



## EXL 300 Cross Cultural Learning: Theory and Practice

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**Quick Flashback:** A selection of thought provoking, funny, and insightful posts from Allegheny College students in the Spring 2013 Study Abroad/Study Away programs.

### **BLOG ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS:**

**INTERCULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS:** For this entry, please write about a specific encounter or experience in your host destination that has made you aware of intercultural differences in the way we conduct business, or etiquette, or rituals around everyday life. Your comparison is not to produce a moral evaluation of whether such a difference is 'good' or 'bad' but rather, to provoke you to ask your local hosts about the significance behind what you have observed, and therefore, to educate the reader.

**HOW OTHERS SEE US:** Please interview 2-3 individuals from your host destination on how they view Americans, or if you are in a domestic destination, how they view people from small town America. Please try and incorporate interesting phrases or statements they make that bring their observations to life. Ask them what they base their beliefs on, and whether they see you as fitting the image they have in their minds? Why/why not?

**A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND YEARS:** For this entry, please post a picture that you feel captures the culture of the place you are at. You can choose to take a picture of a person/people, an event, a ritual or tradition, or a transaction-in-action. Avoid taking pictures of food, monuments, scenery, animals, or anything that would be stereotypically touristy. The focus here is to see how well you have started looking at your surroundings from an informed 'insider' perspective.

**BLOG ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS CONT'D:**

**REFLECTING ON AN EXPERIENCE:** What does it mean to be an American student on a study away program and what privilege does that bring with it?

**RESETTING OUR GOALS:** As you have spent considerable time immersing yourself in the culture of your host destination and benefiting from experiential learning, how would you respond to the reading assigned here? Please select a specific experience you have had, or something you may have witnessed to make your case.

**RETHINKING DIVERSITY:** What are the challenges of diversity that you have learned about or seen firsthand in your host site? How does this effect your understanding of what it means to be a global citizen?

**WHY AM I HERE?** So, you started off on this journey with a set of expectations and goals. Now that you have had enough time to explore and reflect, what do you hope to achieve through your study away experience? Identify two or three specific objectives that you wish to carry with you home, and that are *learning-oriented*.

**LESSONS FROM STUDY AWAY:** Interview 2-3 of your new friends from your host destination, and ask each of them to share a story *about you*, and what the story illustrates about an aspect of you that they believe defines you. Share the stories here and comment on what you observe emerges from this collage. What values/traits are primary in their definition of you, and what lessons emerge from this exercise?

**COMING HOME:** Now that you have finished your program away, what does home mean to you? Scholars have written about making the world your home through study abroad. Do you feel this is possible? Is it equally possible to feel foreign at home?





### **INTERCULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS:**

In the United States, our systems for buying and purchasing goods are neatly maintained for efficiency. Our spacious and colorful stores are well-lit; signs help customers enter, find, purchase, and exit stores with ease. Each item has its own spot on the shelf, and prices are clearly indicated by tags affixed to the item's spot or the item itself. Cashiers wait patiently for customers, bag their items, and the expectation of exact change is a guarantee. If any of these

expectations are not properly fulfilled, the customer has the right (potentially the responsibility) to voice her or his complaint to management.

This species of shopping experience exists in Dakar, with supermarchés like Citydia and Casino that are set up in a fairly western style. There is even a mall decorating the beach on the western coast of the city, about a ten minute walk from my home in the neighborhood of Mermoz. Boasting a variety of imported

goods and traditional Senegalese items, this type of store emphasizes convenience at a slightly inflated price. As would be expected, these stores are frequented by foreigners, expat French folks, and the occasional American study abroad student. The greatest contrast between a Senegalese Citydia and an American TOPS, with the exception of language, concerns the issue of change. If you pay with a big bill, even something as small as the equivalent of a \$20 bill in American dollars (10,000

francs cfa), you run the risk of not receiving exact change.

