



A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO STUDY ABROAD IN HANOI, VIETNAM

Prepared by the Center for Global Education

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SECTION 1: Nuts and Bolts

This handbook is designed to be useful throughout your stay in Vietnam. Please bring it with you and leave a copy with your parents.

1.1 CONTACT INFORMATION

FACULTY DIRECTOR

Professor James Spates
Anthropology and Sociology Department
Stern Hall
Hobart & William Smith Colleges
Office phone: 315 781 3441
e-mail: spates@hws.edu

Hanoi address: To be confirmed shortly

Saigon address: Au Lac Hotel, Nguyen Thi Minh Khai St. Dist 3, HCMC, 9/1/10-9/25/10

For emergencies in Vietnam or to reach the Director if you're delayed in transit use Prof Spates' cell phone number which we will provide to you shortly before your arrival in Vietnam. The secondary (but, most reliable) method of contact will be his email address, as above.

You will also receive a few weeks before departure the name and contact information of the Vietnam program's "Partner" school in Vietnam. Our partner institution is making all the arrangements for your housing and internships and for the cultural program. They will provide 24-hour emergency backup service throughout the program if you are in need of assistance.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS STAFF

EMERGENCY NUMBER AFTER HOURS/WEEKENDS: [315-781-3333](tel:315-781-3333)

Hobart and William Smith Colleges Union College

Thomas D'Agostino, Director
Trinity Hall, 3rd Floor
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Geneva, New York 14456
315-781-3307 (tel)
315-781-3023 (fax)
e-mail: tdagostino@hws.edu
Contact for: Emergencies
and other critical issues

Lara Atkins
Director of International Programs
Union College, Old Chapel, 3rd Floor
Schenectady, New York 12308
phone (office) 518-388-6002
fax: 518-388-7124
24 Hour Emergency Cell Phone 518-573-0471
e-mail: atkinsl@union.edu

Amy S. Teel, Programs Operations Manager
(same address, tel, fax)
e-mail: teel@hws.edu
Contact for: Program details, flight information, etc.

Doug Reilly, Programming Coordinator
(same address, phone and fax)
e-mail: dreilly@hws.edu
Contact for: Orientation questions, return issues, SIIF grants, the Aleph, etc.

Sharon Walsh, Short Term Programs Coordinator
(same address, phone and fax)
e-mail: walsh@hws.edu
Contact for: Info on short-term/summer programs

Sue Perry, Office Support Specialist
(same address, phone and fax)
e-mail: cgestaff@hws.edu
Contact for: Paperwork, general inquiries

ADDRESS, PHONE AND FAX OF HOST INSTITUTION:

Ms. Alyce Van, Director
CET Vietnam Immersion Program
4th Floor, 45 Dinh Tien Hoang, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Mr. Dinh Duc Long
International Relations Department
Vietnam National University
Hanoi, Vietnam
phone (office): 011-84 4-824-51641
fax: 84-4-824-5507

Address for Students in HCMC (September 3 – September 25):
<student name>
Union College or Hobart & William Smith Colleges
168 Hai Ba Trung Street
District 1
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Address and Phone Numbers for Students in Hanoi (September 25 – November 29):
<student name>
Union College or Hobart & William Smith Colleges
Nha Khach A2
Bach Khoa (student residence)
Hanoi, Vietnam
phone (general residence ph.): 84-4-869-5548 or 84-4-869-1327

Remember that there is a 12-hour time difference to Vietnam (after the U.S. goes off daylight savings time), plus you cross the International Date Line. So 10:00 am on Friday here would be 10:00 pm on Friday in Vietnam.

1.2 PROGRAM PARTICIPANT LIST

FALL 2010

HWS	
Name	Email
Gionet,Trevor J	TG2679@hws.edu
Mathers,Rebecca K	RM2995@hws.edu
Posman,Mary K	MP2480@hws.edu
Smukler,Samuel J	SS5744@hws.edu
Wiggins,Tess	TW4240@hws.edu
Wolff,Stephen T	SW5068@hws.edu

UNION COLLEGE	
NAME	EMAIL
Bucklin, Kyle	bucklink@union.edu
Hoszowski, Natasha	hoszowsn@union.edu
Lnenicka, Emily	lnenicke@union.edu
Nault, Daniel	naultd@union.edu
Skorina, Erik	skorinae@union.edu

1.3 TERM CALENDAR

Program Dates - Vietnam Fall 2010

Excursion dates are still tentative. Please consult the separate Program Summary which will be provided by Professor. Spates for corrected dates and greater detail about daily class schedule, daily activities, free days, etc. You should receive this in August.

Depart U.S.	September 1 or 2 (depending upon departure city)
Arrive in Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City)	September 3
Orientation to Vietnam & internships	September 3,4
Intensive language training	September 5-24
Fly to Hanoi	September 25
Arrival in and orientation to Hanoi	September 26
Classes and internships run M-Th	September 27-Nov 25
Thanksgiving Dinner	November 25
Central Region Excursion	November 29- Dec 5

Mekong Delta Excursion
Program wrap up/farewell dinner
Program ends/group flight return

December 6-8
December 9
December 10, 2010

1.4 PASSPORTS, VISAS AND TICKETS

You have been asked to submit your passports to the CGE office along with your Vietnamese visa application, passport-sized photo and a pre-addressed pre-paid certified return mail envelope. You will receive your passports back as soon as the visas are issued. Students who are traveling during the summer and who will need their passports MUST be in touch with Amy Teel with the specific dates of all planned travels so a determination can be made about the best process/timeline to follow for the Vietnam visa.

If you booked a seat on the group flight, you will receive your e-tickets a couple of weeks before departure. You have the option of traveling independently but if you do so we ask that you plan your own arrival EARLIER than the group so you can find them and transfer from the airport with them.

Treat these documents (passport, visa, ticket) like your most valuable possessions; trying to replace such items in Vietnam will be a challenging and difficult process. We strongly recommend that you make at least two copies of these items before you leave. Give one to your parents. Keep one yourself in a safe place other than where you keep the originals. Then, in the event that the originals are stolen or lost, it will be much easier to replace them.

If you are planning to travel to other countries after our program ends, you will need to determine whether those countries require a tourist visa and, if so, take responsibility for procuring those visas yourself. Given that Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam, most countries have embassies which can be visited and visas can be procured at them during our stay. Note - some countries in Asia have disease threats and immunization requirements that may differ from those in Vietnam. It is your responsibility to find out what these diseases are and obtain the appropriate immunizations. Any country's embassy can give you this information or check the US Centers for Disease Control website (www.cdc.gov/travel/seasia). Other good websites are www.campmore.com, and www.travmed.com.

1.5 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD (ISIC)

All program participants must obtain the International Student Identity Card (ISIC). Many of you have already done this through the HWS Registrar. If you have not, make sure you do this before you leave campus. The card will provide you with an emergency medical insurance package; in the unlikely event that you are injured or fall ill and need to be evacuated back to the United States, the ISIC card will pay for much of the expense. Medevac services can be unbelievably expensive, so make sure you get your ISIC card! You *may* be able to receive discounts with the card (for admission fees and the like) that will identify you as a student, but this varies by country. Check out insurance coverage, discounts, emergency numbers, etc. at <https://www.myisic.com/MyISIC/Travel/Main.aspx?MenuID=5004> There is also a feature called ISICConnect (which is free but you must sign up for it online) and this gives you big discounts on phone calls as well as free voicemail, an email account and a fax service. Check this out at <https://www.myisic.com/MyISIC/Travel/Main.aspx?MenuID=5003> Finally, if your passport is lost or stolen, you will be eligible for special replacement services which will expedite the process and pay for a new passport. **PLEASE BE SURE YOU HAVE THIS CARD WITH YOU. Be sure to make a photocopy of the card in case you lose it; it will be replaced free of charge by ISIC as long as you have the ID number and issue date from the card.**

1.6 TRAVEL DATES/GROUP ARRIVAL

If you choose the optional travel arrangements through Advantage Travel, the itinerary of your flight to Vietnam **will be sent to you via email** (Note: If you will **NOT** be taking the group flight, it is your responsibility to make sure that Professor Spates knows the details of your arrival to Saigon/Ho Chi Minh City: date, time, airline, and flight number.). Those students arriving on the group flight (or those arriving earlier that same day) will be met at the airport by the Faculty Director and transported to your accommodations in Saigon/HCM City.

FALL 10 GROUP FLIGHTS

JFK- New York flight Itinerary

01 SEP 2010 Cathay Pacific #889 Depart New York (JFK) 10:40 PM

03 SEP 2010 Arrive Hong Kong 6:55 AM

03 SEP 2010 Cathay Pacific #767 Depart Hong Kong 8:50 AM

03 SEP 2010 Arrive Ho Chi Minh City 10:20AM

10 DEC 2010 Cathay Pacific #766 Depart Ho Chi Minh City 11:40AM

10 DEC 2010 Arrive Hong Kong 3:20 PM

10 DEC 2010 Cathay Pacific #840 Depart Hong Kong 5:25 PM

10 DEC 2010 Arrive New York (JFK) 8:00 PM

Los Angeles flight Itinerary

02 SEP 2010 Cathay Pacific #881 Depart Los Angeles 1:40 AM

03 SEP 2010 Arrive Hong Kong 7:25 AM

03 SEP 2010 Cathay Pacific #767 Depart Hong Kong 8:50 AM

03 SEP 2010 Arrive Ho Chi Minh City 10:20 AM

10 DEC 2010 Cathay Pacific #766 Depart Ho Chi Minh City 11:40AM

10 DEC 2010 Arrive Hong Kong 3:20 PM

10 DEC 2010 Cathay Pacific #882 Depart Hong Kong 4:25 PM

10 DEC 2010 Arrive Los Angeles 12:55 PM

GENERAL TRAVEL SUGGESTIONS

You may want to contact your local travel agent about other travel information, especially if you are staying in your host country after the end of the program. The CGE's agency is Advantage Travel of Central NY (1-800-788-1980). Also in Geneva, Destinations Travel at 315-789-4469 (Cynthia Cannon) or Jeff's Travel Port at 315-781-0265 are convenient.

