



Student Handbook

Short-term International Programs



UNIVERSITY *of* ST. THOMAS

Short-term Program Essentials

CATEGORY 1 - THE ESSENTIALS

- Passport and Visas (students are entering as tourists!)
- Health Issues
- Vaccinations or shots
- Alcohol and drug policies
- What to do if someone gets sick
- Importance of disclosing any medical issues, medications, etc.
- Behavior code—what happens when there are violations?
- Intercultural Awareness
 - How to be a good guest
 - Knowledge of the host country
 - Ability to adapt to different foods, customs, etc.
- Group Dynamics—what is needed to be a good member of study abroad group?
- Safety
 - Groups; pairs
 - Know where you are; stay in lighted areas
 - Carry hotel card with phone number and address with you
 - Avoiding demonstrations
 - Good locations and bad locations—how to know the difference
 - Money belt
 - Pickpockets—Don't fall for pictures, little kids, falling coins, jostling, spills

CATEGORY 2 - PRACTICAL MATTERS

- Financial Matters
 - Credit cards—notify your bank that you will be using it abroad; be aware that most credit card companies assess a 3% surcharge for international transactions
 - ATM cards—know your 4-digit pin, the cost of using your ATM card for purchases and your withdrawal limits; availability
 - Costs of cabs, trains, buses, food, internet
 - How much money to take and how; exchange rates; how to get money in an emergency
- Electronics
 - I-pods, cameras, hair dryers, etc.
 - Telephone
 - laptops
- Clothing—what is appropriate and necessary in the culture? Is dress-up clothing needed?
- Packing—you have to carry it yourself!
- Hotels—what to expect?
- Weather

CATEGORY 3 - COURSE MATTERS

- Grading expectations
- Free time—how much, expectations, suggestions either at orientation or in-country
- All of the specifics for your course

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Dear short-term traveler:

Congratulations! Your decision to study off campus will provide you with many exciting adventures and experiences not to be found in your local environment.

We have put together this handbook to provide you with helpful information for planning and spending your time abroad. It is intended to be helpful both *before* and *during* your time away.

There are excellent tips in this handbook, and it is organized in a way we hope will be user-friendly and straightforward. However, this is not the only source of information you should use when preparing for your time away. Along with reading the handbook, we suggest you talk with visitors and/or natives of your host country(ies), and acquaint yourself with current issues regarding your host culture. Preparing yourself mentally for your program will make it all the more fulfilling.

You should read this handbook thoroughly, share it with friends and family, and of course, take it with you. Much of this information will be useful not only before you depart, but after you are on site.

Finally, keep in mind that the minute anything is in print it runs the risk of being outdated. There is not a book that exists that could attempt to teach you all you will learn during your time studying abroad. Your real learning will come through experience, so experience all you can!

Good luck from all of us at the Office of Study Abroad!

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Pre-departure checklist

Contact Information and personal documents

- Be sure to give family and friends your contact information and itinerary. Keep them updated of any changes.
- Make copies of your passport photo page: 1 to leave at home, 2 to take with you.
- Leave ATM and credit card info at home, and take a copy with you.
- Make sure you have an entrance visa (if required) for the country where you will study.
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, make sure your U.S. visa and other papers are in order.

Financial

- Obtain a small amount of local currency to bring with you.
- Make sure your credit and ATM cards have 4-digit numerical PIN numbers.
- Card numbers and emergency assistance numbers – leave one copy at home and take one with you, separate from the cards.
- Plan with folks at home for emergencies – can money be deposited in an account that you can access overseas?

Academic

- Bring books, syllabus, guidebooks, etc.

Health

- Inform faculty director(s) if you have pre-existing conditions which may affect your participation at some point or which may be critical to know if you are ill/injured and unable to speak for yourself.
- Your personal (U.S.-based) health insurance card – bring it and know how payment/reimbursement works if treated overseas and if you need to bring back specific documentation.
- Get appropriate vaccinations, immunizations in the recommended time frame. Obtain prophylactic medications, if necessary.
- Your regular prescription medication. Keep prescriptions in original containers from pharmacy. Bring copies of prescriptions.

General

- Know electrical current and plug adapters used in your host country(ies). Obtain appropriate transformers, converters or adapters for appliances you will bring.
- Clothing packing list - Know generally accepted standards of dress. Know range of temperature and precipitation for the area you will visit.

Course expectations

Clearly defined expectations are one important way that short-term programs become successful. When everyone knows up front what is involved in a course, students *and* faculty are more likely to have a rewarding, positive experience abroad.

Academic expectations

The most important thing to remember is that study abroad programs are first and foremost *academic* experiences. These are not tourist trips. The syllabus and itinerary are designed to make the most of the location(s) where your course takes place and are designed to meet the objectives of the course. We encourage students to take an active role in their learning outside of class time by visiting sites of cultural importance, such as museums, houses of worship, or market places.

You will receive a detailed syllabus and itinerary for your course. Reading lists, assignments and grading standards will be explained by your faculty director. Students are expected to be present—physically and mentally—at all required course activities and to be active participants in all course activities. Failure to do so may affect your final grade or result in you being sent home at your own expense.

Assignments and academic journals

Another point to remember is that you are completing roughly the same amount of work in a three-week course as you would in an entire semester on campus. There will be assignments in each course which students are expected to complete in the time allowed. For example, many courses require academic journals as an integral part of the course requirements. Your faculty director will give you more detailed directions, but here are some helpful hints:

- Don't keep a log, which merely lists events, places and people.
- Try to analyze observations about people, places, events and artifacts around you. Why does this occur or exist? What might this tell you about the culture around you, and your own culture? How does an observation relate to the subject matter the faculty director is talking about? Making these kinds of analytical connections is very important to a successful learning experience.

Behavior expectations

You are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the rules of your course and the University of St. Thomas. By signing the *Short-term Off-campus Programs Agreement* you have also agreed to:

1. Participate in all classes and scheduled activities unless ill,
2. Abided by dress and cultural codes suitable to the countries you are visiting,

3. Not buy, sell or use drugs at any time,
4. Not engage in abusive use of alcohol.

If you violate any of these or other rules issued by St. Thomas or your faculty director, you can be sent home, immediately, at your own expense. Students who are sent home may also receive a failing grade for the course. **Please also keep in mind that you are under the Rules of Conduct of the University of St. Thomas, and may face disciplinary action after you return.**

Dress for success!

Appropriate behavior extends to the way you dress. Depending on the location of your program, your faculty director may have special instructions regarding appropriate clothing and behavior. The following general rules may help you avoid potential problems:

- Pack at least one nicer outfit (skirt and blouse for women, khakis and button up shirt for men) for cultural outings or formal meals.
- Short or revealing clothing is almost always inappropriate.

Remember that you represent not only yourself, but St. Thomas and the faculty director(s). Always treat guest lecturers, tour guides and other hosts as well as group members and instructors with the utmost respect. Behavior that disrupts others, be they students, faculty or citizens of the host country can lead to the offenders being dismissed from the course and being sent home at their own expense.

Finally, please remember that you will be held responsible for any property that is damaged. Previously, on a program to Ecuador, the hotel manager found a number of mattresses that had been ripped apart by a student. The student was charged for the replacement of the property.

And lastly, how you spend your spare time is YOUR responsibility. But please note these things:

1. Choose wisely.
2. Choose moderately.
3. Morning comes very quickly!!

Ways to have a positive group experience

What is a successful group?