Shopping in Senegal, however, should not be defined by experiences at supermarchés. The vibrant open markets and corner stores sell many of the same products, yet lack the sterile efficiency that is associated with well-defined and inflated prices. For this reason, customers are encouraged to develop a relationship with their local shop keeper. This relationship facilitates bartering, and ensures fairness in interactions. For instance, Waly, who runs the corner store directly outside of the Research Center where I take my classes, knows me by name. For this reason he will hopefully remember the 50 francs cfa that he owes me after I overpaid for my egg sandwich a few days ago. The inverse is also true; I'll have to remember the 100 francs cfa that I still owe to the ladies selling strawberries on the Corniche the next time I want some fruit for lunch. . The fluidity of these shopkeeper/customer

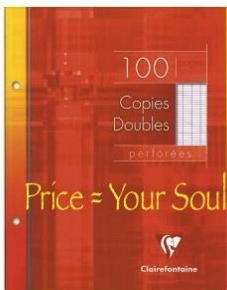
relationships and the convenience of the Citydia down the street from my house are advantageous in entirely different ways it seems. Personally, I've started to choose where I shop depending on my mood, whether or not I'm willing to barter or if I'd rather just silently wait in line for the cashier. There are linguistic challenges associated with each of these methods for shopping as well. Bartering requires at least a respectful attempt at the Wolof greetings of "salaam maalekum" and "nanga def?", while entering the supermarchés requires nothing more than a mumbled "bonjour" and "ça va bien".

Nathan Malachowski –  
Senegal



The first two days after my arrival the international students had to attend a few slide-show presentations concerning the purchase of student health insurance and some information about school activities and important dates. The slide-show about student health insurance was only about 10 minutes long. It detailed only when our insurance applications were due and directed us to resources that could assist us in filling it out because they are extremely confusing. After the presentation Alison (a fellow Gheny student) and I discussed how, at Allegheny College, that slideshow would have been an hour-long, in depth, extremely helpful, hands-on approach to filling out the insurance forms leaving us with no questions. At first I felt very put-off to be left hanging, but after thinking about the situation for a while, I appreciated the idea that, in France, administrators trust that the students are not mindless buffoons who are incapable of completing a form, and therefore do their best not to waste time

with long winded power point presentations. Next, in the little specialty shops (there are approximately one zillion of these in Angers) and even the big department stores, customers are always greeted with "Bonjour!" upon entering and "Au revoir" upon leaving. It feels like a personal and intimate experience every time I go shopping! It seems that, in France, personal connections and a personalized experience is the go-to business plan, while in America there is a lot more focus on driving sales and making money. Lastly, paper here is extremely expensive. I'm talking 4.50 euro for 200 sheets of paper. This seems to be an example of how environmental preservation is a top priority here. While I think that being environmentally conscious is a good thing,



I must say I got a little short of breath when I saw that a 25 sheet pack of notebook paper cost as much as two 300 sheet spiral bound notebooks at Walmart. This will take some getting used to.

Nicole - France

Restaurant Etiquette in Buenos Aires is based upon two central tenants: 1) No one is in a rush. Ever. 2) The waiters are tipped at a very low and very consistent rate, and therefore their performance does not greatly affect the amount of their tip. When you first sit down, your waiter will come up to your table and provide you with a menu, just as in the US. However, depending on the grandeur of the restaurant and how busy it is, this may take 15 or 20 minutes.

Once the waiter has begun to serve you, he or she often lays out a basket of bread and/or other hors d'oeuvres. It may appear to a tourist that Argentinian generosity abounds, but don't be deceived. Things that are typically considered free in the US, such as bread, water\*, and butter, must be paid for. Yet the cost of these items are not listed in the menu, so the only way in which the unknowing tourist can find out about this restaurant trick is to either be told by someone who knows better, or by sticker shock when they receive the check (I was fortunate enough to learn the easy way). Your waiter will eventually come around to take your order (see above about waiting), but be aware—he or she often suggests sauces or sides that, you guessed it, cost extra. Often charged is a service cost if you order alcohol, as the waiter will frequently pour it for you. When you are done eating, the waiter will not automatically bring the check, rushing you out like US waiters do.

