip, you will be told about the exchange rate. You will know whether, your ATM/DEBIT card can work where you will be studying. You will also be made aware of the possibility of using traveler’s checks and credit cards. In any case, you will need to carry a small amount of cash to spend while traveling.

- Cash: We recommend taking a small amount of cash (\$50-100) in the local currency so you will have some when you arrive. However, the exchange rate you get in the U.S. is

likely to be worse than what you would get abroad. You can also usually change money at the arrival airport. Consult your program director for more guidance in this area.

- ATM or debit cards: These are probably the most convenient way to get money while you're abroad. You will receive your withdrawal in the local currency, so it's particularly convenient when you're traveling in several countries. The exchange rate is generally good, too. Note: Be sure you inform your bank of your travel dates so that they are aware. Some banking institutions will freeze your account if they believe the charges are fraudulent. Find out from your bank your international PIN for abroad (some are 4 digits, some 6), if your card is connected to a world-wide system (Cirrus, Plus), if fees are charged for using a foreign ATM, and if your daily withdrawal limit is going to be sufficient for your needs when you are abroad. Talk with your bank officials about this and the availability of ATM services and the system used by your bank in your target country(s). Watch for thieves when using an ATM, and do not use an ATM after dark, if possible.
- You can find ATM machines abroad via the Internet. MasterCard and Cirrus cardholders can check www.mastercard.com/carholderservice/atm, and those with Visa and Visa Plus cards can use www.visa.com/pd/atm/main.html. Though American Express doesn't have an online ATM locator, cardholders can call 800-227-4669 in the U.S. or 910-333-3211 collect from abroad for locations.

Prepaid travel money cards can be used as a debit card or with a PIN in a Visa ATM machine. The advantage to these cards is that they are not connected to your bank account; if lost, you lose no more than the prepaid value of the card. There is a minimum value of \$300. A fee is charged each time you use the card (similar to prepaid telephone cards).

Personal checks drawn on a U.S.; bank will NOT be accepted abroad.

Traveler's checks are the safest way to carry money abroad as they can be replaced if lost or stolen. They are useful for emergency backup in case the bank machines are down or there is no other way to access cash. It is best to buy them in the U.S. then exchange them for currency abroad. **Disadvantages** are that you may be charged a fee when you cash them, not all stores or hotels accept them. Travelers' checks come with receipts, which should be stored in a safe place, separate from the checks themselves, so that you can replace the checks if lost or stolen. The most widely accepted brand (and easiest to replace) is American Express. AAA, some banks, and some credit unions issue them with no fee to members.

Exchanging some U.S. money for local currency when you first arrive, at least enough for phone calls and taxi from the airport, is a wise idea. This can be done at major banks or in currency exchange offices at international airports.

Consider purchasing at least \$100 in local currency before you leave the U.S. in case you cannot exchange money right away or can't find an ATM. Several banks in Ames offer this service. Carry cash in a safe place on your body, such as in a money belt or a pouch around your neck, hidden under your clothes.

Students spending a semester or more abroad will be able to set up a bank account in a local bank after arriving at their destinations. Traveler's checks will be accepted when opening an account. Opening an account will allow you to obtain a local ATM card and not have to worry about locking up large amounts of money. You can choose a local bank or a branch of a U.S. based bank. Some banks require a letter of recommendation from your home bank in the U.S. There are usually large fees for transferring money from your home bank to your new account. Be prepared for a 4 to 6 week waiting period while they activate your account.

Credit Cards: Major credit cards such as VISA, MasterCard and American Express are widely accepted in most countries and are necessary in an emergency. They are useful in shops, restaurants, and hotels in many locations. Credit cards are convenient, reduce the amount of cash you need to carry, and automatically give you a good exchange rate. You should have at least two credit cards from different companies, for instance, one Visa and one MasterCard.

****Note: be sure you inform your credit card provider of your travel dates so that they are aware. Some credit card companies will freeze your account if they believe the charges are fraudulent. ****

Remember, the interest rates may be high if you don't pay off your card every month, they are subject to theft, it is easy to spend money you don't have, and they can become

demagnetized. You can access cash from your credit card (you will need to know your international PIN if using an ATM to do this) but the interest rates are extreme, so avoid this option if possible. If the card goes missing, call immediately so you will not be charged for items you did not purchase.

Packing for Study Abroad

Please follow the following recommendations:

- Do not take expensive items such as jewelry
- Good walking shoes and jeans will be helpful
- Take bedroom/house slippers
- Do not forget your prescription medicine. Take enough refills for the study abroad.
- Take your own towels and washcloths
- Take a camera for pictures
- Take personal hygiene products
- Take a voltage converter when the electric voltage is different from the USA. This will allow you to use your electrical equipment.
- Take SSU paraphernalia as gifts for others

Taking Your Personal Computer Abroad

Depending on how computer savvy you are and your level of patience, taking your computer with you on your travels can be either practical or frustrating.