Traveling in a group is very different from traveling with family or friends. Not only may your group be comprised of students from different classes, but these students come to the group with different academic backgrounds, attitudes and expectations. A truly successful group will find a way to maximize the strengths of its members and minimize any characteristics that might take away from those strengths. A positive group experience is one where members are flexible, positive and mature in their reactions.

Traveling with your group, you will go through long days and may have little free time. You might be asked to walk when you are tired, eat when you are not hungry, and focus on your program for longer periods of time than you are used to in Minnesota. Through all of this, it is expected that you will be present with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn the material and participate actively. **Everyone** has a responsibility to the group to ensure that its goals are met and that problems are minimal.

Empowering yourself as a group member

Group dynamics—the way groups work together—will have a tremendous impact on how successful your course ultimately is. We have put together a list of ways you can make sure your group has a positive experience traveling and studying together:

- **Learn about your destination.** You may have already thought about the differences in things like food, climate, transportation and language, but do you know about the variation in things like hotel room size (hotels outside the United States are likely to be half to a third the size you are used to at home!), toilets, and ideas about personal space? By being aware of such differences ahead of time, you minimize the effect they have on you *and* your group, and can focus on the essential parts of the course. We have included in the appendices a list of resources you can use to learn more about your destination.
- **Be patient.** You may feel that the group spends too much time in one place, or not enough in the next. You may want to have more group meals, while other students want none. The course itinerary may rarely feel “just right” to you, but to your instructors, who have spent considerable time and energy designing activities to make the most of your time together, it makes sense. Trust in their experience and judgment, and encourage others to do so as well.
- **Be FLEXIBLE.** There are many things which can affect your itinerary: weather changes, circumstances in the host country, exchange rates, unforeseen transportation difficulties. If something *does* cause your group’s plans to change, you can limit the negative effects on your group by going with the flow.
- **Rely on your strengths.** You have encountered many difficult situations in your lifetime: adjusting to college life, learning how to live on your own, meeting

the academic and financial demands of being in college, whether you are an undergraduate or graduate student. You have inner resources which have allowed you to overcome these obstacles and meet the challenges of adulthood. When you are faced with a stressful or challenging situation in your study program, call upon those same resources to get you through.

- **Take care of your health.** By staying healthy, you ensure that you are able to actively participate in all course activities. When you are healthy, you are better able to focus on your studies, and get the most out of the experience. You also prevent any potential problems that could affect the whole group, for example needing to stop the day's activities for a doctor visit. Take a look at the Health and Safety section of this handbook for ways to stay healthy during your program.

How to overcome problems in groups

Sometimes, despite the best intentions of the group, problems arise. Personalities might conflict, jet lag or illness can impact group members' abilities to actively participate in the group, circumstances in the host country may be very different from what you are used to. With all the things that could have an affect on your course, it is a good idea to figure out ways you can go beyond the potential problems and keep the course on track. Here are some tips for you to use:

- **Be prepared to do something about problems.** If something serious is affecting your ability to fully participate in course activities, talk to your faculty director. By being proactive, you avoid letting little problems turn into major obstacles. Don't just complain, take charge of your reactions and change the situation if you can.
- **Keep an open mind.** It only takes one member who complains that things are not the same as back home to have a negative impact on the entire group. Remind yourself that the cultural differences—big and small—are a major reason why you have chosen to do this program.
- **Recognize that there will be situations you won't be able to change.** Sometimes, you'll just have to let it go. There won't be anything that can be done about a situation. Instead of complaining and potentially sabotaging the group's progress, take a step back and look forward to the next day's activities.
- **Realize you have a responsibility to the entire group.** Your behavior can have a major influence on the success or failure of your group experience. It is each member's responsibility to ensure that he/she is prepared for class, ready to be an active and eager participant in course activities. By taking responsibility for your own actions, you ensure that you and your classmates will make the most of your time abroad.
- **Keep your sense of humor!** Try to keep perspective and see the humor in difficult situations. This can often mean the difference between a good day and a terrible one.

- **Remember, this too shall pass.** Your course will take you away from home for a brief moment. Before you know it, the time will be over, and you will be on your way back home. Make the most of that time!

Health and safety abroad

Insurance

When preparing to study off campus, it is important to consider what kind of insurance coverage will protect you from major financial consequences should you have medical problems prior to departure or while abroad. St. Thomas requires that all students studying abroad be insured against any medical expenses that may be incurred while participating on an off-campus program. The following insurance is “stackable”:

- CISI insurance (already provided to you as part of your short-term program coverage; see below)
- St. Thomas Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan
- Parents/Spouse/Other Health Insurance

Insurance is your responsibility

Make sure your present medical insurance covers you outside of the U.S. Your program fee covers a CISI travel insurance policy.

Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI)

Students participating on international short-term programs through St. Thomas will receive coverage through CISI while they are overseas. Your CISI insurance will include*: comprehensive accident/sickness, medical evacuation, repatriation, 24-7-365 worldwide assistance, a comprehensive security evacuation plan, and trip cancellation.

** See the CISI brochure or refer to emailed information sent to you from International Education for more detailed information and policy exclusions and maximums.*

Upon acceptance you will receive more information on your insurance plan, access to the CISI portal, and your insurance card. Please print this card to carry it on you during your time overseas, and contact CISI in the event of an emergency. To learn more about CISI visit www.culturalinsurance.com.

Are you insured through the St. Thomas accident and sickness insurance plan?

The St. Thomas insurance policy covers you before, during and after your time abroad. See the brochure for a list of travel assistance benefits.

Questions to ask your insurance provider:

- Does the plan include hospitalization coverage for accidents and illnesses while off campus?
- What is the maximum amount of coverage provided?
- Are there deductibles? If so, what are they?
- Will the plan include emergency room expenses?
- What is the coverage for medical evacuation?
- In the event of death, what is the coverage for repatriation of my remains?
- What do you do under the plan if you have to pay cash up front and have no money?
- Does the plan cover visits to the doctor or medication prescribed while abroad?
- What are the procedures for filing a claim, and how long does it take to get reimbursed after filing?
- If it is a trip cancellation plan, what are the guidelines regarding pre-existing conditions?
- When does the plan begin and end?
- Does the plan enable you to have continuous coverage before, during and after you go abroad?
- Is the plan the primary or secondary carrier? If secondary, when does the coverage begin?
- Is there a booklet explaining coverage in detail?

Tips for staying healthy abroad

Many places you will go will have no special health concerns. Health-care systems and facilities in many overseas locations are quite similar to what we have in the United States. In other regions, however, there are different and specifically recommended health procedures.

- If you require regular medical care for any condition you have, tell those who can be of assistance. This may mean simply identifying a doctor or other practitioner who will provide your care. Or it could mean discussing your condition with your faculty director or on-site organization if you may need emergency intervention during your stay.
- Students with health concerns such as allergies, asthma, diabetes, mental health concerns, dietary restrictions, or sleep problems should consult with their health care provider before departure to make sure they know how to take care of themselves abroad.

Attend to your well-being

Despite the change in your environment, you can still keep some of your daily routines from home.

- Get enough rest – a challenge during the few days of jet lag.

- Eat nutritiously, which may mean trying some foods you're not accustomed to.
- Get plenty of exercise to keep your mind and body working well.
- Don't isolate yourself. You may have to make the first move in developing friendships, but they are an essential part of any overseas experience and, more importantly, your emotional well-being.