You must ask the waiter to bring out the check. I've found that this is my favorite aspect of dining in Buenos Aires. I never realized how rushed I often feel when dining...until I wasn't being rushed. When you finally decide to pay, don't dare to ask for separate checks. It is considered rude for the waiter: In a country where technology is expensive and cash is much more common than cards as a form of payment, it would take the waiter about 10 minutes per card if a group were to pay for separate checks with credit cards. Also, because everyone has cash on hand, it's not considered a problem to pay your own portion of a single check. Moreover, it is traditional that whomever initiates the dining reunion pays. Last but not least, when you tip, you much tip at about 10%—no more and no less. This is, again, considered a service fee, and not a reflection of how good the service

was. Despite the many differences in timeliness and hidden fees, I find the dining experience in Buenos Aires to be just that—an experience. Meals are not just meant to provide nourishment for the body, but as a time to come together with friends and family.

J Coplen – Argentina

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### HOW OTHERS SEE US:

Part of my program includes having an "intercambio," or speaking partner, who we meet with on a semi-regular basis to help each other with Spanish and English. CCCS really pushes us to interact with our intercambios by

having parties and going on a trip to a nearby town to be able to interact more. I have been getting along with my intercambio really well, and have already learned a lot of phrases that have been very relevant and useful. He, and other intercambios in the program, were also a very valuable resource to get an understanding of American stereotypes that Spaniards tend to have. For example, they said that American tourists are typically thought of as overweight who eat large portions. This is because of the reputation that fast food restaurants have. They also said that Americans



typically wear socks with sandals in Seville, which they find funny.

Fortunately for me, this is not an American style that I have.

Fortunately, they did not think of me as fulfilling their stereotypes as an overweight American who eats too much, although they could recognize me because of what I was wearing—a sweatshirt and jeans, since Spanish women are almost always dressed up. I don't think my clothing was as stereotypically American as possible though, because I was not wearing socks with sandals. Because of my conversations with them, where I've talked about playing soccer for Allegheny, I think that they think that I fit the competitive stereotype, with Americans being successful in sports and business. This has definitely prompted me to try to recognize any stereotypes that I may have had about Spaniards and try to recognize why these exist, and whether people who I have

interacted with here have fulfilled the stereotypes or not.

masonk – Spain

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Ana Salas, a professor of Spanish Language, has had a bit more experience with Americans—she studied and earned her doctorate at the University of North Carolina, about twenty years ago. So, for her, she explains, she appreciates the culture and the language, but prefers to stick with her familiar Spanish lifestyle. She tells me, “Specifically, I do not like the way Americans feel about taking vacations—they feel guilty and do not relax nor enjoy time with their family. In Spain, we go to the beach, enjoy each other, and are able to relax.”



I have heard something similar to each of these comments before—after all, Americans even say similar things about themselves! Perhaps we are the ones that reinforce this notion that Americans hardly live or enjoy life. What I find the most interesting is that, despite the amount of interaction each interviewee has had with Americans (one only exposed to other American students, and one having lived in the United States) they have a similar basis in their commentary. Something that Ana mentioned that I had not previously picked up on, however, is that she believes Americans, a lot of the time, start sentences or make the reference, “In the United States, this is how we....” After this comment, I began to realize how often I have heard this said—not just on this trip, but other travels abroad. The moment I met José, I have been trying not only to immerse myself in the language, but the culture as well—I have asked him about his favorite bars, food,



his experience with carnival, his home town. He told me, therefore, that I do not exactly add up to his image of an American, as past Americans he has met at school have. Challenging views on both ends is always a good thing—to continue to open minds, and have yours be opened around the world, is a privilege.