Getting connected may mean dismantling a phone or wall socket and then locating a local, worldwide, or roaming Internet Service Provider (ISP).

Taking advantage of cybercafés can be a great alternative to carrying your computer with you. Remember to bring memory sticks and to take them with you when you leave the cafe.

Books that can provide you with a wealth of information on how to stay connected include:

- The Rough Guide to the Internet, Angus Kennedy, Rough Guides
- Cybercafés: A worldwide Guide for Travelers, Kath Stanton (Ten Speed Press)
- Internet Café Guide, Ernst Larsen

Also check out the Web guides at <http://www.netcafeguide.com> (also by Ernst Larsen) or <http://www.cybercaptive.com>.

In general, unless you absolutely need your computer, do not take it. It's just one more thing to be lost, stolen or damaged!

General Safety Guidelines

The following guidelines should be observed while studying abroad:

- Always go out in groups. Never go out alone because you may be an easy target
- Even when you go out in groups, let the Director Resident know about you destination.
- Do know get drunk and do not let people know that you have money.
- Always stay alert.
- Women should dress appropriately and conservatively. Provocative way of dressing may be misconstrued as an invitation for harassment
- Be a team player: advise your colleagues when they act improperly.
- In areas where sanitation is not adequate, you may need to drink only bottled water.

Communicating Across Cultures

There are a number of skills and guidelines that can be suggested for communicating successfully in cross-cultural situations:

- Pay Attention. Clear your mind of its various preoccupations so you can concentrate on what is being said. Remember that there is no point in talking if you cannot pay or receive attention. If you cannot, try to postpone the conversation.
- Set your assumptions and values aside and try to hear not just what the other person is saying but what is meant by what was said. (This may require asking many questions). It is easier to understand if you set aside your ideas and try to explore theirs thoroughly.

- Withhold judgment. You will have more success in communicating with other people if you are trying to understand them rather than to evaluate them.
- Be complete and explicit. Be ready to explain your point in more than one way and why you are trying to make a particular point in the first place. Give the background; provide the context; make clear “where you are coming from.”

Study Abroad Evaluation Form

Please share your thoughts with us regarding your study abroad experience

Name of the Program: _____

Term of the Program: _____

Student Name: (Optional) _____

My responses can be shared with other students who are preparing for the same program or country of study. (Circle One) **Yes** **No**

Please rate the following as it applies to your study abroad program

1. Pre-departure orientation and materials received prepared me well for the study abroad:

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

N/A

2. The Application Process was easy and clear:

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

N/A

3. The Air travel from Atlanta to the host country was well coordinated

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

N/A

4. Coordination/guidance/supervision throughout the program was adequate

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

N/A

5. The daily schedule was appropriate

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

N/A

6. The program-related excursions, visits, tours, activities were educational, informative, and enjoyable.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

N/A

7. The quality of class instruction was satisfactory

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

N/A

8. Given the circumstances, the housing arrangements were acceptable

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

N/A

9. The food provided by the host university was good

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

N/A

10. Academic and medical help was available

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

N/A

11. The whole delegation was in security throughout the duration of the program

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

N/A

12. The classroom and other meeting spaces were satisfactory

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

N/A

13. The local transportation was adequate

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

N/A

14. Our hosts were courteous and helpful

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

N/A

15. Why did you choose to participate in this study abroad program? (Choose all that apply)

- To make academic progress
- To enrich my international and international and intercultural experiences
- To improve my career opportunities
- For my intellectual growth
- Other _____

16. Did the study abroad meet your objectives? (Circle one) **Yes No**

17. Would you recommend this program to others? (Circle one) **Yes No**

18. What can we do to improve this study abroad program?

Your Next Steps

Your Study Abroad has given you the opportunity to see the world from different lenses. Your involvement and interest in global affairs has just begun. You should strive to be a global citizen by keeping up with world events and getting involved in activities design to promote your global knowledge. On campus, you can join organizations such as the Model United Nations or take some courses designed to broaden your international horizon. You may also consider minor in International Studies when this program becomes available. Once you graduate, you may seek employment in International Organizations and work in various countries of the world. You may even work a corporation that has branches overseas. Your international experience will be contributing factor to your employment in Multinational Corporations, Government Agencies, or International Organizations. Good Luck!

Useful Web Addresses

U.S. State Department.....<http://www.state.gov>
Passport information.....http://www.travel.state.gov/passport_services.html
Travel Warnings.....http://www.travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html
Travel Publication.....http://www.travel.state.gov/travel_pubs.html
US Consulates abroad.....http://www.state.gov/www/regions_missions.html

Foreign consular offices in the US:

<http://www.state.gov/www/traveloffices/fcoindex.html>

Center for Disease Control's Travel section:

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/travel.html>