Remember that you are ultimately responsible for informing yourself about common ailments and diseases in "your part of the world", whether shots are required and for deciding whether or not to have vaccinations.

Pay attention to jet lag

Jet lag can have a serious impact on your health and your ability to do well in your course. Here are some suggestions for minimizing the foggy feeling you may experience after traveling across time zones.

In flight:

- Get plenty of rest before your departure.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine on the plane, which interfere with your body's natural "clock" and cause dehydration.
- Drink plenty of liquids, such as fruit juice or water.
- Exercise at your seat, in the aisles or at the back of the plane.
- Sleep for a few hours rather than watching the movie. Bring an eye pillow and earplugs to block out light and sounds that might prevent you from sleeping on the plane.
- Wear comfortable clothes on the plane, and dress in layers to account for temperature variations.
- Try resetting your watch to the destination's time as soon as you get on the plane. If it is daytime in your new destination, try to stay awake. When it is nighttime there, try to sleep.

On arrival:

- Walk outdoors, if possible.
- Continue to eat and drink healthy foods to avoid getting sick.
- Try to stick to the local bedtime-you'll adjust faster that way.

Don't overlook culture shock

Culture shock can affect anyone, from the most seasoned international traveler to one who is leaving the home country for the first time. Culture shock can have a real impact on your health and well-being during the time you are abroad, and we offer the following information to help you confront culture shock head on.

Culture shock comes in many forms. For some students, it shows up as sleep problems (either too much or too little), while others experience an increase in anxiety, anger,

depression, or even feeling overly homesick. You might feel lonely or isolated, while your friends have trouble with the food and refuse to eat, for example. If culture shock takes control, you may find yourself feeling hostile or extremely negative towards your host country's culture.

Fortunately, there are a number of simple things you can do to limit the affects of culture shock.

- Keeping a journal might allow you to process some of the feelings you are having, and also provide a healthy outlet for negativity.
- Talking to other students or your faculty director about what you are experiencing can make the process of adjusting to a new culture less intimidating, and also provide an opportunity for group problem-solving.
- Getting more involved with the host culture, whether it is by meeting people, asking questions, or reading up on your own can clear up confusion about why things are the way they are in your new country, and provide a point of comparison for your thoughts on life back home.

Need immunizations?

Check with your Student Health Services for current regulations, your physician or with the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Be sure to know exactly where you will be in the countries you are visiting, as this will affect what vaccinations you may need. For example, you may be going to Peru, but never entering the rainforest.

Have your doctor or a state health official stamp and certify an "International Certificate of Vaccination" upon completion of immunizations. You can get this card from your travel clinic, the state health department or passport office.

The University of St. Thomas recommends that students ensure their **tetanus immunization** is current (within past 10 years) before going abroad. **Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B** are also recommended vaccinations that students should receive before going abroad, which are available to UST students in UST Health Services.

Tips for avoiding diarrhea

Avoiding traveler's diarrhea is not an exact science, but following the tips listed below will significantly decrease your chances of contracting it:

- Do not drink the local water unless you know it is 100% safe (and still question your source of information). You may drink coffee or tea, if they are brewed with water that has boiled for at least ten minutes. Pure fruit juices are usually safe, but be sure that you are using a clean glass. Bottled water and carbonated drinks are your safest bets.

- Where water is contaminated, ice is also contaminated. Ice can also contaminate drinking containers, unless the containers have been thoroughly cleaned with soap and hot water after the ice is discarded.
- It is safer to drink directly from a can or bottle of a beverage than from a questionable container. Wipe off wet cans or bottles before opening them as well as any surfaces that are in direct contact with your mouth.
- If you boil water, it must be boiled vigorously for at least ten full minutes and allowed to return to room temperature.
- Avoid salads, thin skinned fruits (such as grapes), milk and milk products, and seafood that is far from where it was originally caught.
- Be sure that cooked foods are thoroughly cooked. The longer the cooking time, the less chance of bacteria surviving.
- Choose restaurants carefully. Hotels that cater to tourists from Western countries will probably have higher sanitary standards, than smaller local hotels.

Symptoms of diarrhea can range from mild to very severe and occur with little warning. If you are one of the unfortunates who, despite careful eating and drinking habits, still develops traveler's diarrhea, here are some recommendations:

- Replace fluids — dehydration is one of the problems associated with diarrhea. The goal of treatment is not to suppress the symptoms of diarrhea, but to correct the body's fluid imbalances.
- Add salt to your diet.
- Avoid dairy products (they inhibit the body's absorption of salt).
- Use medications such as Imodium, Lomotile, Pepto-Bismol or Paregoric to relieve abdominal cramps. These medications should be used only for two to three days to give symptomatic relief.
- If symptoms persist longer than a few days, consult a physician.
- If diarrhea is accompanied by a high fever, shaking, chills, and/or blood in the stools, tell your course instructor and consult a physician immediately.

Avoid problems with your prescription medication

If you require special prescription drugs such as medications for asthma or diabetes you must take an adequate supply with you and know how to administer them. You should also carry written instructions from your physician in case of emergency. It is appropriate to notify your on-site coordinator of any medications you are taking or any special health problems.

Glasses and contact lens wearers

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take along an extra pair and your lens prescription. You may also want to include enough contact lens solution for your time abroad since it

may be difficult to obtain in certain countries and is often very expensive when it is available.

How to adjust to the heat

If you are going to a country with a warm winter climate, you need to be thinking about more than just how nice it is to escape the Upper Midwest weather. Extreme changes in climate and temperature variations will affect both the comfort and health of those who are not prepared. For the most enjoyable time in the heat, follow these tips:

- Minimize the amount of time you are in direct sunlight.
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially water!
- Wear light colored, loose fitting clothing that is made of cotton or another material that is capable of absorbing perspiration. Bring a hat!

A safe journey abroad

The information in this section is taken from:
DEPARTMENT OF STATE PUBLICATION 10942
Bureau of Consular Affairs • Revised March 2002

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html

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Millions of U.S. citizens travel abroad each year and use their passports. When you travel overseas or within the U.S., the odds are in your favor that you will have a safe and incident-free journey. However, crime and violence, as well as unexpected difficulties, do befall travelers in all parts of the world, including the U.S. No one is better able to tell you this than consular officers who work in the more than 250 U.S. embassies and consulates around the globe. Every day of the year these embassies and consulates receive calls from American citizens in distress.

Fortunately, most problems can be solved over the telephone or by a visit of the U.S. citizen to the Consular Section of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. But there are less fortunate occasions when these consular officers are called on to meet U.S. citizens at foreign police stations, hospitals, prisons and even at morgues. In these cases, the assistance that consular officers can offer is specific but limited.

In the hope of helping you avoid unhappy meetings with consular officers when you travel, we have prepared the following travel tips. Please have a safe journey.

Safety begins when you pack. To avoid being a target, dress conservatively. A flashy wardrobe or one that is too casual can mark you as a tourist. As much as possible, avoid the appearance of affluence.

Always try to travel light. Traveling light allows you to move more quickly and you will be more likely to have a free hand. You will also be less tired and less likely to set your luggage down, leaving it unattended.

Carry the minimum amount of valuables necessary and plan a place or places to conceal them. Your passport, cash and credit cards are most secure when locked in a hotel safe. When you have to carry them on your person, you may wish to conceal them in several places rather than putting them all in one wallet or pouch. Avoid handbags, fanny packs and outside pockets, which are easy targets for thieves. Inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest are somewhat safer. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.