Meagan Roppo – Spain

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### **A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS:**

How exactly do I avoid being stereotypically touristy when I raise the camera lens? How exactly do I capture an entire culture in couple thousand pixels? The first would assume that I'm not a tourist and the second would assume

that I understand the culture of Dakar. Neither of these things are true. Dakar is so far beyond my comprehension, and Senegal one step beyond that. I don't have an "insider's perspective"; I hardly understand Wolof, the language that many Senegalese cherish. Each time I attempt to take a photo I receive an uncomfortably familiar itch, the reminder that I am an outsider and that I'm busy collecting experiences before jetting back to America.

Nathan Malachowski – Senegal

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My first few days in India were a little rough. I was really homesick and trying to take in my new, chaotic surroundings. To say the least, I hit culture shock as soon as I stepped off the plane in New Delhi. After orientation and settling in with my host family, my roommate, Emily, and I took a walk in the park near by.



We were reflecting on how hard it has been for us to adjust as we strolled around the perimeter. After a few minutes, we realized there was a young girl following us. The girl seemed to be wandering alone and from our first observations she was dressed in ragidy clothing and looked like the street children we had seen in Delhi. We smiled at her and kept walking. Emily and I came across a play structure and decided to sit for a while in it and keep chatting. The young girl climbed up to it and just smiled at us. We motioned for her to sit with us and she eagerly joined. Through the very little Hindi we learned in only two class periods we were able to ask how she was and what her name was. She giggled at our Hindi but told us her name was Angeline. We then were able to teach her

some hand games from America- hot hands and thumb wars. She then sang us a few rhymes, and we taught her the itsy bitsy spider. I was amazed at how well we could communicate without knowing one another's languages. I later learned that Anegline's mother stitched clothing on the side of the street, and we continue to go to the park to talk to her with our new phrases. This initial encounter with Angeline was just what I needed to remind me why I chose to study abroad. I was so lost and confused when I arrived to India, but meeting Angeline at the park grounded me and made me realize how many wonderful people I can meet in a new place.

Mary Eddins – India



Kenya is a country world renowned for its natural beauty. People flock here from all corners of the globe to see Africa's Big 5 (the elephant, rhino, cape buffalo, lion and leopard), to climb Mt. Kenya and to visit the white sandy beaches on the Indian Ocean.

Certainly, when most foreigners who have never visited Kenya think of the country, they think of a safari with the lions. Most wouldn't think of trash. Sadly enough, trash was one of the first things that I noticed here. Waste management, something that I have taken for granted my entire life, is lacking here. Trash cans are very hard to find, and most people resort to littering. Others pile up trash and occasionally burn it, releasing many pollutants from the low temperature burns. Even in my neighborhood, where trash is collected weekly, people still burn trash and litter. Even in my neighborhood, where trash is collected weekly, people still burn trash and

litter. I took this photo near Ngong, in Masai Land. We were staying at a resort that one of the MSID coordinators runs with his brothers. They took us for a long hike, which involved climbing up a canyon. As we followed the dry creek bed, I noticed more and more litter. This upset me, but I assumed that it was from a few careless tourists.

When we reached the top of the canyon, I was shocked to see the source of the trash--a dump site at the top of the canyon wall (see photo). While the view, as the sun set over the Great Rift Valley, was breathtaking, this juxtaposition of Kenya's great scenery with one of its most evident environmental problems illustrates the country's struggles.

Kenya is so dependent on its environmental resources for ecotourism, but struggles with many environmental issues like deforestation, soil erosion, poaching, desertification, water issues and air pollution. Finding solutions



to these issues will take time and political will, but it is something that must be addressed.