1.7 ORIENTATION

Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. Prof. Spates will be in Vietnam before you and will greet you when you arrive. He will travel on all group excursions with you. The Center for Global Education at HWS and International Programs Office at Union will be open throughout the summer and can answer your questions.

It is strongly recommended that you pick up some reading materials about Vietnam to prepare yourself for your experience. A travel guide (Lonely Planet, Fodor's, Let's Go, Rough Guide are good ones) will provide a general summary about the history and customs of Vietnam and will include information on the climate, currency, and suggested travel itineraries. Visit the web sites listed on the PGE web site for additional information on current events, things to do and places to visit (<http://academic.hws.edu/pge/>).

You will gain a great deal of insight into the Vietnamese language and culture during the intensive language and cultural orientation program in Ho Chi Minh City the first few weeks of the program. In addition, an orientation program will be held in Hanoi when the group arrives from the South. The content of the in-country orientation will include details about how to get around the city, safety, food (where to get it, how much to pay, eating customs, etc), and the academic program. Be prepared for strong feelings of disorientation and culture shock which may last for some time. If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, ASK FOR HELP! Professor Spates is available for you whenever you need assistance.

1.8 WHAT TO BRING

CLIMATE

Hanoi has a humid tropical climate, characterized by monsoons, like most of northern Vietnam. Summers, between May and September, are very hot with plenty of rain, while winters, from November to March, are cold and dry. During the transition months of April and October anything is possible! The most sweltering hot month of the year is June. January is the coolest month, usually beset with a cold north-easterly wind.

Hanoi	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rainfall (mm)	19	26	44	90	188	240	288	318	265	131	43	23
Rainfall (inches)	0.7	1.0	1.7	3.5	7.4	9.4	11.3	12.5	10.4	5.1	1.7	0.9
Min Temp (°F)	57	59	64	70	75	79	79	79	77	72	64	59
Max Temp (°F)	66	68	73	81	88	91	91	90	88	84	77	72

PACKING

Keep baggage to a minimum. **You must be able to carry your own luggage unassisted**, so after packing, try carrying your bags for a distance to see how portable they are and make adjustments as needed. Large, heavy suitcases are awkward and cumbersome as you negotiate trains, planes, and narrow staircases. Reasonably-sized duffel bags and backpacks are recommended. It is important that you contact your airline to find out about baggage restrictions. The usual allowance is for two pieces of checked luggage and a carry-on, although there are specific restrictions for total weight and dimensions of the bags. Be sure to label each bag (inside and outside) with your name and address.

While each individual will have his or her own tastes and habits, the following is a list of recommended items to bring. Remember that the weather in Vietnam at the outset of the program will be hot and humid with the possibility of some heavy rains. It will become cooler and more pleasant later in October and November with chilly weather at night. Remember that the dress in Hanoi is fairly conservative - no shorts, tank tops or sleeveless tops on city streets (but bring some for lounging around the beach). If you

don't want to be branded a tourist, dress appropriately. You will be able to purchase a wide variety of clothing fairly inexpensively in Vietnam as needed, although note that larger sized shoes are not readily available.

WHAT TO BRING:

Two skirts and/or dressier pants for more formal events for women

One long sleeved shirt and tie and decent khakis for formal events for men

Jeans or trousers (3-4)

Sweater or light jacket/fleece (1)

Shirts (5-6)

Underwear and socks for one week (7-8 each)

Light windbreaker (water proof) Note: cheap rain coats/umbrellas are readily available in Vietnam

Two pairs of everyday shoes/sandals (if one gets wet you have another)

One pair sturdy walking shoes for hiking

One pair of dressier shoes (if everyday shoes are unsuitable)

Sunblock (for trips to Saigon and the South) and **Insect repellent** with Deet (30%)

A good pair of sunglasses (polarized recommended)

Sleep wear (Hanoi nights later in term may be cool)

One nice bath towel

Bathing suit (conservative)

Travel alarm clock

Enough prescription medication for the term

Extra pair of glasses or contacts (and a copy of your eyewear prescription)

Camera and film or memory card(s)

Money belt or a pouch to wear under your clothes for valuables

Cosmetics/Toiletries/Sanitary items (if you have brand favorites)

Small first aid kit (for your backpack)

The essentials: airline tickets, passport and visa, immunization record, ISIC card, credit and debit cards (including photocopies of all) and this handbook

Novels to swap with others; Portable CD player

Empty notebook for your journal

Any texts or equipment that Professor Spates has asked you to purchase

Also consider:

Laptop (recommended, although it is your decision)

Earplugs (spongy ones are best)

Hat with sun visor

Small flashlight (for caves, evenings, general exploring)

Cotton or silk 'bed liner' to place between the sheets/blanket during excursions

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BRING LINENS/PILLOW FOR YOUR BED. A HAND TOWEL IS PROVIDED. You will want to bring a bath towel from home.

Some gifts for Vietnamese people who are especially helpful to you or your language teacher or a special friend (e.g., photobook on your home town, mouse pad, nice color calendar, caps or t-shirts with hometown or college logos). Small gifts for children you meet on fieldtrips or in villages (e.g., stickers, pens, erasers, hairclips, key-chains)

There may be some items that you will want to purchase while you are in Vietnam - clothes, souvenirs, film, CDs, paper, pens, books, toiletries, and the like. How much you spend depends on your tastes and finances, but all of these items are likely to be cheaper than at home. Remember that you will only be allowed two checked bags on the plane going home. If you find, as we approach departure time from Hanoi, that you are in baggage trouble, ship things home surface mail. It takes about two months but past

experience indicates that everything eventually arrives and most things arrive unscathed. If you are interested in DVDs, note that there are (at least) two different production modes for them, one for North America, one for the rest of the world. This means that DVDs bought outside the US are unlikely to play back in the US. Don't forget to leave yourself with at least some cash (\$50) to be used in the airports on your way home. Don't be caught short!

WHAT NOT TO BRING

More luggage than you can carry

Expensive jewelry

Expensive electronics that you are afraid will be stolen (petty theft is the most common crime affecting students abroad.)

Other things to keep in mind:

Point 1: Most other countries have stores! Most other countries have stores that sell things like toothpaste and socks. The brands might be unfamiliar to you, but they will get the job done. Also, you're going to want to do some shopping abroad for souvenirs, art, clothes, etc...so leave some empty space in your pack.

Point 2: Bring a day pack large enough for a weekend away but not so large you break your back. You'll need a day pack to get your books/things back and forth around the city, and a 4000 cubic inch frame backpack is quite inconvenient for this! A lot of people forget this basic necessity. (If you do, see point 1!)

Point 3: Choose the form of your luggage carefully. Many students find the internal frame backpacks efficient for getting around since they can be worn instead of being dragged or wheeled (not nice on cobblestones or dirt roads!) But there are options for all kinds of people and all kinds of travel. You know what you like best...we really just want to you to bring less.

Point 4: Bring some nice clothes. Check with the faculty director, a guidebook, or students, and they'll all likely tell you U.S. Americans are some of the most informal folks around. That means that for most students going abroad, you'll be diving into a more formal culture with a more formal standard of attire. Shorts are great for hot weather, but (in Europe and Latin America, for example) are reserved for sport and certainly not for visiting cathedrals! In general, bring at least some dressy clothes with you. It never hurts to look "good"—just remember that this is culturally defined. (See the section on fitting in, as well.)

PRESCRIPTIONS

If you have any medication you must take while you are abroad, please be sure that you have enough for the entire time you are away as it may be difficult to have prescriptions filled. Be sure to bring the written prescription (no photocopies) and a signed statement from your doctor if you have a particular medical requirement. Also, please notify the Center for Global Education before departure if you haven't done so already on your medical form. Immigration authorities may question medications in your possession and you should have proper documentation. Finally, it would be advisable to verify that a particular drug is not restricted in the host country (or others that you may plan to visit). Some countries ban certain drugs, even when prescribed by a doctor (for example, the drug Ritalin cannot be legally brought into some countries). The best advice is to be prepared and check either through your personal physician or through official government sources (such as the US State Department www.state.gov/travel/ or the Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/travel/)

LAPTOPS AND ELECTRONICS

In Vietnam (and throughout Asia), electric voltage is 220V 50 cycles (not 110V 60 cycles as in North America). If you feel you must bring a small appliance, such as a hair dryer, bring a model which is clearly marked as being usable in 220 or 110 countries. Then all you will need to do is flip the switch to 220V and get the appropriate outlet plug adaptor. Dorm rooms in Hanoi have a voltage converter appropriate for small appliances (which are not already convertible from 110 to 220V). You could also buy a small travel voltage converter before leaving the US if you think it is really necessary. Places like Wal-Mart, K-Mart, and Radio Shack have them. However, be forewarned: inexpensive converters are designed for small appliances only and for use over relatively brief periods of time. Under no circumstances should you trust a laptop to such devices.

We have been told (by Dell computers) that using your normal power surge protector strip with your laptop (and attaching the appropriate outlet plug adapter once in Vietnam) will work fine. Bringing a laptop is optional. Students from the last program also reported that some computers are available at the university. If you do bring a laptop (or any other expensive item), make sure it is covered by insurance and that you bring a receipt if possible.

Please note that petty theft is the most common crime affecting travelers. Please do not bring anything without first considering the impact of it getting stolen, or the reality of having to worry about the safety of these possessions all the time.

Two general rules for all electronics: 1) bring copies of your receipts. If your equipment looks new, upon return to the U.S., you may be asked to pay customs duties if you don't have a receipt to prove that you didn't purchase it abroad. 2) we recommend you investigate insurance coverage for your electronic devices and other expensive items. They might be covered by parents' homeowners insurance policies.

JOURNALS

Have you thought about keeping a journal abroad? Many students write journals as a way of capturing and reflecting upon their experiences, even though some may have never kept a "diary" before. A journal (or diary) is a book of dated entries. The author can record experiences, dialogues, feelings, dreams, describe sights, make lists, take notes, whatever the writer wants to leave as documentation of his or her passage through time. **Journals are tools for recording and interpreting the process of our lives.**

Why should you keep a journal? It will be an important factor in your grade for the VNLC course and...