Pack an extra set of passport photos along with a photocopy of your passport information page to make replacement of your passport easier in the event it is lost or stolen.

Label your luggage. Put your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality and if possible, lock your luggage.

Consider getting a telephone calling card or a country-specific SIM card. It is a convenient way of keeping in touch. If you have one, verify that you can use it from your overseas location(s). Access numbers to U.S. operators are published in many international newspapers. Find out your access number before you go. Or, you can buy a pre-paid phone cards in the foreign country for use in public telephones. Check with your cell phone carrier before you travel because international calls and texts can be quite costly.

Travel security

The Department of State's Consular Information Sheets are available for every country of the world. They describe entry requirements, currency regulations, unusual health conditions, the crime and security situation, political disturbances, areas of instability, and special information about driving and road conditions. They also provide addresses and emergency telephone numbers for U.S. embassies and consulates. In general, the Sheets do not give advice. Instead, they describe conditions so travelers can make informed decisions about their trips.

In some dangerous situations, however, the Department of State recommends that Americans defer travel to a country. In such a case, a **Travel Warning** is issued for the country in addition to its Consular Information Sheet.

Public Announcements are a means to disseminate information about relatively short-term and/or trans-national conditions posing significant risks to the security of American travelers. They are issued when there is a perceived threat, even if it does not involve

Americans as a particular target group. In the past, Public Announcements have been issued to deal with short-term coups, pre-election disturbances, and violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events.

You can access Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements at:

- <http://travel.state.gov>, or
- The Overseas Citizens Services at 1-888-407-4747, from 8:00am-8:00pm, which answers general inquiries on safety and security overseas.

Local laws and customs

When you leave the United States, you are subject to the laws of the country where you are. Therefore, before you go, try to learn as much as you can about the laws and customs of your host country. Good resources are your library, your travel agent, and the embassies, consulates or tourist bureaus of the countries you will visit. In addition, keep track of what is being reported in the media about recent developments in those countries.

General safety tips

Your actions while traveling should be guided by a combination of common sense and an awareness of the conditions around you. Be especially cautious in or avoid areas where you are likely to be victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, festivals and marginal areas of cities.

The following tips should help keep you safe:

- **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. Avoid particularly demonstrations which are likely to be anti-American in focus.
- **Keep a low profile** and avoid loud conversations or arguments. Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.
- **Always carry the hotel name, address and phone number with you.** This is especially important in countries where English is infrequently spoken or the road signs are written in non-Roman alphabets.
- **Avoid scam artists.** Beware of strangers who approach you, offering bargains or to be your guide.
- **Beware of pickpockets.** They often have an accomplice who will:
 - jostle you,
 - ask you for directions or the time,
 - point to something spilled on your clothing, or spill something on you
 - distract you by creating a disturbance.

- **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. When possible, ask directions only from individuals in authority.
- **Know how to use a pay telephone** and have the proper change or token on hand.
- **Learn a few phrases in the local language** so you can signal your need for help, the police, or a doctor. Make 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. Your money and passport can be replaced, but you cannot.
- **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.
- **Let someone know when you expect to return** if you are out late at night.
- **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. Be sure you know where the nearest fire exit and alternate exits are located. Count the doors between your room and the nearest exit. This could be a life-saver if you have to crawl through a smoke-filled corridor.
- **Taxis.** Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked cabs.
- **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 drink offered to passengers. Criminals may also spray sleeping gas in train compartments.
- **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.

How to avoid legal difficulties

You can be arrested overseas for actions that may be either legal or considered minor infractions in the United States.

Be aware of what is considered criminal in the country where you are. Consular Information Sheets include information on unusual patterns of arrests in various countries when appropriate.

Some of the offenses for which U.S. citizens have been arrested abroad are:

Drug violations

More than 1/3 of U.S. citizens incarcerated abroad are held on drug charges. Some countries do not distinguish between possession and trafficking. Many countries have mandatory sentences - even for possession of a small amount of marijuana or cocaine. A number of Americans have been arrested for possessing prescription drugs, particularly tranquilizers and amphetamines, that they purchased legally in certain Asian countries and then brought to some countries in the Middle East where they are illegal. Other U.S. citizens have been arrested for purchasing prescription drugs abroad in quantities that local authorities suspected were for commercial use. If in doubt about foreign drug laws, ask local authorities or the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Photography

In many countries you can be harassed or detained for photographing such things as police and military installations, government buildings, border areas and transportation facilities. If you are in doubt, ask permission before taking photographs.

Terrorism awareness

Terrorism is an unfortunate fact of life in today's world. Terrorist acts occur at random and unpredictably, making it impossible to protect oneself absolutely. The first and best protection is to avoid travel to unsafe areas where there has been a persistent record of terrorist attacks or kidnapping. The vast majority of foreign states have good records of maintaining public order and protecting residents and visitors within their borders from terrorism.

Most terrorist attacks are the result of long and careful planning. Just as a car thief will first be attracted to an unlocked car with the key in the ignition, terrorists are looking for defenseless, easily accessible targets who follow predictable patterns. The chances that a tourist, traveling with an unpublished program or itinerary, would be the victim of terrorism are extremely slight. In addition, many terrorist groups, seeking publicity for political causes within their own country or region, may not be looking for American targets.

Nevertheless, the following pointers may help you avoid becoming a target of opportunity. They should be considered as adjuncts to the tips listed in the previous sections on how to protect yourself against the far greater likelihood of being a victim of crime. These precautions may provide some degree of protection, and can serve as practical and psychological deterrents to would-be terrorists.

- Be aware of what you discuss with strangers and watch out for anyone who may be eavesdropping.
- Try to minimize the time spent in the public area of an airport, which is a less protected area. Move quickly from the check-in counter to the secured areas.

- As much as possible, avoid dress and behavior (baseball hats, college sweatshirts, fanny packs, loud voices) that may identify you as an American.
- Keep an eye out for suspicious abandoned packages or briefcases. Report them to airport security or other authorities and leave the area promptly.
- Avoid obvious terrorist targets such as places where Americans and Westerners are known to congregate, such as McDonalds and other fast food restaurants, and U.S.-owned companies, such as The Gap.

Special note on cultural differences

We include the following two excerpts from the Council on International Educational Exchange student handbook, as attitudes toward women and minority groups vary greatly among cultures. Consider that even if you are not in the minority at home, you might be in your host culture.

A note to women

Women may not have the same status or role in the host country as in your home country and women may find themselves in situations where they experience anxiety, confusion, fear, powerlessness and/or anger. Some past participants have found that many host country nationals have a distorted and stereotyped image (often acquired through advertising, television, and movies) of U.S. women. In-country hosts can provide insights into the host culture's view of women and provide suggestions for reducing anxiety while ensuring one's personal safety.

A note to students of color

Students who are members of under-represented groups (ethnic minorities, participants with disabilities, participants who are overweight, religious minorities, gay and lesbian students), may face particular challenges in the study abroad setting. For example, African-American students in St. Petersburg and white students in the Dominican Republic may experience similar feelings of discomfort and may learn that host country nationals hold misconceptions about ethnic groups. Non-visible minority groups, such as gay students in China or Japanese-American students in Japan may face different challenges. The gay student, who could be openly gay on the home campus, may feel pressure to modify his behavior in a culture where homosexuality is not accepted or is against the law. For some students the culture shock may be double: an African-American student who attends an all-black college in the U.S. might find him or herself a minority among program participants and a minority in the host country. In-country hosts or your faculty director can provide information and support.