E-IN R-2-RO – Kenya

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### REFLECTING ON EXPERIENCE:

I have been thinking about the concepts in this article a great deal. I have even talked with my roommates and other classmates about it. I am not even in my homestay yet so my experience is different than many other students at this stage of my study abroad. We are all American students so when we walk around town or are having class at the Biological field station we speak English (but we always speak Spanish to shopkeepers

and Costa Ricans that we meet). We all speaking at differing levels of Spanish so I understand that some people just can't have full on conversations in Spanish. Still it feels strange when we are walking along speaking in English.

Is it possible to be a global citizen? I don't feel that it is. But what does it mean to be a global citizen? Trying to define it is already distancing. It is automatically a me vs. them mentality. That doesn't mean that we can't try to be a part of the world. I may not be having the same experience as everyone else but I am meeting new people and gaining a better understanding of Costa Rican culture. Developing country is also a term that I have a problem with. Developing into what? The minute that you step off the plane and start thinking I am from a developed country you are already distancing yourself. I am a privileged American. The fact that I even get to



make this trip to see the world is proof of that. You can't deny that.

Laura – Costa Rica

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My experience thus far and my ability to travel to not just Israel, but to the West Bank as well has definitely brought with it previously unseen advantages such as: learning deeply about multiple cultures (Jewish and Arab) as well as intense political situations, learning other languages quickly through immersion, becoming more adaptable and open-minded, and becoming more comfortable with multiple cultures and constantly new experiences. I think to add intercultural experiences and global citizenship to our marketability has a different connotation for

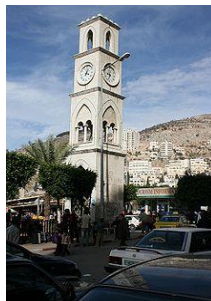
different people and their varying interests. For example, this experience is essential for me and tests whether I can and want to work in an international sphere. However, for others who plan on working on more of a national or regional scale it helps them to bring in more ideas and know how to work with a variety of people from different backgrounds which could help in a multitude of careers. So far, I have definitely had a mixed experience in terms of feeling like my visit is at the expense of another culture. With regards to my interactions with my friends I have not had the feeling of harming their culture, but rather learning so much from it! However, I have felt at times that I have been enjoying this experience at the expense of their culture when in public. For example, most women here wear a hijab and I do not, therefore I feel as though I am imposing on their cultural standards; however my friends here have assured me that I am

not. Also, many of the children and store owners try to sell me things and pay special attention to me rather than their regular customers.

Also, I feel like, in general, the Arava Institute has helped me to confront these issues of privilege, interacting with different cultures (some perceived as more “developed” than others), and most of all the complex, heated political situation that involves all students at the institute to a certain extent:

Palestinians, Israelis, Jordanians and Internationals (primarily from United States and Canada).

We have been able to discuss these issues through a program that is a part of our curriculum called PELS (Peace-building and Leadership Seminar). Through this we have primarily discussed our identities and the



conflict. It has definitely helped me to start processing what it means to be an American studying abroad, especially in two countries with an intense conflict in which the United States has tried and failed to mediate. Nevertheless, throughout the rest of my Pesach vacation in the West Bank I will continue to confront my identity as stated in the article as a “white, privileged American.”

Sami Laurence – Israel

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## RESETTING OUR GOALS:

The other day, I read an article that stated three million people in Spain are living in poverty (poverty being an income less than 390 euro per month). A lot of this could be attributed to the market crash and economic crisis of 2008, which has since increased unemployment rates by 24%. Additionally, a million lost jobs are

expected for this year. I myself have not come into contact with this problem, as I have not sought a job here, I have not known anyone here with personal employment problems, and have seen nothing out of the ordinary as far as a prospering or failing-to-thrive city. However, this issue stands amidst these concepts of "development," and the ideas in my mind as I attempt to become a global citizen. To me, reflecting on economic crisis brings to mind America's own financial troubles in the last decade. I think about how Americans would see this based on our own reference point. Although we see Spain as part of Europe, and therefore a "developed" country, how do we take this economic plunge? What assumptions do we make? That the government has failed? Or worse, that their form of government as a constitutional monarchy is wrong? That they cannot solve their problems like Americans can? Most importantly, as Spain's economy is beginning to

mimic post-war conditions, does this officially make it a "Third World" country? Could we even consider that? Instead, to build a critical, educational response and attitude, we can meditate on the intersections of the country's structure, and how better to understand it. As I continue to define what these concepts mean, not only globally, but personally, I have found that the only way to disconnect myself from an imperialistic mindset is to lose the classifications altogether, determine that every country in the world is constantly "developing," and to educate myself on the decisions being made during this economic crisis.