- Because a journal...* is a keepsake that will record memories that you'd otherwise forget.
- is a keepsake that will record the person you are now—and how you'll change abroad.
- is a way to interpret what you're seeing/experiencing.
- gives you something to do on long plane/bus/train rides or alone in cafes.
- helps you become a better writer.
- is a good remedy for homesickness.
- is a space where you can express yourself with total freedom.
- is a powerful tool of exploration and reflection.

For more about keeping journals, download the CGE's Writing to Explore Journal Handbook at http://www.hws.edu/academics/global/pdf/journal_writers.pdf
You will receive a separate sheet with journal requirements from Professor Spates

DON'T BOTHER BRINGING...

Expectations: “Don’t expect, accept,” is a good attitude for students crossing cultures to have. How you set your expectations now will impact how positive of an experience you will have abroad. This means that you can do a lot now to help ensure you will get the most out of your program.

How you set your expectations now will impact how positive of an experience you will have abroad.

Simply put, examine your expectations and be realistic. You are going to a different country. Expect that things will be different. You have no idea how many things will differ or in what ways, and of course you may well be surprised at how many things are similar. But for now expect that *everything will be different*.

Believe it or not, notions of the “right way of doing things” are entirely cultural and relative. Efficiency, manners, punctuality, customer service and “the rules” do not mean the same thing in different countries. Germans might be meticulously punctual. Italians might operate under a different conception of time (and being “on-time.”) The point here is not to draw national stereotypes but to understand that different countries organize things differently, and not all of them work well from the American’s point of view. So don’t expect people in your host country to define these terms in the same way as you do. Expect to run into bureaucracy, but do look at how the people around you react to these things, and follow their lead. If they’re not throwing a temper tantrum and lecturing the mail clerk/waiter/train conductor, then neither should you.

You’d be surprised how ingrained our expectations are. We don’t see them as culturally-determined; rather, we see them as part of “the right way of doing things.” So you will get frustrated. Expect that too. But keep telling yourself that things are different, and remember that it’s not the local people’s duty to meet your expectations—it’s your duty to adjust yours to what is considered right and reasonable locally. “Don’t expect, accept.”

SECTION 2: Studying and Living Abroad

2.1 ACADEMICS ABROAD

ACADEMIC WORK

There is much to learn outside of the classroom. Nevertheless, study abroad is also fundamentally an academic endeavor. No matter what *your* goals and expectations might be, the Colleges also have expectations of *you*. These include the expectation that you will take all of your academics abroad seriously and that you will come prepared, meet deadlines, read assignments, write papers or exams with care, etc. Having said that, as study abroad programs are uniquely well-suited to non-traditional learning (i.e. experiential learning such as field-trips, internships, or field research), you will likely find that you have never had so much “fun” working so hard. The key, however, is to realize that if the fun comes at the expense of learning, you will likely be very dissatisfied with the final results. The sections that follow are designed to answer the most commonly asked questions about academics and study abroad.

While all of the participants in this program will have a life-changing experience in Vietnam, the primary purpose of this program is to develop an understanding of this country and its people in a way that one could not achieve as a tourist. For example, few people visiting Paris ever get much of a sense of the complexities of French society: they see this remarkable society only through the limited perspective of

their walk down the Champs-Elysees, from the panorama at the top of the Eiffel Tower, or from the pleasantries exchanged with a waiter at a sidewalk cafe. We will be living in what was once called the "Paris of the East". But, there is a lot more to Vietnam than its French colonial past and the buildings erected during that period.

COURSES

The courses that you will be taking as part of this program are designed to give you an in-depth understanding of Vietnamese society. These courses include: 1) Vietnamese Language, 2) Vietnamese Life and Culture, 3) Professor Spates' course, plus 4) the internship placements and/or independent study projects that you arranged in advance. NOTE: HWS STUDENTS MUST specify whether you are taking an internship or an independent study when you register so that your course registration will accurately reflect your activities and also be applied to the appropriate field of study.

Through these courses you will gain a level of insight into this dynamic society that few others will share and you will have the opportunity to learn about a culture very different from your own from the inside.

Please remember that Professor Spates will assign some work for the summer, as well as details of his expectations for readings, journals, etc in country. A detailed academic program outline is forthcoming and you should be referring to it throughout the summer.

GRADES AND CREDITS

You will receive four courses worth of credit for the Vietnam term abroad. You will receive letter grades for your work which WILL be computed into your HWS or Union grade point average, and will be posted on your permanent transcript. You will receive one course credit in Vietnamese Language. Grades for these courses will be determined by the course instructors. The Director will be responsible for evaluating your work in the Director's Seminar and the Vietnamese Life and Culture Course. Grades for your internship/independent study will be assigned by the Director after consultation with your internship mentor or independent study advisor. Students doing an independent study project must have a faculty mentor or advisor on your home campus who will collaborate with you on your project before and during your time in Vietnam..

For HWS students: as on the home campus, you may request to take any course OUTSIDE your major or minor on a credit/no credit basis so long as you do so in a timely way. This is not later than two-thirds of the way into your course term abroad. Note that the deadlines for students abroad for exercising CR/NC are based on the "host" program's calendar, not on the HWS calendar. Think hard before doing this for more than one class, however. It may well be that future graduate programs and employers will think worse of a semester of CR/NC than one poor grade in something really outside your element.

Union students are required to take all classes abroad for a grade per Union policy

ACADEMIC CULTURE AND STANDARDS

As is the case on campus, there is no single "standard" or classroom culture abroad; each professor will run his/her own classroom his/her own way and your job, as the student, is to adapt to his/her expectations and teaching style. This having been said, there are some general statements that can be applied to most classroom settings outside the United States. Here are some of the most prevalent and most pressing that are likely to affect the classroom "culture" you will experience and to which you must adapt if you will have any professors from the host country.

- 1) Learning is YOUR responsibility, not your professor's. It is much less common abroad for a faculty member to seek you out if your work is deficient, your attendance is unsatisfactory or your understanding of content inadequate. Faculty abroad expect that you will ask for help if you need it – and if you don't then you should be prepared for the consequences.
- 2) Assessment (i.e. graded papers or exams) is less frequent and therefore each grade counts – a lot. In the U.S., we're accustomed to frequent assessment and feedback. You normally receive a paper back with lots of comments. A first exam is usually returned before the second exam is given. This is NOT always true abroad. If you feel uncertain about how you are doing, make a point of sitting down with the professor to ask where you stand. For some classes the ONLY assessment may be in the form of a final paper or exam. Be sure you are prepared!
- 3) Unlike here where assigned readings are often discussed in class, faculty abroad frequently provide students with a list of required readings and also some supplemental "recommended" readings to further illuminate some of the themes emerging in class. However, these readings may never be discussed explicitly nor are you assigned homework designed to demonstrate your understanding of the readings. Be forewarned: whether or not readings are discussed, if they are assigned they are fair game for exams. You are expected to do the readings, to understand them and to incorporate them into your thinking about a particular topic. If you feel that you're not "getting" something, ask questions.
- 4) Grading standards may vary from those you've experienced in the U.S.. In some countries, an "A" is reserved for only the most outstanding or original work with "B"s or "C"s being more of the norm for students who have clearly learned the material but aren't going the extra mile. Similarly, you may find that you are rewarded or penalized for different skills than are normally measured here. Some cultures place a higher premium than others on rote memorization, others want you to think independently, and in others you might be expected to draw upon a basic factual foundation that is assumed rather than explicitly taught. If you aren't certain what a professor expects of you or what you can expect from him or her, ask for clarification. The Center for Global Education and its staff CANNOT change a grade once it's been assigned nor intervene in its determination.
- 5) In most societies, classrooms are run more formally than in the U.S. (there are a handful of exceptions) and the division between student and professor is more marked. Unless/until you are told otherwise, here are a few basic "don'ts" about classroom etiquette:
 - Don't eat or drink in class.
 - Don't dress more casually than is acceptable for the culture.
 - Don't shout out an answer without being called upon.
 - Do not interrupt another student while s/he is talking, even if you disagree.
 - Don't put your feet up on desks or other chairs.
 - Don't address your professors by their first names without being invited to do so.
 - Don't enter a faculty member's classroom or office (other than for the scheduled class time) without knocking first.
 - Don't challenge a professor's grade or assignment. (You can and should ask for an explanation of how a grade was determined and what you can do to improve your performance.)
 - Don't assume that "dissenting" or original opinions are equally rewarded on exams and papers. Find out whether you are free to develop your own ideas or if you must demonstrate understanding and ability to apply the faculty member's own ideas or themes.

STUDENTS WITH LEARNING OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Both the law and the custom abroad with regard to accommodation for special student needs are different than the law and custom here. If you have a physical or learning difference that requires

accommodation, you should: 1) disclose this prior to embarking on the program abroad to find out about the accommodation that is available and how to gain access and 2) be prepared to find arrangements more ad hoc than they would be here on campus. If you are attending a program led by an HWS or Union faculty member, you can normally expect to receive similar accommodations as you would here for his/her particular class(es) (such as extended time on exams or access to a note-taker, etc.) but may not receive the same accommodation from host country faculty unless this is arranged and agreed to well in advance.

2.2 MONEY AND BANKING

The most important general advice we have regarding **money is to make sure you can access money in several different forms**. That way, if for some reason your debit card doesn't work at a particular ATM, you can use a credit card or travelers' checks.