Practical matters

Baggage

Baggage allowances vary among the airlines, and between domestic and international destinations. To avoid delays with airport check-in and coach transfers, we ask that travel course participants bring only one carry-on bag and one checked bag. There is a range of baggage allowances among carriers and destinations. Check directly on the website of your airline for details, as they frequently change. There may be times when you will be responsible for the transfer of your luggage (back packs or bags with wheels are recommended) so the lighter you travel, the happier you will be. Put your name, address and phone number on the inside of your suitcase, in the event your outside address tag is torn off. Do not lock your luggage, because locks might be cut in the event your bag is chosen for a random search.

Due to higher security levels at airports worldwide, the list of restricted carry-on articles has been expanded to include the following: knives and cutting instruments of any kind, nail files, corkscrews and butane lighters. For liquids and gels in your carry-ons, follow the 3-1-1 rule. Each container of liquid or gel must be 3 ounces or less. The containers must be placed in 1 quart sized, clear plastic, zip-top bag and only 1 bag per traveler is allowed. If in doubt, pack it in your checked bag or leave it at home. **You are the one responsible for your bags, so we recommend that you consult the TSA website for the most up-to-date policy on U.S. security and screening procedures especially relating to liquids and gels, at www.tsa.gov.** Also it is strongly recommended to pack all film in your carry-on luggage. X-ray screening of checked luggage can destroy film.

Packing advice

Rolling your clothes into cylinders and tying them with a rubber band saves space in your suitcase and actually keeps your clothes less wrinkled. For example, try placing all toiletry items in one bag and socks and underwear in another. The separation of items makes it much easier to grab items out of your suitcase.

Always carry your passport in your wallet, purse or shoulder bag and never in your luggage. All the items you'll need *during* the program, and essentials such as medication, should be carried in your carry-on luggage. Again, check the Transportation Security Administration website for specifics on what you can/cannot bring in your carry on bag. www.tsa.gov

Clothing

In deciding what to bring, the key word is **utility**. Choose your clothing and other things wisely. Keep in mind that in very few other cultures (if any) do students have the large number and variety of clothing items that the typical U.S. student does. No one will be

surprised to see you repeatedly in the same outfit. Bring clothes that go well together in a variety of combinations. You may want to consider bringing some older clothes so you don't feel bad leaving them behind if they do not fit into your suitcase at the end of the program.

Consider climate. For instance, students going to England might consider that the weather is not as severe as one might expect, due to the fact that the Gulf Stream serves to moderate temperature extremes. The actual climate, however, is much wetter than here, so that the cold seems colder and the warmer temperatures seem warmer. Another factor to consider is that generally residences and classrooms abroad are not heated to the same extent as here (the average temperature indoors is between 50 and 60 degrees). Therefore, the best way to keep warm is to follow the trend of the "layered look"--a jacket over a sweater over a shirt over an undershirt, for example.

Casual items such as trousers, shirts, sweater, and appropriate outerwear are essential on all programs. You should also bring a sturdy pair of comfortable walking shoes, which will adequately support your tired feet when walking for miles and miles. Remember, dress casually but you may need to dress up occasionally for a company visit, the opera, concerts or dining out. Ask your faculty director for specific packing advice.

Leave at home:

- valuable or expensive-looking jewelry,
- irreplaceable family objects,
- all unnecessary credit cards.

Leave a copy of your itinerary with family or friends at home in case they need to contact you in an emergency.

Bring *and* leave behind copies of these documents:

- Two photocopies of your passport identification page, airline tickets, driver's license that you plan to bring with you. Leave one photocopy of this data with family or friends at home; pack the other in a place separate from where you carry your valuables.
- Copy of credit/ATM cards front and back

Valuables

Don't bring your most prized possession on your study abroad program. We suggest that you don't take Grandmother's beautiful cameo or a \$400 camera unless you're prepared to watch them attentively. If something is irreplaceable, leave it at home.

Electrical appliances

In most parts of the world, electricity is not as cheap as it is in the U.S. Especially if you will be living with a host family, please take note of the everyday use of electricity in your host country.

The electrical current in many foreign countries differs from that of the U.S., which operates at 110 volts alternating at 60 cycles. In much of the rest of the world the standard current is 220 volts at 50 cycles. In addition, plug prongs are often different. If you don't use the proper converter or transformer, and plug adapter, you risk burning out your appliance and causing an electrical short. The best advice is to do without gadgets or purchase them there.

If you must bring a few gadgets to a country where the voltage is higher, you can purchase a current converter which "steps down" the higher voltage abroad, and adapters to change your plug prongs to the local variety, but the difference in the rate of cycles will cause your equipment to operate more slowly. This makes it difficult to operate appliances such as clocks and tape recorders. Computers require a special transformer to operate successfully.

Money matters

How much money will you need?

It is a good idea to keep close track of how you spend your money now so that you can gauge your personal spending habits and learn to budget your money carefully. Be aware that small expenses tend to add up and that you will have many such items to purchase while abroad such as bus and train fares, snacks, stamps and postcards, newspapers, beverages, gifts, telephone calls and books.

Money tips

- Be aware of the official currency used in the country where you will be studying and of the approximate rate of exchange to the U.S. dollar.
- If it's not too much trouble, exchange a small amount of money prior to your departure in order to have some cash on hand upon arrival.
- Make a small guide that lists various amounts of money in U.S. dollars, and their value in the other country's currency that you can keep in your wallet to refer to while shopping (i.e. \$10=7.87 euros, \$50=\$39) Check www.xe.com for the latest exchange rates.
- A small calculator or currency converter is invaluable when traveling.
- Make a note of the credit limit on each credit card that you bring. Make certain not to charge over that amount. In some countries, Americans have been arrested

for innocently exceeding their credit limit. Ask your credit card company how to report the loss of your card from abroad. 800 numbers do not work from abroad, but your company should have a number that you can call while you are overseas.

- Make sure to have your passport with you as identification when you change money.

How much should you budget to spend?

Because spending habits differ widely, it is hard to provide a set amount for all students. In order to determine how much you will need, you should take into account both the fixed costs, such as meals not included in the program fee and transportation during free time AND variable costs, such as independent travel, entertainment, shopping and gifts, and frequency of communication to the U.S.

Budgets vary depending upon spending habits and course inclusions. Check your course description for inclusions and exclusions and talk to your Program Director(s) about what costs are in your host country(ies). As a guide we suggest the following:

- \$8.75 for each breakfast (may be included with accommodations)
- \$15.00 for each lunch
- \$22.50 for each dinner (for information on the number of meals not included in the comprehensive fee, see the course description)
- \$50.00 for inner city transportation (bus, subway, etc.)
- \$50.00 for optional theatre performances or side trips
- \$50.00 for incidentals such as toiletry articles, laundry, postage, etc.

How to carry money

Opinions vary on the best way to take money overseas. Some will only take ATM and credit cards, while others rely on cash and traveler's checks. Regardless of which you choose, be aware of the advantages and disadvantages.

ATM cards:

- Offer a better exchange rate than changing currency and ATM machines are generally easily accessible in large cities.
- Your card must have a "Cirrus" or "Plus" symbol in order to work outside the United States.
- PIN must be 4 digits; keep in mind that ATMs overseas do not have letters on the keypads.
- You will have access only to your checking account, not savings.
- Before departure, check with your bank to determine ATM transaction fees, limits, and customer service numbers that can be dialed from your host country.