Meagan Roppo - Spain



## RETHINKING DIVERSITY:

A quote from the reading that really stood out to me was "Even those issues that seem closest to home--- issues, for example, about the structure of family, the regulation of sexuality, the future of children---need to be approached with a broad historical and cross-cultural understanding." This quote had meaning to me because I feel as though so many issues have become more "real" to me since studying abroad. Of course, I have always known that there are differences between cultures, and that different countries throughout the world have very diverse histories. However, reading about these differences in a textbook or hearing a professor explain them to you is completely different than seeing this differences first hand, or talking to a person who is a part of one of these different cultures. For example, one of my friends here at Lancaster is from Norway, and one day we

got on to the topic of family structure. She was explaining to me how it is almost looked down upon in Norway if a woman chooses to stay home with her children. Most women choose to return to work right after their maternity leave. I thought about what it's like in the United States, and realized that even though women pride themselves in having opportunities in the workplace, it is also respected when women make the decision to stay home with their family. Hearing my friend explain what it's like in Norway, and to hear her explain it so naturally, makes me see that these roles in Norway are just as "normal" to them as our roles in America are to us. When you hear about different cultural norms from someone in your own culture, I think you are more likely to view the opposing norm as odd or possibly "incorrect," but to hear someone from that culture explain it and talk about it just as you talk about your own norms

gives you a completely different perspective, and makes you re-analyze your views on what is "right" and "wrong."

Emily Farr – England

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In India, I have only encountered a few individuals (out of many) that have an open-mind about their own culture and way of life. I have had some conversations with individuals about the flaws in the education system, government, and women's rights. These individuals that openly critique their own culture are rare. For the most part, the Indians I have spoken to dance around issues such as rape, male preference, and HIV prevention. India, in either their opinion or in how they chose to present it, is a superior culture to mine. I have had countless people tell me that family is valued here, not like in my country where marriages only last 5



years. I respond by saying my parents have been married for 25 years, but this is normally not taken seriously or considered an exception.

I have been told that American women are "loose" because of what the media projects, and have felt uncomfortable walking down the street because I am not Indian (even when I try to wear traditional clothing and cover my entire body). I have never been so embarrassed of my race and sex. I have also been shown by many individuals their place of worship (mostly Hindu temples and also some Sikh temples), but when I try to talk about my religion there is very little interest. One person even told me "many Indians don't like Christians. You will have to get over

that." This upset me because I am so open to learning about new religions and I can't understand why others aren't open to learning about mine.

I am trying to figure out what it means to be a global citizen. I am trying to metabolize what I am learning here. I have hit about 50 walls in India. I know I will hit more in this last month here. I know I am learning a lot- even though I can't put everything in words quite yet but there is still the question of what am I going to take from this? What am I really learning? Did my liberal arts education prepare me?

Mary Eddins - India

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The Brockington and Weidenhoeft reading struck me as what would happen in a perfect world where every school was a small liberal arts college.

I'm still not sure that a person can be a global citizen, and going to one small corner of the world for a couple months definitely doesn't classify a person as one. Each culture worldwide is so unique and so different that it's extremely difficult to experience "the world" because the world isn't monochromatic; there are too many distinct types of people and places. I do agree with the fact that a large amount of learning occurs outside of the classroom, whether it be in internships, study abroad experiences, or just

learning things in everyday experiences. The classroom can only teach theories or regurgitate old studies, but to me the most important learning is through actually experiencing the way things work in different places.