It is strongly recommended that you carry a credit card and a debit card with you in Vietnam as a source of credit and cash (don't forget your PIN numbers and make sure that your bank verifies for you that your number will work in Vietnam.). Visa is the most widely used. Some ATMs, especially if they are linked to the Cirrus or Plus systems, will distribute cash to you on the spot. **BE SURE TO NOTIFY YOUR BANK(S) THAT YOU WILL BE TRAVELLING OUTSIDE OF THE U.S., TO WHICH COUNTRIES AND FOR HOW LONG** so they do not cut off your access to cash or credit. Most major banks will let you use your credit or debit card at a special teller's window (using your passport as identification) and give you cash (note that some banks impose a limit on the amount of cash they will dispense at any one time and that you will be charged a fee for these transactions). For those with American Express cards, an AmEx office is located in a travel agency in Hanoi. You can cash traveler's checks, personal checks, or charge cash to your Am Ex card. As with passports, it is wise to keep records of your card numbers and PINs in other places, in case these are lost or stolen. Personal checks will not be honored in Vietnam and travelers checks are not happily received (however, some banks may cash them). You should not expect to open a bank account while in Vietnam; it is difficult and transfers of monies are problematic. Have a small amount of US cash available for emergency situations (\$100 should be adequate). Make sure that your money and cards are secure at all times. A money belt that you wear in front is a good idea or, if you don't like these, keep your cards and cash in your front pockets. It is not smart to bring expensive jewelry or other items of considerable value. If you must, see that they are insured. **ALSO BE CERTAIN THAT YOU HAVE AT LEAST \$50 U.S** to be used in the airports once you've reached the U.S. at the end of the program. You've got to get from L.A. to your home and will likely want to eat, buy a book or newspaper, make a telephone call home, hire a sky cap for your luggage, etc. Don't be caught short!

Finally, do your homework. Here are some things you're likely to need to learn about each way to access money:

CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards are useful in many countries now, and one of the advantages is that by using them, you'll be getting a competitive exchange rate. But, if you're going to be using a credit card abroad, make sure your card company knows about your trip. It's possible that they may cancel your card if they see lots of foreign charges all of a sudden. While you've got them on the phone, ask about any fees for using the card abroad for purchases or cash advances. Also, make sure you have your pin number memorized before you go...this will enable you to get a cash advance from many ATM machines. **NOTE:** You can often get a credit card cash advance inside a bank, though they may wonder why you are not using the machine outside. Just make sure you have your passport for identification purposes. This process may take a while, but can be a saving grace in a financial pinch.

DEBIT CARDS

Make sure your card is on one or both of the big international ATM systems, Cirrus or Plus, by looking at the back of the card. Make sure you contact your bank to let them know you'll be abroad and ask about any fees for using ATMs overseas. In the past, we recommended using Debit/ATM cards as the best way to get your money abroad. Recently however, a lot of banks have begun levying hefty fees each time a card is used at an ATM abroad – one student told us of fees of \$25 per transaction! We strongly recommend that you ask about the fees and see if there is any way to have these reduced or waived. If your bank is charging more than \$5 per transaction, considering shopping around and changing your bank. Small banks, credit unions, and savings and loans tend to be (but not always) less punitive than the large commercial banks. So do your homework and then plan accordingly. Wherever you bank, **please be aware of your surroundings when you take out money from an ATM. This is a common place for theft so stay alert.**

Some students have found it useful to sign up for online banking before they leave home so they can keep track of their balance and the fees charged for overseas transactions – and to help ensure that they don't go overdrawn.

TRAVELER'S CHECKS

These are used less and less as credit and debit cards become more popular, but they are still useful in some countries and are far safer than carrying cash. Traveler's checks have tracking numbers on them that will allow you to easily cancel them and recoup your losses in case they are lost or stolen. You must keep these tracking numbers separate from the checks and several copies in different locations are recommended. You can sometimes pay establishments directly with these checks, but most often you must change them at a change office or bank. There is often a fee involved in cashing them, expressed as a percentage of the total or a flat fee.

We really recommend traveler's checks **ONLY** as a backup source of funds in the event that international money networks are down or your cash/credit card is lost or stolen. You will find them inconvenient to use on a regular basis. However, it's not a bad idea to bring along about \$200 (in relatively small denominations) in traveler's checks – just in case. If you don't use them while abroad, they're still "good" here in the U.S. upon your return, including at the U.S. airports you'll be traveling through on the way home!

HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU NEED?

Students and families always ask us to estimate the amount of funds that they'll need for personal spending in Vietnam. This is **VERY** difficult for us to estimate as "typical" student spending ranges vary so widely depending upon resources available and personal spending habits. Given the fact that all your basic needs are provided for and/or should have been pre-budgeted (see meals, housing below) and that the program pays for A LOT of group travel and tourist admission fees, you actually **NEED** (as opposed to will want) very little personal spending money. Thus, in addition to the sum you should plan to bring for food, for most students an extra \$1200 for personal/discretionary spending should be adequate. This sum should buy you that occasional night out and one or two extra weekend trips. Be forewarned, however! If you are a power shopper, expect to jet off to a new country every weekend, or tend to consume large amounts of alcohol or food at night, you will certainly spend a lot more. You'll also need more if you expect to stay on in Asia through much of December. Most students tend to spend however much they have (we seldom hear of students bringing money back home with them), whether this is \$1000 or \$5,000 or even more; our best advice is for you to sit down as a family and decide what you can afford and what you think is reasonable. Given that it is very easy to get money to you quickly if you underestimate (mom or dad make a deposit at the ATM in the U.S.; you have access to the funds within

24 hours), it's better to bring less and ask for more in a pinch than to re-mortgage the home up front. If you're on a tight budget and need tips, ASK us!

Note about financial aid

Many students manage the cost of their education through grants, scholarships and loans. If the total of these items exceed the total amount that HWS bills you for your term abroad, you will be eligible for a refund. You can use this refund to pay for room, board, travel or any other educationally related expenses while abroad. You can determine the amount of your refund by referring to your student bill for the abroad term. If the balance due is preceded by a minus sign, this indicates a credit owed back to you. To arrange for your refund check, contact the Student Accounts Office at 315-781-3343. If the refund is not enough to cover your expenses, be sure to contact the Financial Aid Office to explore your options in terms of additional loans or grants. The Student Accounts Office can also help you and your family plan for an expected refund before the term bills are generated. However, before making the call, please be sure to educate yourself regarding the costs of your program including things like airfare, how much money you think you'll need to take with you and your current financial aid package in order to gain the most information from the conversation. Applicable e-mail addresses are Finaid@hws.edu and studentaccounts@hws.edu.

2.3 HOUSING AND MEALS ABROAD

U.S. Americans are used to large living spaces, lots of privacy, endless hot water and access to the telephone. Most people in the world do not have the same expectations and get by with (sometimes much) smaller spaces, have less privacy, take very quick showers, often turning off the water between getting wet and rinsing off, and use the telephone for only very brief communications. Often there are economic and ecological reasons for these differences.

You will be staying at the international student residence at VNU. Given that there is no food service available, there is no board plan for this program and you will need to budget for your meals each day (Note: HWS students are not charged for a board plan but should just bring the food money with them and Union students will receive a board plan stipend over the summer prior to departure). You will be able to buy prepared food inexpensively near your residence and may even be able to prepare some simple meals there. (Suggestions about where to eat inexpensively in Hanoi will be provided during orientation.) How much you spend on meals can vary widely, according to taste and available funds. If you eat near the university and go out to dinner in a restaurant once or twice a week, \$50 a week should be quite adequate (alcoholic beverages not included). During the initial period in Saigon, mostly you will be eating in restaurants but these should be relatively inexpensive (though more than in Hanoi) and the program Director will assist you in finding appropriate, reasonably priced places to eat. Minimally, HWS students should plan on bringing \$1300-1,400 for food to cover these meal expenses and, again, Union students will have a stipend provided to you. If you know that you are choosy about what you eat or if you eat a lot, bring more to supplement these minimums or the stipend.

Wherever you eat, throughout your time in Vietnam, remember these basic do and don'ts: don't drink water that has not been boiled or which comes from a bottle that has a broken seal; don't eat fruits or vegetables that are uncooked, unwashed, or peeled (unless you know you are eating in a "clean" or upscale restaurant). If you follow these simple guidelines, you should have few reasons to fear intestinal problems.

As would be the case at HWS/Union or on any program abroad, you are responsible for maintaining your residence to a reasonable degree of cleanliness and in keeping with local fire-safety standards and

health codes. If you damage your room, your common area or the building due to carelessness, neglect or worse, you WILL be held accountable financially and charges will be placed by the program onto your student bill. Housing is inspected before students move in, but in the unlikely event that you find something broken or damaged upon your arrival, be sure to report this immediately to ensure that you are not held responsible later.

2.4 SERVICE ABROAD

U.S. Americans live in a service-oriented economy. We expect a certain level of service for our money. Many other countries have no similar service culture. Store clerks don't have to be polite and warm. Wait-staff in most European countries do not make their money from tips and so therefore do not feel the need to give you a lot of attention or deference. Remember that you expect what is normal, and what is normal for you is not necessarily normal for the local culture. The good side to this different definition of service is that you can often stay for as long as you would like at a café and the waiter won't bother you too often or urge you to leave. Europeans are clearly okay with the quality of service at cafes and restaurants—they would have a different system if they were not. So accept it, and look to the local people to help you figure out how to get your check. Tipping is still appreciated, of course.

2.5 TELEPHONES AND EMAIL ACCESS

At present, few American phone card companies allow calls to be made with their cards from Vietnam to the US. In addition, international phone service from the VNU campus area where you will be staying is limited. The same is true for fax services, either sending or receiving. However, if you need to talk to people directly, all the major hotels in Hanoi will be able to connect you (but it is best to check on the rate per minute before placing such a call). Professor Spates will have a cell phone in Vietnam which can be used in emergencies. He will provide you with this number as soon as it's available. Once you have it, BE SURE TO GIVE IT TO YOUR PARENT(S) AS WELL! 84 is the country code and 4 the Hanoi city code.

Given the challenges of the telephone situation, it will be best if you plan to communicate back home mostly via e-mail. Internet cafes are now common in all Vietnamese cities of any size and they are quite inexpensive. Mail service to Vietnam, even air mail, can be quite slow and sometimes unreliable. E-mail is the preferred and cheapest means of communication at present. You will not have internet access in your residence in Ho Chi Minh City. We are hoping (but cannot guarantee) that you will have it in your residence in Hanoi. Even if you are fully wired in the residence it will NOT be the HIGH SPEED access to which you are accustomed. This is a good thing since we really do want you to limit your use and engage with Vietnam rather than stay at home abroad. In a pinch internet cafes abound!

Be sure to check your HWS/Union email regularly because that is how we will be in touch with you. Make sure you clean out your mailbox before you go – otherwise it could fill up and you could be unable to receive any new mail.