Credit cards:

- Usually offer the best exchange rate and are safe to carry.
- Can be prohibitively expensive to use for cash advances.
- In most countries, only Visa and MasterCard are accepted. Leave other cards at home.

Traveler's checks:

- Are no longer used by many travelers; mainly in sites where ATM machines are not yet common place. Check with your faculty director.
- Can be helpful in case credit card(s) or cash are lost or stolen.

Cash:

- Cannot be replaced if lost or stolen.
- Is easier to exchange than traveler's checks in many places.
- If you bring in the currency of your host country, it can be used immediately after you arrive to meet any expenses.

How to handle money safely

- **Do not flash large amounts of money** when paying a bill. Make sure your credit card is returned to you after each transaction.
- **Deal only with authorized agents** when you exchange money, buy airline tickets or purchase souvenirs. Do not change money on the black market.
- **If your possessions are lost or stolen**, report the loss immediately to the local police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance claims and as an explanation of your plight. After reporting missing items to the police, report the loss or theft of:
 - traveler's checks to the nearest agent of the issuing company,
 - credit cards to the issuing company,
 - airline tickets to the airline or travel agent,
 - passport to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Other things to think about as you prepare to go**Customs checks**

Upon arrival in a new country you may have all of your bags checked by a customs official. If you have only personal items and clothing, you should experience no difficulty. Any person found with illegal drugs will be subject to the laws of the country in which they are found and the fact that the offender may be an U.S. citizen is not grounds for leniency in the punishment that may be meted out.

Communicating with loved ones

Explain to your family and friends that you may not be able to call them for the first couple of days that you are away. Of course, they will want to know that you have arrived safely, so try to give them a call within the first few days, or so. Manage their expectations however; it may actually take a few days to figure out the telephone system.

It is possible that you will find a cyber cafe in your free time. Many students report that this works well. Keyboards may be different in other countries than you are used to in the United States. Computers may be slow.

There are three basic ways to call the United States when you are traveling abroad:

1. **Use Local Pay Phones:** In general, the best way to make international calls from pay phones is to buy a pre-paid phone card when you are at your destination. These phone cards usually offer better rates than calling cards and are quite convenient.
2. **Use an International Calling Card:** If you decide to use a card from your long distance phone service, figure out *before you leave* how to call home from the countries you will be in. Calling cards are convenient and can be used virtually anywhere, but can have steep rates.
3. **Skype:** A free online service that allows voice or video phone calls. Visit www.skype.com for more information and to set up an account.

Do not place a direct call from your hotel room! The costs will be enormous, and you will be subject to surcharges even if you use a calling card. Use public phones!

Photography

People give expression to their experiences overseas in many different ways. Some of these means are journal writing, detailed letters home, art, music, and photography.

Of various forms of expression, photography is one that needs to be done with particular sensitivity and care. If you plan to take pictures while overseas, keep the following things in mind:

- Be sensitive to others' feelings about photography and do not intrude when you are not welcome. Do not let your photography become offensive.
- Remember that memories can be created by getting to know people as well as by photographing them.

- Look and listen; do not merely see your experiences through the lens of the camera. Searching for the perfect shot can distract you from enjoying and learning from what is around you.

Digital storage space / 35mm film

To maximize your use of a digital camera, consider the following:

- If you plan to print your photos, set the camera on the highest resolution possible.
- Know the storage limits on your media cards. Consider bringing a spare in case the first one reaches its maximum.
- Figure out how much battery life you will have depending on the kind of battery. Take extra batteries, or consider how you will recharge—do you need a plug converter or voltage adapter?

If you are using 35mm film, take enough film for the entire program because it is generally more expensive overseas than in the U.S. Don't underestimate the number of rolls you will need — better to have too much than too little. Generally, 12-25 rolls will do it. More serious photographers may want 30-40 rolls. With various new security precautions now in place, research how best to transport both undeveloped and developed rolls of film before you depart.

Currently, it is strongly recommended not to pack any film in your checked luggage.

Appendices

Ten Commandments of travel

- 1. Thou** shalt not expect to find things precisely as they are at home...for thou left home to find things differently.
- 2. Thou** shalt not take things too seriously... for a carefree mind is the basis for a good vacation.
- 3. Thou** shalt not let other tour members get on thy nerves... for thou art paying good money to enjoy thyself.
- 4. Thou** shalt not worry... he that worrieth hath little joy... and few things are fatal.
- 5. Thou** shalt not judge all people of a country by one person with whom thou had a problem.
- 6. Thou** shalt do in Rome somewhat as the Romans do.
- 7. Thou** shalt carry thy passport at all times... for a person without a passport is a person without a country.
- 8. Blessed** is one who can say “Thank you” in any language... verily it is worth more than gold.
- 9. Blessed** is one who can make change in any currency, for thou shalt not be cheated.
- 10. Thou** art welcome in every land... treat thy hosts with respect and thou shalt be an honored guest.

-author unknown

Traveler's toilet trauma

By Rick Steves

Every traveler has one or two great toilet stories. Foreign toilets can be traumatic. And they can be hard to find. But, when all is said and done, they are one of those little things that make travel so much more interesting than staying home. Before you dive into that world of memorable porcelain experiences, let me prepare you for toilet-shock, and pass on a few tips on finding a Water Closet (W.C.) quickly when you need one.

First, about toilet trauma. While most European toilets are reasonably similar to our own, many are dirtier than and different from what you're used to. Only Americans need disposable bibs to sit on and a paper strip draped over their toilet, assuring them that no one has sat there yet. In fact, those of us who need a throne to sit on are in the minority. Most humans sit on their haunches and nothing more. When many Asian refugees are de-Oriented in the United States, they have to be taught not to stand on our rims.

So, if you plan to venture away from the international-style hotels in your travels and become a temporary local person, "going local" will take on a very real meaning. Experienced travelers enjoy recalling the shock they got the first time they opened the door and found only porcelain footprints and a squat-and-aim hole in the ground — complete with flies in a holding pattern. When confronted by the "nontilet," remind yourself that if a Western-style toilet were there, it would be so filthy you wouldn't want to get near it.

Toilet paper (like spoon and fork) is another Western "essential" that most people on our planet do not use. What they use varies. I won't get too graphic here, but remember that a billion people in south Asia never eat with their left hand. Some countries have very frail plumbing, and toilet paper will jam up the W.C.'s. If wastebaskets are full of dirty paper, leave yours there too.

Take only a small amount of toilet paper with you from home. When you run out, tour a first-class hotel or restaurant and borrow 8 or 10 more yards of good, soft stuff. Local grade TP can be closer to wax or crepe paper — good for a laugh but not much more. The TP scene has improved markedly in the last few years, but you'll still find some strange stuff worth taking home to show your friends.

Finding a decent public toilet can be frustrating. Once I dropped a group off in a town for a potty stop and when I picked them up 20 minutes later, none had found relief. Most countries have few public rest rooms. You'll need to find a knack for finding a private W.C.