This being said, it's extremely important to get the best of both worlds; to apply what we have learned in the classroom to the real world experiences we have. Before coming to Spain I had taken one class that focused half a semester on Spanish culture, but when I arrived I knew that that wasn't nearly enough.



I realize now that the Spanish people are a very proud, traditional people. There isn't a lot of interaction between immigrants from Africa and Asia and Spaniards, except for that the majority of immigrants own corner stores where Spaniards shop. But I haven't seen any mixed race friends or couples or anything. Also, the Spanish views are very traditional, especially in the home life as well. From what I've seen with my host mom and what I've heard about other peoples host moms, is that they don't work, they stay home and have dinner on the table and clean the house while everyone else is at work or school. The younger generation seems to be less traditional, I know a lot of girls who are in the business world and there are a good number of Asian

people who attend the university through their own abroad programs, so society might finally be changing and becoming more progressive.

Clark Tritto – Spain

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### WHY AM I HERE?

When I leave Jordan, I hope to bring back an understanding of cross cultural communication. I want to be more equipped to hold and facilitate cross cultural conversations. I think this is one of the most important ways that we can learn about our place in the communities that we enter. Linked to this point, I would like to bring back greater cultural understanding and sensitivity so that when the opportunity for these conversations arise, I will be better prepared to engage in them. This involved a broad and deep understanding of customs and values of the people involved.

Learning cannot happen unless we are prepared to respect other people's cultures and to see issues from their perspective. Another goal I have is to obtain a greater awareness of global issues. I read recently that it is important to travel while you are young because it allows you to expand your horizons, encounter compassion, and experience culture. I completely agree with this and I think that too often we as Americans make conclusions about the world without really understanding it. I believe, therefore, that a greater understanding of what is actually happening in Jordan is invaluable. Our generation desperately needs to learn how to think more critically about the world and to learn to ask the people most affected what the issues are. These are all human-related goals. At the most basic level, I want to be able to relate to humans no matter their background and culture. I want to be able to understand them and to learn from them. My goals

are drastically different, and I'm so thankful for that.

Jessica Bonzo - Jordan

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Senegal has sparked revolt inside of me in ways that I never expected. This anger and frustration leads to a strong desire to learn, to fill in the knowledge void that is the direct product of a semi-directionless education. So, my academic goals, for study abroad and beyond are:

1. Better understand my history as an American, achieve a better understanding of the history of other countries, and recognize the interactions between these histories. History has been integral to making sense of my experience here in Senegal, so I have a renewed appreciation for it. In addition, I want to become proficient in a language other than French, as languages are intricately tied up within history and culture.

2. Better understand the systems that perpetuate my privilege as a westerner/northerner at the expense of oppressive colonial relations with countries such as Senegal in terms of culture, economics, and other aspects. As part of this, I want to learn how to better channel my privilege, which I believe has been effectively wasted up until this point in my life, to amend this injustice in ways that avoid ruts of guilt or helplessness.

3. Allegheny in its tininess made me forget how to interact with strangers. Here, all of my interactions have been with strangers. I want to continue to connect with strangers (locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally) in positive ways, regardless of barriers such as culture or language.

Nathan Malachowski

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### LESSONS FROM STUDY AWAY:

I asked two of my flatmates to write a story



about me. I figured that would be easier than interviewing them:

Jon:

"On an evening during second term, Ian came and knocked on my door to inform me that he was appearing in a talent competition a few nights hence. My initial reaction was one of bemused admiration. Things like this are generally poorly advertised around campus, so for Ian to have discovered this event is a testament to his skills of detection. What's more, it's one thing to actually go along as an observer; it's another thing entirely to perform.