2.6 TRAVEL TIPS

For some of you, your term abroad represents your first excursion out of the country and your first real travel experience. Some of you are already seasoned travelers, or, at least, seasoned *tourists*. A term abroad

will open up to you many opportunities for further travel. Sometimes there are so many choices it can be difficult to make decisions. It's worth thinking about what you'd like to do, and how you'd like to do it, before you go. Develop a strategy or philosophy to guide your travels. Perhaps you have two weeks to travel after your program. Do you plan a whirl-wind tour of 10 countries? Or do you choose one or two places to get to know well? Do you put the well-known cities and sites on your itinerary, or do you choose lesser-known, out of the way places? This is a good time to do some homework, too, reading guidebooks about the country you are going to and the surrounding region. Consider what is important to you, what kinds of things you think would make the best memories later on. You might want to make a list of things you hope to see and experience while abroad, or maybe you even want to make a detailed plan; or maybe you want to leave it entirely open and be spontaneous. But thinking about how you want to explore now will enable you to make better use of your time.

AROUND THE CITY

The city you are studying in is your major entry-point into the study of the nation as a whole. This is one of the reasons we tend to name programs by both city and country (Bath, England; Hanoi, Vietnam); we recognize that the city you live in is a major player in creating the sense of place you have. While you may have an enduring fondness for Denmark, you will reserve a special place in heart for the city of Copenhagen if that's where you spent most of your time. Students abroad can choose between two extremes, spending a lot of time getting to know every corner and nook the city has to offer, or traveling most weekends to other cities or even other countries. Recognize that there's a balance to be struck between these two extremes. But also recognize that weekend visits to other cities or countries will not offer the level of in-depth access you will get by regularly exploring the city you live in while abroad. One of the writers of this guide was struck when, at the end of his study abroad term in Seville, Spain (a gem of a city by all accounts) a fellow student asked him "what's there to do in this town?"

FAMILIARITY AND TIME

Remember that around the world, most people don't move as often as U.S. Americans do. We're a very mobile society. Globally it is much more common for a person to spend his/her entire life in one city of one country. A result of this difference in mobility is that in general, people abroad spend much more time building relationships and friendships than U.S. Americans do. What this means for you abroad is that you might need to spend more time getting to know a place and its people before you become a "regular" at a café or life-long friends with your host family or local classmates. This reality is one of the reasons we suggest you explore your city and surrounding areas and save most of your major travel for after the program.

AROUND THE COUNTRY

If you do travel during weekends outside of the excursions may be built into your program, consider limiting yourself to other cities in the country. This advice is especially relevant to students on language immersion programs. When learning a language in this style, taking a break entirely from it for a weekend will delay or even push back some of the progress you've already made. Traveling around a country and visiting its different regions and cities can give you a fascinating comparative view and a sense of the diversity of the place. Also, traveling in a country where you speak the language (even not very well) will always be a more in-depth experience than traveling through countries where you speak none of the language.

SECTION 3: All About Culture

If you think back to your first year of college, you might remember both apprehension and anticipation. You were quickly hit with what you did not know—how to do your laundry, how to navigate the

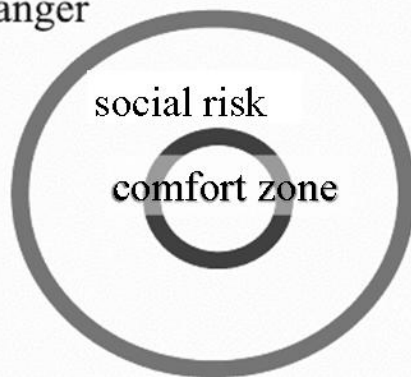
cafeteria, the necessity of having your I.D. card on you at all times, where to buy books, how to succeed in a new kind of study...the list goes on. What you were going through was a *process of cultural adjustment*. You were learning the rules of a very new game; it took time, patience, and a willingness to watch, listen and learn. What you are about to experience abroad is roughly comparable in character to the transition you went through coming to HWS, but it will be far more intense, challenging and rewarding. It's the next step. Congratulations on choosing it.

How long will you be abroad? About four months? That's really not all that much time to fit in what many returned students would call the most significant and amazing experience of their college careers (if not their lives). Although many students experience homesickness and/or culture shock and have good days and bad days, you want to try to maximize what little time you have abroad. This section will help you understand what *intercultural adjustment* is all about, what you should expect to experience, and how you can actively work to make this process a vibrant learning experience.

You are about to encounter a culture that is typically much different from that with which you are familiar. The rules of the game will not be the same. Researchers of cross-cultural communication use several models to describe various aspects of the study abroad experience; this packet will guide you through them. You may not think you need this information now, but many students who have crossed cultures—and come back again—say that they are glad they knew about these ideas beforehand. Take this packet with you...our bet is that at some point in your time abroad, you'll pick it up again.

3.1 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

danger



Much of the value of your study abroad program lies in the experiences of day-to-day living, the encounters and relationships you build with the people of your host country. The experiential learning model depicted to the left contains several key ideas that, if you keep them in mind, can help you get the most from your time abroad.

The experience of living amidst a totally new culture can be at turns exhilarating and frustrating. These frustrations can add up as you run into more and more differences between the culture you carry around with you and the host culture. One of the benefits of study abroad is this realization—that you actually carry America around with you. It's your comfort zone, a set of values, ideas, and manners, a language and a set of products. You've got to step out of this comfort zone if you want to truly have a great experience.

There's no way around this: If you want to really learn, you'll have to go outside of your comfort zone. And going outside of your comfort zone means taking a social risk.

A good rule of thumb for students abroad; if you're not feeling *uncomfortable*, you're not in much of a position to learn anything. *You haven't felt confident enough in your language to talk to the newspaper seller you pass every day, even though he looks like a character. You've felt too shy to go into that corner pub. You're lost—but rather than ask someone for directions, you fumble with a map. You pass the town square and people are dancing in traditional costume—what's the occasion? Your host family invites you to a familiar gathering—but your American friends have*

planned a day away at the beach. You're in class all day with foreign students and many of them look very interesting but they haven't introduced themselves to you.

Stepping up to these challenges involves social risk and possible feelings of discomfort. But they all offer opportunity as well. There's much to gain, so take a chance!

TOURISM VS. STUDY ABROAD

Most cities have their tourist attractions and these are great things to take in during your time abroad. But remember that most local people don't frequent these places. And remember too that the spaces where the local people live aren't frequented by tourists. There is a name for this: tourist infrastructure. Tourism is the largest economy on the planet. This infrastructure (with multi-lingual tour guides, menus in 12 languages, museums and historic sites, and boutiques) is designed to do three things: make you feel comfortable, show you what most tourists want to see, and separate you from your money.

If you understand the experiential foundation of study abroad, then you realize that this is not the optimal space for students studying abroad to spend their time. Tourist infrastructures in fact insulate the traveler from the daily life of the country (and the citizens that don't speak the tourist's language) and this is exactly what you should want to experience while abroad. So, as a student abroad and not a tourist, take delight in the simple pleasures of daily existence and really get to know your neighborhood and your city. Find a local hangout. Become a regular. Go to restaurants without menus out front in five languages (they're also often less expensive). Get to know the merchants, waiters, and neighbors you bump into every day. Play basketball or football (soccer to us) with the local kids. These experiences often have as much (or maybe more) to say than every city's "tall thing to climb" or sanitized "attractions".

BREAKING AWAY

If you're abroad for a language immersion experience, hanging out all the time with other Americans will keep you from advancing your language skills. So too will missing out on activities because you have to wait around for your boyfriend/girlfriend to call for the second time that week. And: did you really travel halfway around the world to spend *all your time* with people you already know or talking to people at home? So take advantage of invitations from your host family, your language partner, or a foreign classmate. Go off exploring on your own or with one good friend.

It's okay to explore with an American buddy, but beware of the pack! Large groups of Americans (along with being immediately recognizable and off-putting) will keep you from really getting to know the local culture and people.

Going abroad is about *breaking away* from what you know, so make sure you actually do that and don't live abroad in "Island America". There are two other related things that will keep you from actually experiencing what is going on around you: one is the easy accessibility of internet cafes, and the other is cell phones. Technology allows us to be connected with people far away with great ease, but remember that is often at the expense of connections with those immediately around us (not to mention actual monetary expense!)

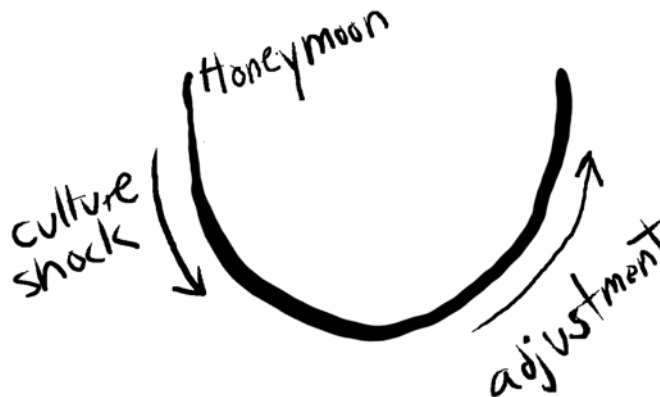
"OH YEAH, YOU BLEND"

It's a famous line from *My Cousin Vinny*, a film about culture clash right here in our own country. But blending is what the characters try to do, and it's what you should do. Why should you try to blend? First and foremost, it's a great way to learn about the culture. To blend in first requires you to actually look at the people around you. You must become an ardent and keen observer of people's behavior, language,

etiquette, dress and, in more general terms, the way people carry themselves and treat each other. Local people will appreciate your efforts to understand and adopt some of these behaviors. It will show them that you respect and want to understand their customs and values. And therefore they'll trust you more, share more with you, and feel more of an immediate bond of commonality with you. You'll learn even more. Another reason you should try to blend in is safety. The reality is that foreigners are often the targets of petty crime or unwanted attention from the wrong kinds of people. Not sticking out in the crowd will keep you safer, and that bond of commonality will mean that local people will be more likely to look out for you.