I can sniff out a biffy in a jiffy. Any place that serves food or drinks has a rest room. No restaurateur would label his W.C. so those on the street can see, but you can walk into

nearly any café or restaurant, politely and confidently, and find a bathroom. Assume it's somewhere in the back. It's easiest in large places that have outdoor seating, because waiters will think you're a customer just making a quick trip inside. Some call it rude — I call it survival. If you feel like it, ask permission. Just smile, "Toilet?" I'm rarely turned down. Timid people buy a drink they don't want in order to leave one. That's unnecessary. American-type fast food places are very common these days and always have a decent and fairly "public" rest room. When nature beckons and there's no restaurant or bar handy, look in parks, train stations, on trains, in museums, hotel lobbies, government buildings, and on upper floors of department stores. Large, classy hotels are as impressive as many palaces you'll see. You can always find a royal retreat here and plenty of very soft TP. They are an oasis in Third World countries, where a pleasant sit-down toilet experience is a rare treat.

Many cities (Paris, London, Amsterdam) are dotted with coin-op telephone booth-style W.C.'s on street corners. You insert a coin, the door opens, and you have 15 minutes of toilet time accompanied by Sinatra Muzac. When you leave, it disinfects itself.

After you've found and used a toilet, you're down to your last challenge — flushing it. Rarely will you find the basic handle you grew up with. Find some protuberance and push, pull, twist, squeeze, step on, or pray to it until the waterfall starts. Electric-eye sinks and urinals are increasingly popular.

In many countries, you'll need to be selective to avoid the gag-a-maggot variety of toilets. Public toilets like those in parks are often repulsive. I never leave a museum without taking advantage of its restrooms — free, clean, and full of artistic graffiti. Use the toilets on the train rather than in the station to save time and money. Toilets on first-class cars are a cut above second-class toilets. I go first-class even with a second-class ticket. Train toilets are located on the ends of cars, where it's most jiggly. A trip to the train's john always reminds me of the rodeo. Never use a train W.C. while stopped in a station.

Men: The women who seem to inhabit Europe's W.C.'s are a popular topic of conversation among Yankee travelers. Sooner or later, you'll be minding your own business at the urinal and the lady will bring you your change or sweep under your feet. Yes, it is distracting, but you'll just have to get used to it — she has.

And finally, there are countries where the people don't use rest rooms at all. I've been on buses that have just stopped, and 50 people scatter. Three minutes later they reload, relieved. It takes a little adjusting, but that's travel.

Reprinted from Europe through the Backdoor Newsletter



[Please note that you have signed the following document and agree to abide by it]

Short-Term Off-Campus Programs Agreement International Education

This is a Release of Legal Rights -- Read and Understand Before Signing.

Name of Student:

Name of Program/Course:

I, _____ (Student's Name) will participate in a cross-cultural off-

campus program ("Program") in

_____ for _____ term, _____, offered through the University of St. Thomas International Education

Center. I understand that participation in the Program is voluntary, and in consideration of being allowed to participate in the Program, I hereby agree as follows:

1. Risks of Off-Campus Study

I understand that participation in the Program involves risks not found in study on-campus, these risks include: traveling to and within, and returning from, one or more foreign countries; foreign political, legal, social and economic conditions; different standards of design, safety and maintenance of buildings, public places and conveyances; risk of pandemic and possible quarantine; housing that may be located in an area that is dangerous to my health and safety; travelling to and within, and returning from one or more countries which is the subject of a U.S. State Department Travel Warning; and other risks which may be described in brochures and other written information concerning this Program which I have received and reviewed. I understand that these and other risks are further described in the U.S. Department of State Consular Information Sheet and Travel Warning, accessible at <http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/>. I have made my own investigation and, knowing the dangers, hazards and risks involved in my participation in the Program, I am willing to accept these risks.

2. Independent Activity

Although the University of St. Thomas ("University") sponsors this Program, I understand that neither the University nor any of the Program Directors or travel arrangers will supervise me at all times. I will have the opportunity and the right to independently leave the group periodically, subject to the Program Director's requirements for participation in and attendance at classes and other activities that are a required part of the Program. Therefore, I will be responsible for my own safety and cannot hold the University liable for any injuries to my person or property or any other losses that occur during my participation in the Program.

3. Disclaimer of Institutional Liability

I understand that the University does not represent or act as an agent for, and cannot control the acts or omissions of, any host institution, home stay, hotel, transportation carrier, tour organizer or other provider of goods or services involved in the Program. I understand that the University is not responsible for matters that are beyond its control. The University, its Board of Trustees, employees and agents are not responsible or liable for any injury, damage, loss, expenses, or delay which I incur as a result of my participation in the Program including, but not limited to: (1) any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or other irregularity which may be caused by the defect of any vehicle or the negligence or default of any host institution, home stay, of goods or services involved in the Program; (2) any losses or expenses due to sickness, weather, strikes, hostilities, wars, natural disasters or other such causes; or (3)

any disruption of travel arrangements, or any consequent additional expense that may be incurred therefrom.

4. Early Departure

If I decide to leave the Program before completing my course of study, I will provide the University with advance written notice of my intention to leave the Program. If I leave the Program prior to its completion, the University has no liability to provide or arrange for transportation, housing, dining or other services to me in connection with my early departure.

5. Standards of Conduct

A. I understand that each country has its own laws and standards of acceptable conduct, including dress, manners, morals, politics, drug use and behavior. I recognize that behavior violating those laws or standards could harm the University's relations with those countries and the institutions therein, as well as my own health and safety. I will become informed of, and will abide by, all such laws and standards for each country to or through which I will travel during the Program.

B. I will comply with all rules and regulations issued by the University, Program Directors or any coordinating institution. It is within the Program Director's discretion to determine that my violation of such rules and regulations warrants my termination from the Program. **In that event, I may be sent home at my own expense.** I agree that the University has the right to enforce its rules and regulations, in its sole discretion, and that it will impose sanctions, up to and including expulsion from the Program, for violation of these rules and regulations or for any behavior detrimental to or incompatible with the interests, harmony and welfare of the University, the Program or other participants. I recognize that due to the circumstances of offcampus study programs, procedures for notice, hearing and appeal applicable to student disciplinary proceedings at the University do not apply. If I am expelled, I consent to being sent home at my own expense with no refund of fees. **I also agree that I will: (a) not buy, sell or use illegal drugs at any time, (b) not engage in abusive use of alcohol, (c) participate in all classes and scheduled activities unless ill, and (d) abide by dress and cultural codes suitable in the countries visited.**

6. Program Changes

The University may, in its sole discretion, determine that circumstances within a foreign country may require the cancellation of the Program within that country. The University will provide me with as much advance notice as possible of its intention to cancel the Program in which I will participate. I also understand that the University, the on-site coordinators or the foreign government may prematurely terminate the Program. I understand that the University's fees and Program charges are based on current airfares, lodging rates and travel costs, which are subject to change. If I leave or am expelled from the Program for any reason, there will be no refund of fees already paid. I accept all responsibility for loss or additional expenses due to delays or other changes in the means of transportation, other services, or sickness, weather, strikes, computer problems or other unforeseen causes. If I become sick or injured, I will, at my own expense, seek out, contact and reach the Program group at its next available destination. The University bears no liability for any losses or claims incurred by me in connection with my own early termination from the Program or the University's termination of its participation in the Program. If I decide to remain in the foreign country after receiving notice of the University's intent to terminate the Program, I bear complete responsibility and liability for my own care and safety.

7. Health and Safety

A. I have consulted with a medical doctor with regard to my personal medical needs. There are no health related reasons or problems which preclude or restrict my participation in this Program.