3.2 ADJUSTING TO A NEW CULTURE

Just as you did when you entered college, you will go through a process of cultural adjustment abroad where you will learn to operate in a different cultural system, with different signals, rules, meanings, values and ideas. Your experience living in this host culture will change over time. Once the immediate sensations of excitement subside (*the honeymoon phase*), the experience of adjustment will likely be characterized by feelings of anxiety, stress, sadness, and fatigue, as things begin to seem very...*foreign*. This process of intercultural adjustment is often represented by the "u-curve", plotted below:



If you're studying in a non-English speaking country, your language skills will be quickly tested to their limit. You might not understand the local accent. You might not be able to communicate with the bus driver. Your host family's behavior may confuse you. You may feel fatigued at having to use the language so much, and finding it so difficult. This is normal and to be expected.

Culture shock is the term that describes what happens to a person from one cultural environment when he or she is placed in an entirely new setting, unable to identify with familiar cues. It typically takes longer than a one or two week vacation for culture shock to really set in. Most students experience culture shock to one degree or another, sometimes without fully recognizing what is happening to them. However, an understanding and awareness of culture shock can minimize the effects. As your stay progresses you may find yourself passing through several phases of adjustment. The first often will be one of excitement and enthusiasm urged on by the new, different, and superficial aspects of life around you. As the first couple of weeks come to an end, the excitement and enthusiasm can sometimes wear off and all the new and different things around you are no longer quaint, but in fact, may become annoying and frustrating. You can begin to dislike the local population or the way things are done; you may begin to complain a lot or just decide to withdraw. Suddenly the food is no longer good, the traffic and crowds are "just too much," the lack of unfamiliar conveniences is "unbearable," and you realize that your ability to communicate in Vietnamese is limited. You may start to really miss people at home. It is at this point that you may find yourself saying, "Why did I ever come here?" and "Life back in the US is so much better!" You may

wonder whether you can survive the weeks that lie ahead. All these reactions are perfectly normal, but you need to recognize them for what they are.

One of the keys to overcoming culture shock and making the most of your experience abroad is to integrate and immerse yourself in the local culture. While you may be inclined to find a comfort level with the group and congregate together, it is very important that you strike out on your own (within the parameters established by the Faculty Directors) and “discover” what Hanoi and the other areas of Vietnam that you will visit have to offer. Indeed, we take it as a mark of pride that the intent of our semester abroad experience is to find many ways to get you into the new culture you are encountering. That means, as a matter of course, that everyone on such programs will experience some degree of culture shock. The trick is to make up your mind to go through the experience and keep on actively confronting the newness around you. Keep trying to speak Vietnamese. Keep negotiating the crowds. Resist the temptation to spend hours on the internet with friends at home. As you stick with it, you will begin to notice that, day-by-day, things will start to improve (actually, it is not those things that are changing – your perspective is). You will begin to get acculturated to your new society. Your self-consciousness and unease at being different will start to subside. You will find that the city will begin to grow on you and that you will begin to consider it “home”. And as you get to know them, you will find that the majority of Vietnamese are charming; you will find that they are not only very interested in you, but that they are genuinely friendly and frequently funny; you will discover that they are an energetic, enterprising, quietly proud people. Some will become your friends; some of these will become your friends for life.

Most students begin to adjust toward the mid-point of their sojourn and come to terms with the cultural differences they experience. Living and studying in a different environment can then take on a new and deeper meaning. The reality is that for most of you the opportunity to be in Vietnam for such an extended period is a once-in-a-lifetime thing; take full advantage and experience as much as you can. We also encourage you to bring a small journal and write about your experiences and impressions as often as you can. This is a great way to reflect upon your experience and to remember key details after your return.

You may have your down moments, but if you persist in trying, eventually the daily victories—when you have successfully adapted to one or another aspect of the culture—will start to outweigh the setbacks and frustrations. Over time, as you gain confidence in your ability to navigate through a different cultural system, as your familiarity with local norms, values, and attitudes grows, and as you start to see things from different perspectives, your adjustment will enhance the exciting and happy time you originally anticipated your experience abroad to be.

From extensive experience in other cultures, from those fairly familiar to those very different from our own, we have learned that the best way to adapt to a new cultural environment is to cultivate two special traveler's virtues: flexibility and patience. In Vietnam, we must expect that things will not always go as we wish or as quickly; we must expect that others on the program will sometimes frustrate us as we shall sometimes frustrate them; we must expect that we won't always be able to get done what we want to get done. This is part of the process of learning to live in a new cultural setting. If we make up our minds to be flexible about changing our plans as necessary and if we learn to have patience, we shall find that life becomes a lot easier. So - remember these two watchwords and use them as a kind of mantra that you repeat over and over in your head throughout the duration of the program.

One final note: everyone experiences cultural adjustment differently. This is just a general model to help you visualize the fact that you will go through a process of cultural adjustment, and that this process will include ups and downs, good days and bad, and moments of alternating homesickness and elation at the new culture that is all around you.

3.3 CULTURE LEARNING: CUSTOMS AND VALUES

Before you go abroad, it's a good idea to start thinking about culture as being one part customs and one part values. As a person going abroad to immerse yourself in a different culture, you should be extremely flexible about your customs, that is, the little things that make up your daily routine, the way you do things, the level of service or quality of life you expect. You should, however, be more reserved about your values, that is, the core beliefs that are important to you. It won't hurt you to eat a food you are not accustomed to (notice the word "accustomed"?) but say, for example, your host-father makes a racist comment about the recent wave of North African immigrants. You shouldn't feel like you have to agree with him just for the sake of fitting in. Be respectful, but be true to your values, too.

There's a connection between customs and values, however; the values of a culture are often expressed in its customs. The café society of many Mediterranean countries suggests a certain value for comfortable social interaction, a relaxed view of time, and the idea that life should be savored teaspoon by teaspoon. So as you adopt new customs, take time to reflect on the values that underlie them, and examine your own values as well. Is there something in this culture worth taking back with you, making part of your own core values?

LOCAL CUSTOMS

EATING AND DRINKING

Food is one of the most important parts of any culture. Although we may have pushed eating aside in the United States, trying to make it fast and unobtrusive on the *real* concerns of our lives, for many cultures across the world, eating and food are still of central importance to family and social life. Be aware that many countries frown upon eating on-the-go and it is considered rude to eat food while you're walking across campus or down the street. Follow the examples of the locals: if you never see anyone else eating food as they walk, you can assume it is not appropriate. Following the logic above, a country's eating habits and customs suggest its values. Note the café example above; a simple cup of coffee has many facets of Mediterranean culture encoded in it. In Africa, to take another example, meals may be eaten with hands from a central bowl. Encoded in this is a statement about community, family and sharing. As a guest in another culture, you should be open to trying as many different new customs as you can, and this means kinds of food and modes of eating. But be realistic: don't expect yourself to eat beef if you're a vegetarian or down tripe soup for the fourth time if you really hate it. If you're in a home-stay, first and foremost, be honest on your application for housing. If you're a vegetarian, say so. If you can't handle cigarette smoke, write that. Even in programs like Vietnam where you do not live in a home-stay, you may be invited as a guest into someone's home from time-to-time. Be honest and polite with your host families; probably not every family member likes the same kinds of food there, too. It should be a process of mutual discovery. But also try new foods. Experiment with menu items you can't necessarily identify. You never know what you'll discover. Bon appetit!

While alcohol consumption varies in degree and social context from country to country, it is safe to say that, in general, few countries consider the kind of drinking prevalent on American college campuses to be socially acceptable. Many countries do not have strict drinking ages and therefore alcohol, not being illegal or taboo, isn't considered novel, and binge drinking is relatively rare. Many other cultures appear to have a much healthier relationship to alcohol than does society in the U.S..

Many English- and German-speaking nations, for example, have lively pub scenes where people drink quite a bit; but the careful observer will note that 1) people drink more slowly than in the U.S. and 2) people are expected to hold their liquor. To be seen stumbling drunk is embarrassing, not funny. In these cultures, you may also note that, with the exception of pubs that are explicitly for the student

population, there is a broader mix of people who socialize together. It is quite common in England and Ireland, for example, for young adults to go to the pub with dad and grandma or even with a young sibling in tow. So, conduct yourself in a way that is appropriate for a mixed age crowd.

Mediterranean cultures value alcohol as a social lubricant and as an intrinsic part of meals. People will socialize in bars, but the careful observer will notice that the local people will space their drinking out over a large stretch of time, and eat small snacks in-between drinks. In this environment, it is not uncommon to leave drinks half-finished as there will be a lot of sampling over the course of the evening. If you finish everything, you'll normally drink quite a bit more than you might here.

In a number of Asian countries, most notably Japan and Vietnam, you'll be surprised at the amount of alcohol consumed. You might even witness drunken behavior – within the confines of the bar or restaurant. But notice two important things: 1) this behavior ends when you cross the threshold from the bar to the street where drunkenness is NOT tolerated and 2) behavior that might be okay for a local is more likely to be disapproved of when displayed by a guest. Asians are very mindful of the differences between hosts and guests and each has explicit responsibilities to the other. In Asia you may be showered with gifts and offers of hospitality by total strangers – which are okay for you to accept. In return, however, you must be certain that your own behavior is always seen as respectful.

Although you are all “legal” abroad, we strongly encourage you to drink responsibly and carefully abroad. Drinking too much leaves you more vulnerable to pick-pocketing and other petty crime and, in excess, will lead you to display behavior that may fuel anti-American sentiment. If you choose to drink, be very aware of the quantities you consume. Also note that alcoholic drinks in other countries, beer and hard cider in particular, tend to have a higher alcohol content per volume than their U.S. counterparts.

SECTION 4: Safety and Health

4.1 SAFETY ABROAD: A FRAMEWORK

Take a look at the experiential learning model again. Notice that there's “social discomfort”, and there's **danger**. Taking social risks doesn't mean putting yourself in harm's way. What you “risk” should only be embarrassment and a wounded ego, temporary feelings that wear off. You can rely on your good judgment to tell the difference between risk and danger much of the time: for instance, there's talking to the newspaper seller, and there's wandering through a seedy part of town alone in the middle of the night. One poses the kind of social risk we're encouraging, and one poses danger to your well-being.

Recognize, however, that there are instances when you **can't** sense the line between social risk and danger simply because you don't understand the culture. Sellers in the open market place follow you around. They seem aggressive. Are you in danger, or is this simply the normal way of doing things in your host country? Is there some kind of body language you can use to communicate that you're not interested? You can't know this unless you know the culture well. And to know the culture well, you need to get out there, learn, ask questions, and take social risks!

The best way to stay safe abroad is to be more aware and learn as much as you can about your host-country.

Statistically the crime rate in most overseas locations where we send students is lower than the typical US city. While the amount of crime visited on foreigners is generally low in Vietnam, it is always wise to remember that you will clearly stand out as non-Vietnamese and that you will obviously be seen as coming from a country of much greater wealth. Don't be lulled into a false sense of security. If you are

going out at night, go in groups (this is especially important for women) and always be aware of your surroundings. Use the buddy system. If something or someone doesn't feel right, listen to your instincts. If you are returning to campus late at night, always take a cab (rates are very cheap). When you go out at night, be sure to let someone who is not going in your group know where you are going and approximately when you will return. Always carry the phone numbers for Professor Spates. Non-group trips outside the city are discouraged. **You must speak to the faculty director about any trip you wish to make on your own and receive his permission.**

Probably the most significant safety risk you'll encounter in Vietnam relates to traffic. Be very attentive to your environment and DON'T assume that if a car (or bus, etc) sees you it will stop – even at a light! Always exercise extra caution as a pedestrian. In addition, we STRONGLY discourage you from using bicycles in Hanoi and have adopted a firm “No” policy on renting mini-bikes.

Regarding your personal belongings, be sure to secure your important items (passports, travelers checks, valuables) and to lock the door to your dorms rooms at all times. If you are bringing anything of significant value (laptops, photo equipment, etc) you should do 2 things. First, find out if these items will be covered by your parents' insurance – some homeowners' policies will include such coverage but some will not. Contact your respective insurance companies and find out if your belongings will be covered while you are abroad. If not, inquire about what a rider to obtain coverage might cost and weigh this against the value of your items. Second, you should bring a copy of your receipt(s) for these items to avoid having to pay duty on them. You may also register them at the customs office in the US to avoid paying duty.

DANGEROUS BEHAVIOR

The following is behavior you should avoid while abroad:

- 1.) Don't give out the names, numbers, and addresses of other program participants.
- 2.) Don't invite new friends back to your quarters; meet in a public place until you know them better.
- 3.) Don't do drugs abroad (see below for why).
- 4.) Avoid American hang-outs (McDonald's, Hard Rock Cafes, etc.) and avoid being in large groups of Americans.
- 5.) Don't wander alone in an unfamiliar city where you don't know the good areas from the bad.
- 6.) Don't drink too much in public; it may make you look foolish and you be more susceptible.

4.2 HEALTHCARE AND INSURANCE

Immunizations: Hepatitis A and B and typhoid immunizations are recommended for travelers to Vietnam, as well as anti-malaria medication. All students should be sure that their tetanus shots are up to date. Please check the CDC website <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> to read more about the recommendations. If you choose to get immunizations, you can do this at a local medical clinic near your home (use this link to find travel medicine clinics: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/content/TravelClinics.aspx>), with your home doctor or you can contact one of the Passport Health offices in Canandaigua, Rochester or Syracuse who provide travel immunizations. Their contact number is: (585) 275-8884.

Due to the particular places that our group will/will not travel, neither rabies nor Japanese encephalitis medication is being recommended. The others are. Students will be in a malarial area for very limited periods of time and thus that is also up to your discretion but for about two weeks there is some risk of exposure. Passport Health, whose medical personnel have advised us, particularly recommend doxycycline for your antimalarial should you choose to take one. HOWEVER, all students are strongly

advised to consult with their own physicians for advice about which immunizations and/or malarial prophylaxis to take. Your own individual health history may influence which immunizations are/are not recommended for you. Many of you have had the hepatitis B vaccines and tetanus boosters already to come to college but many of you likely have NOT had the others listed here such as typhoid and these should be the focus of your conversation with your physician – although you should check that you are up-to-date with EVERYTHING recommended.

Health care will be of high quality in Vietnam. The Faculty Director and our Vietnamese contacts will assist you if you need medical care. By the time you arrive, we will have arranged to retain the services of an English-speaking doctor for everyday problems and routine office visits, minor illnesses, and prescriptions. Regarding medical costs, you will be covered by health insurance either through your parents' policy (Union Students, this is your responsibility to investigate) or through the Colleges' (HWS students) general policy (see below). Normally this is a reimbursement situation and you will need to pay up front and keep all receipts, prescriptions, and invoices for reimbursement. In the case of minor expenses, the Faculty Director will be able to assist with covering costs from program funds pending reimbursement. **IF YOU HAVE A CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITION WHICH REQUIRES MONITORING (such as diabetes) or REGULAR SHOTS (such as allergies) WE CAN MAKE ACCOMMODATIONS TO HAVE THIS CARE PROVIDED TO YOU IF YOU CONTACT US AT LEAST 60 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF YOUR DEPARTURE.** We will put students (and/or parents) and their doctors directly in touch with the medical personnel in Vietnam about how your care will be provided.

All HWS students are covered by the Colleges' mandatory medical plan which is provided through Excellus of Upstate New York. (For Union students, if your parents' policy does not cover you, we strongly encourage you to purchase a supplemental plan for coverage abroad). **HWS students: be sure that you bring your Excellus-issued ID card with you.** On it is your name, the group policy number and info for medical providers. Note, that you will not be able to access the toll-free number on the card from overseas. So, if you need to speak with the insurance company, either have your parent(s) call the toll free number for you OR use the internationally accessible number: 1-585-325-3630. Normally, you will have to pay for each non-emergency office visit and obtain an official receipt of the treatment you have received with the date of treatment. Then you must present that receipt to the insurance company for reimbursement. In cases of severe emergency, you will be treated first and billed later. Every attempt will be made to contact your parents/emergency contacts if hospitalization or surgery is necessary. In the most extreme cases, the insurance provided by your International Student ID card will cover the cost of evacuating you to the U.S. or Europe for treatment if adequate care isn't available on site.

For more information about your student medical insurance plan, visit the plan's website: www.excellusbcb.com.

If you have a specific condition that requires special prescription medicine or any type of special care, you need to notify the International Programs Office (Union) or the Center for Global Education (HWS) and Professor Spates before departure. You should have a brief letter explaining your medical situation with you at all times. If you have any medication you must take while you are abroad, please be sure that you have enough for the entire time you are away as it may be difficult to have prescriptions filled. Be sure to bring the written prescription (no photocopies) and a signed statement from your doctor if you have a particular medical requirement. Immigration authorities may question medications in your possession and you should have proper documentation. Finally, it would be advisable to verify that a particular medication is not restricted in the host country (or others that you may plan to visit) as some countries ban some types, even when prescribed by a doctor (for example, the drug Ritalin cannot be legally brought into some countries). The best advice is to be prepared and check either through your personal physician or through official government sources (such as the Vietnamese embassy or the US State Department).

4.3 WOMEN'S ISSUES ABROAD

American girls are easy and want to be approached. A special word to women going abroad: the sad truth is that some foreign men believe this stereotype to be true. How they may have arrived at this conclusion is not hard to surmise if you watch a little TV. What this means for you is that certain behaviors in public (drunkenness being a big one) may get you unwanted attention from the worst kinds of people. Again, blend in by watching the behavior of those around you and adopting it as your way. In almost all cases, one of the best dissuaders for getting the kind of attention that may make you uncomfortable is to dress conservatively. Less exposure means less negative attention.

4.4 HIV

HIV is equally or more prevalent abroad and just as deadly as it is here. Sometimes Americans abroad lower their guard and engage in activities that they never would back at home, feeling somehow “immune” or “invincible”. Resist these thoughts! Also, in a different context, many Americans are unsure of the cultural cues involved or are unsure of how (or whether it is appropriate) to talk about sex. Don't let this uncertainty get in the way of your safety: get to know your partners, use a condom, and be aware of safer sex practices.

4.5 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Although in Vietnam you are all “legal”, we strongly discourage you from drinking while there. It leaves you more vulnerable to pick-pocketing and other petty crime and, in excess, will lead you to display behavior that is simply inappropriate in this environment. If you choose to drink, be very aware of the quantities you consume. Also note that alcohol tends to have a stronger impact in a warm climate where you are more likely to be dehydrated.

As to other drugs, DON'T DO THEM. Use of illegal drugs is plain and simply grounds for being returned home to the U.S. (to your parents' home – not to your college) at your own expense and normally at the forfeit of academic credit (and tuition dollars) for the term. Note: One student on a prior program was sent home for just this reason. If you are caught by the authorities and arrested for using drugs in Vietnam, the only assistance the Faculty Director and your home campuses will provide is to refer you (and your parents) to legal counsel. We cannot and will not intervene in matters between you and the Vietnamese government. Please note that Vietnam is a communist state without the U.S. expectation of “innocent until proven guilty”. Breaking the law there is simply unacceptable and could be a decision you will spend a lifetime regretting. Watch the film “Midnight Express” before you go to get an idea of what this means.

4.6 TRAFFIC

Probably the most significant safety risk you'll encounter in Vietnam relates to traffic. Be very attentive to your environment and DON'T assume that if a car (or bus, etc) sees you it will stop – even at a light! Always exercise extra caution as a pedestrian. In addition, we STRONGLY discourage you from using bicycles in Hanoi and have adopted a firm “No” policy on renting mini-bikes.

4.7 POLITICS

Don't read the newspaper? Unfamiliar with what's happening in Washington or New York, let alone the events shaking Paris or Moscow or Delhi? You're in the minority. People around the world, by and large, know a lot about politics and spend a lot of time talking about it. Not just their politics, *our* politics. So it is very important to read up on what's going on in the country you're going to, and what's going on here, too. We can pretty much guarantee you that people will press you for your opinion of the current U.S. administration or the next stop on the globe-trotting war on terror.