B. I am aware of all of my applicable personal medical needs. I have arranged, through insurance, to meet any and all needs for payment of medical costs while I participate in the Program. I recognize that the University is not obligated to attend to any of my medical or medication needs, and I assume all risk and responsibility therefore. If I require medical treatment or hospital care in a foreign country or in the United States during the Program, the University is not responsible for the cost or quality of such treatment or care.

C. The University may (but is not obligated to) take any action it considers to be warranted under the circumstances regarding my health and safety. I hereby authorize the University and/or Program Directors to procure all necessary medical assistance while I participate in this Program and to authorize any competent medical person to do all things reasonably necessary to treat any injury or illness that occurs during my participation in the Program. I agree to pay all expenses relating thereto and release the University from any liability or any actions.

D. In the event of an emergency, the University is authorized to contact and release information to:

_____ (person and relationship to me) at:
_____ (current phone number) about

any and all aspects of my participation in the Program. Such information may include, without limitation, information about my medical condition, my behavior while participating in the Program, and payment of expenses and other costs associated with my participation in the Program. This authorization is valid for two months beyond my participation in the Program, unless another date is specified as follows: Ending Date: _____.

8. Indemnification

I agree for myself and on behalf of my heirs and successors and assigns agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless the host institution, the University of St. Thomas, the past and present trustees, officers, employees, students, and agents of each from any and all loss, cost, damage, liability or expense (including reasonable attorneys' fees) resulting in or arising from my participation in the Program (including periods in transit to or from any country where the Program is being conducted).

9. Program Charges

I am responsible for any and all required payments and charges applicable to the Program. I understand the Program's cancellation policies and fees and agree to abide by them. I have read, understand and will abide by the terms of the **Short-term Off-Campus Programs Policies and Procedures** book included with the application.

10. Health Insurance

I am insured for any medical expenses, which I may incur while I participate in the Program. This policy is with _____ and my policy number is _____

11. Photographic Likeness Release

I authorize the University and its agents to record photographs or other portraits or likenesses of me while participating in the Program on video tape, audio tape, film, photographs, or any other medium in use, reproduce, modify, distribute, and publicly exhibit such recordings, in whole or in part, without restrictions or limitations for promotional purposes. I further consent to the use of my name, voice and biographical material in connection with such recordings or photographs.

A. I release the University, and its past and present trustees, officers, employees, students and agents from any liability by virtue of any blurring, distortion, alteration, optical illusion, or use in composite form, whether intentional or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the recording process, or any unintentional misspellings or inaccuracies and waive any right that I may have to inspect or approve the finished recordings or photographs.

B. If due to private circumstances I cannot allow the use of my likeness, I can officially notify the University of such, in writing, and that request will override this Release.

I have carefully read this Short-Term Off-Campus Programs Agreement (this "Agreement") before signing it, and I have received good and valuable consideration for signing it.

This Agreement shall be effective only upon receipt of my application by the University of St. Thomas, and shall be governed by the laws of the state of Minnesota, which shall be the forum for any lawsuits filed under or incident to this Agreement or to the Program.

Student Signature:

Date:

Each of the student's parents/guardians must sign this Agreement if the student is under 18 years old.

I, (a) am the parent or legal guardian of the above student; (b) have read the foregoing Agreement (including such parts as may subject me to personal financial responsibility), (c) am and will be legally responsible for the obligations and acts of the student as described in this Agreement, and (d) agree for myself and for the student to be bound by its terms.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

Check here _____ if the student has only one parent/guardian.

Make a copy for personal records.

Check out these websites....

US State Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How to apply for a U.S. passport •Entry requirements to foreign countries for U.S. citizens (includes visa requirements) •U.S. State Dept Travel warnings/Consular Info Sheets/ Public Announcements •Tips for travelers for different world regions from the U.S. State Dept 	http://travel.state.gov
Centers for Disease Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Health Information by country 	http://www.cdc.gov
Insurance	Resources for short-term insurance, trip cancellation insurance and more.	www.culturalinsurance.com www.insuremytrip.com www.studyabroadinsurance.com www.kitt-travel.com/insurance.htm www.travelguard.com
Mobility International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Information on traveling abroad for people with disabilities 	http://www.miusa.org
Lesbigay Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Links to sites dealing with issues involving the lesbigay community and international travel. 	http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay
U.S. Postal Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •International shipping rules, regs and rates. Good links, too. 	http://www.uspsglobal.com
Currency conversions		http://www.xe.com/
Global Information Network	Time zones, telephone codes and more!	http://www.ginfo.net
Map Quest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Maps of various cities around the world 	http://www.mapquest.com/
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tourism offices worldwide •Hostels by country •International Youth Hostels •Travelocity •European and British passes 	http://mbnet.mb.ca/lucas/travel/tourism-offices.html http://www.hostels.com/hostel.menu.html http://www.iyh.org/ http://www.travelocity.com http://www.railpass.com/ http://www.raileurope.com
Travel Guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lonely Planet home page •Rough Guides •Let's Go •Fodors 	http://www.lonelyplanet.com http://www.roughguides.com http://www.letsgo.com http://www.fodors.com

Suggested packing checklist

Documents and essentials

- Money belt or neck wallet
- Passport and, if necessary, Visa
- Airline tickets
- Traveler's checks
- ATM, credit or debit card
- Insurance information and claim forms
- Phone card
- other _____
- other _____

Miscellaneous

- Luggage locks and tags
- Swiss army-type multi-purpose knife (packed in your **checked** luggage!)
- Small sewing kit
- Laundry kit – line, soap, flat drain plug
- Alarm clock (battery-operated)
- Adapter, voltage converter, transformer – if needed
- Camera and film
- Favorite music – a couple of CD's or tapes (and portable player)
- Address book
- Journal
- A notebook and pencils to get you started
- Phrase book or dictionary, if visiting a non-English-speaking country
- Small flashlight & batteries
- Sunglasses
- Ziplock plastic bags
- Earplugs
- Eyemask to block out light while you sleep
- Pictures of family/friends (for those in a home stay)
- Flipflops for the shower
- Bag to pack flat and use to carry purchases home
- other _____
- other _____

Medical/toiletries

- Prescription medicine in original containers, plus written prescriptions
- Eyeglasses or contacts, spare pair, and lens prescription
- First aid kit
- Sunscreen

- Wash cloth and small towel
- Name-brand non-prescription medications
- Moleskin for blisters
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Shampoo, deodorant, hair care products, feminine hygiene products
- Over-the-counter medications such as pain relievers, cold/allergy medicine, antihistamines, vitamins, medication for diarrhea and constipation, decongestants and hydrocortisone cream.

Clothing- cold weather

- Heavier outerwear, as recommended (coat, mittens, gloves, hat, scarf)
- 1 pair comfortable walking shoes
- 1 pair boots or dress shoes
- 3-5 pairs socks
- 5-7 sets underwear (remember that nylon dries faster than cotton)
- 1-2 pairs of trousers or skirts
- 3-4 shirts
- 1-2 sweaters
- long underwear
- Pajamas
- Nice outfit (shirt and tie for men, nice dress or outfit for women)
- other _____
- other _____

Clothing- warm weather

- sunhat with brim/scarf
- 2 pairs sandals/walking shoes
- 3-4 shirts
- 2-3 pair of trousers/shorts
- Jacket/windbreaker
- 3-5 pairs socks
- 5-7 sets underwear (remember that nylon dries faster than cotton)
- Nice outfit (shirt and tie for men, nice dress or outfit for women)
- Swimsuit
- Pajamas
- other _____

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