You can learn a lot from talking politics with surprisingly well-informed foreigners. Some of you might, however, be on the receiving end of angry talk against the United States. Second to the surprise over how knowledgeable people around the world are about politics is how angry many of them are over U.S. policies. In general people are very good at distinguishing between U.S. Americans and the U.S. government, but in some cases you might feel the need to remind them of this distinction and to diffuse some of the anger by saying that you might not necessarily agree with the policy either. It's an instance where you'll have to use your judgment. As you re-examine some of your values over time, you might also find yourself questioning some of your political beliefs. And you might change other's minds as well. Eventually people all around the world will have to come to the table and talk out their differences...you might as well be in on it early.

SECTION 5: Coming Back

5.1 REGISTRATION & HOUSING

HWS Registration for Spring 2011

The Office of the Registrar will email instructions to you on how to register when you're abroad. You will be directed to the Registrar's webpage for the registration dates and course catalog, which is now only available online. You should not be at any registration disadvantage due to your off-campus status. Be aware of time differences and remember that there may only be a small window of time for you to register, so plan accordingly. If you will be on a required excursion or break during your registration dates, you may contact Linda Breese in the Registrar's office and she can register for you. **Also, be sure to check before you leave HWS that you do not have a financial or administrative hold on your account or you may be unable to register.**

Union Registration

The Registrar will contact you during the 5th or 6th week of Union's term with instructions for registration. The word "Registration" will be in the subject line. Students will need to reply to the initial email before further instructions are sent.

If you have any questions please contact the Union College Registrar's Office at (518) 388-6109 or email: registrar@union.edu

HWS Housing for your return

The Office of Residential Education will shortly be announcing their procedures and deadlines for the on and off-campus housing lotteries for the next academic year. Students going abroad in the Fall will be

invited to co-sign for a room with a student going abroad in the Spring as soon as Spring decisions are announced. If you are a Fall abroad student who does not co-sign for a room, you will have to work directly with Res Ed on your housing assignment and should be aware that choices will be limited.

Please note that only rising seniors will be considered for off-campus housing status and you must apply for off-campus approval by the same process as students on campus. **DO NOT SIGN A LEASE UNTIL YOU RECEIVE WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION.**

5.2 REENTRY AND READJUSTMENT

This information is designed to help you prepare for the transition back “home”. It is organized into two themes: *Closing the Circle* looks at a few things you can do now to prepare for the next phase of your international experience, coming home (or reentry). *Opening New Doors* suggests ways you can keep your international experience alive and relevant, including information about some of the programs the CGE offers for returning students.

CLOSING THE CIRCLE

Are you ready to leave this place? Have you wrapped up all your academics? Think back to all the times over the last few months (or in those months of planning and anticipation) that you said “before I leave I’d really like to...” Now’s the time to review this list and see if there’s any way to fit a few more of these things in before you go. We hope this will ignite a lifetime passion of travel and intercultural endeavor on your part, but although many students say they will return to their host country again, in reality most do not. So get out there while you can and have as few regrets as possible.

Think about all the photographs you’ve taken over the last few months. Did you really photograph everything that’s important to you? How about what you see on your walk to class every day? Or your host-family? Do you have a photograph of your favorite café or restaurant, or your host-country friends? Don’t end up with a thousand pictures of churches, temples or castles and none of the things that make up your day-to-day life, because it’s those commonplace details you’ll think-and talk-about most when you’re back.

An idea: do a “day in the life of” photo-shoot. Photograph your whole day from morning till night, so you can visually answer the question “what was a typical day like”.

PACKING UP

Remember the airline weight limits you worried about before you left? They still apply. Check with your airline if you don’t remember what they are. Now might be a good time to ship a box home if you can. Remember that you’ll likely be tired on the way back, and that jet-lag tends to be worse coming home than going away.

Now might also be a good time to pack up some things you wouldn’t have thought about bringing home otherwise. Think of the food you’ve (hopefully) grown to love over the last couple of months. Is there anything you’d like to share with your family, or just have at home for a taste of your host-country on those days when you’re missing it? Are there any recipes you’d like to have? Now’s the time to ask about them and write them down.

Other things you might want to pack up include memories. If you've been keeping a journal, the last few weeks are a great time to reflect on your experience. The times in peoples' lives that are characterized by change often have a crisper quality to them; every experience seems to be imbued with a deeper meaning. Try to capture this in your writing.

Ask yourself some questions:

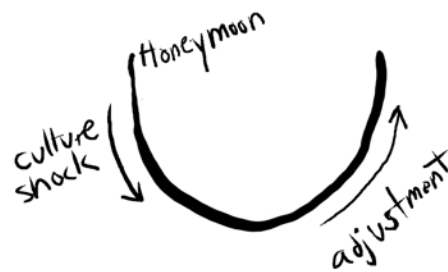
- What did I accomplish while abroad?
- What did I learn about myself?
- What did I learn about this country?
- What friends did I make, and what did they teach me?
- What will I miss the most?
- What am I most looking forward to?
- What does this experience mean for my future? Will I live differently now?
- What did I learn about my own country and culture while abroad?
- Do I want to return to this place? What have I left undone?

You'll want to ask yourself these questions again after you've been home for a while, but thinking about them now can be rewarding and can help you put a little closer on your experience.

COMING HOME

The first (and often surprising) thing to know about coming home is that in many ways you will feel like you did when you arrived in your host country a few months ago: exhausted and excited. Probably it will feel as great to be home as it felt to be in your host country for the first few days, though for different reasons. You'll enjoy some home cooking, calls from old friends, and telling your family about your experiences. You may be thrilled to pull all those clothes you left behind from the drawer and put on something clean for the first time in some weeks.

But, just as your initial elation at being in a new and excited place was tempered by a realization at how foreign and unfamiliar it felt, your honeymoon period at home may also start to not seem totally right. Things that you expected to be familiar may now seem quite alien. Your ears might find it weird to hear English being spoken everywhere. You might think your family throws too much away. You may balk at spending \$50 for a meal out when you know your host family lived off that much for a month. The abundance in the supermarket may stop you in your tracks, so used to getting by with less things have you become. You may be dismayed at how fast-paced US culture is, or frustrated at how little people actually want to hear about all your experiences (or look at all your pictures). You may not experience every single one of these things, but most of you will experience some of them. The most important thing to realize is that this is totally normal, and the ups and downs you're experiencing is frequently called "reverse culture shock". It actually often gets mapped just like the U-curve:



The most important step in being ready for reverse culture shock is to expect it, and to realize that most of it is caused not by changes in home, but changes in you. You won't know how far you've come until

you can reflect on the journey from the place you call(ed) home. This is actually a great time to not only learn about yourself and how you've grown while abroad, it's also a great time to learn about home from a far more objective perspective than you've ever had before. Lots of students come back saying that they never felt more American than when they were abroad, and never more foreign than when they were back in the US.

The first thing to do is relax. Like culture shock the first time around, you'll get through this, and end up stronger for the experience. You'll have your ups and downs, good days and bad. Some of the same coping skills you used to get you through the low points while abroad will serve you well here—reflect in your journals, keep active, rest and eat well, explore your surroundings with new eyes. Soon you will have adjusted, though we hope that you've never quite the same as you were before your experience abroad!

OPENING NEW DOORS

While the last section dealt with things you needed to address while still abroad, this section examines your (new) life at home and back on campus. And while we encouraged you to put some closer on your experience abroad, now we're going to suggest you take the next step—figuring out what doors have opened to you as a result of your experiences.

DO YOU WANT TO STAY INVOLVED WITH STUDY ABROAD?

Get involved. Talk about your semester abroad in your classes. Make a zine about it. Come to Away Café and tell a story that crosses borders. The students who continue their international experiences often go on to international careers, or exciting opportunities like Peace Corps or the Fulbright Program. To start with, consider becoming a *Global Ambassador*. Ambassadors help the CGE represent programs to prospective students at admissions events, general information sessions for study abroad programs, and general and program-specific orientations, as well as tabling, and talking to classes. Contact Doug Reilly at dreilly@hws.edu.

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE COUNTRY YOU STUDIED IN?

Talk to your advisor, the faculty director of the program or anyone at the CGE; we'll help you find courses that may build upon your experiences. You can also consider an independent study; talk to your academic advisor to find out more. Some students focus their honor's thesis on their country of study as well.

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL CAREERS?

Maybe you think you'd like to make travel a part of the rest of your life. Maybe you'd like to spend a few years after graduation traveling or working abroad before settling down. Career Services and the Center for Global Education present an International Career Workshop every semester. In addition, please visit Career Services and the CGE and learn about some of the many options!

DO YOU WANT TO PUBLISH YOUR WRITING, ART OR PHOTOGRAPHY?

There are several opportunities available to you. There's a yearly photo contest, usually held in the Spring semester, and the CGE curates a gallery space on the third floor of Trinity Hall called the *Global Visions Gallery*. *GVG* hosts individual and group shows, with the goal of opening a new show each semester. If you have an idea for a show, see Doug Reilly. There's also *The Aleph: a journal of global perspectives*, published every Spring by the Center for Global Education and an editorial board of students just like you. To submit your work to the Aleph or learn more about the editorial board, email Doug Reilly at the CGE at dreilly@hws.edu.

DO YOU WANT TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH FELLOW STUDENTS?

Learn about becoming a paid Programming Assistant (PA) with the CGE and help orient other students going abroad, help the CGE develop on-campus programs aimed at making HWS a more culturally-diverse place, and help us out with programs like the photo contest, *The Aleph*, and International Week.

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A FILM ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE ABROAD?

Doug Reilly at The Center for Global Education has been regularly offering a Reader's College on digital storytelling. Students meet each week to eat, tell stories, learn about making films, and actually make their own three-minute digital story. This is a great way to both process your experience and also create a statement about it that you can share widely. Contact Doug Reilly at dreilly@hws.edu for more information.

DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT YOUR REENTRY EXPERIENCE?

The staff of the CGE love to talk about study abroad. Most of us have studied abroad ourselves - that's why we do the work we do today. Make an appointment with one of us or just drop in - if we're available, we'd be more than happy to hear about your experiences. It helps us learn how students perceive our programs, and it gives you a chance to talk to someone who understands.

Our hope is that you'll take advantage of one or more of these opportunities.

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