Ian told me and my flatmate that he was going to play an instrument called a Marimba. Now, I think it's no detriment to my intelligence for me to admit that I had no idea

what a Marimba actually was. A few searches on Youtube and Wikipedia aided me, along with a brief description from Ian. I was now informed, expectant and also a little scared. It seemed like a tough instrument to master, and I kept having repeating images of Ian clumsily dropping the sticks and hitting the wrong notes.

After a hastily scoffed down dinner, my flatmate and I travelled over to the bar, just in time for the first act. We were greeted by Ian looking cool as the proverbial cucumber, waiting patiently for his turn to take to the makeshift stage. He was up against some considerable adversaries. I was beginning to get worried for him, but he remained sitting there, calm and collected, with a sort of knowing smile on his face which seemed to say, 'Don't worry, Jon, I'm actually pretty good.' So, finally, it was Ian's turn. Each performer was hastily interviewed beforehand – name, nationality, college

affiliation. After a brief bit of banter with the interviewer, Ian was ready to perform. To start with: a rather staggered, stop-start rendition of The Star-Spangled Banner, which the American contingent of the crowd (brought along by Ian) wilfully joined in with. I was again a little scared; this was alarmingly close to the images I had of him clumsily dropping his sticks! However, after that shaky beginning, Ian treated all of the spectators to a wonderful performance. I now like to think of Ian as the Stevie Wonder of Marimba players – I'm pretty sure he could have performed blindfolded! This anecdote is a great example of Ian's

bravery, playfulness and easy-going demeanour. I, a 'native' student, could never have plucked up the courage to be in a talent competition. Memorable evening out; thanks Ian!" Mae:

"I couldn't have asked for a better flatmate than Ian; from his contagious laughter to his cheerful whistling, it's impossible not to feel happy in his company. We've shared many memorable times with Ian, but I was especially touched by his spontaneous decision one evening to cook a feast of classic American food for the whole flat, which was unbelievably kind of him - kind is definitely a word



that is encompassed in my schema of Ian. I have also been impressed by how proactive Ian has been in organising trips to various places in the UK and Europe, making the most of his time here. He will be missed and is always welcome to come stay if he's in London"

Ian Lim-Bonner - England

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Before starting, I first need to explain my host family situation in MSID Senegal. While in Dakar at the beginning of the semester and throughout my last week here I have lived with the family Sow. Throughout my six week internship at Radio Niombato FM 91.1 in Soucoute, Senegal, I lived with the family Mané. This division of time led to two incredibly different experiences, and I almost feel as though I studied abroad in two separate countries. My first interview, well, breakfast discussion, was with Maman Coumba, my

host mother in Dakar. She was quick to note that I am a very calm individual, unlike the other students that the family has hosted in the past. Along with this, she noted that I was able to adjust to life in Dakar rather quickly with little assistance. Another piece of her perception of me as an individual comes from the time that I cooked burritos for the family. She was genuinely surprised that I knew how to cook, and has since taken great interest in cooking with me. This past week we made pizza together and she has been teaching me Senegalese recipes; unfortunately, her desire for me to bake a cake was cut short by my departure for home. Maman Coumba was very appreciative of these actions, and as a result ultimately concluded that, "You are nice, you could live anywhere." My host father in Soucoute, who also happened to be my supervisor for my internship, is Moussa Mané. He is the son of the village chief, director of the radio, as well as an amateur beekeeper. He, similarly to



host mother in Dakar, noted my calmness, and a few tendencies which distinguished me from the tourists of Soucoute including my lack of a desire to take photos of everything and everyone. He contributed all of these qualities to being well educated. My host brother in Soucoute, Momo Mané, who happens to be both a plumber and a famous local rapper, recalled a time where I successfully caught four fish using a piece of string and a hook, and was fearless in my exploration of an island on the mangroves that he claimed was frequented by panthers. From this, he gathered that I was relatively capable, despite my misgivings when it comes to speaking Wolof or Seereer in conversation. With all of these perspectives considered, it seems that my Senegalese

host families thought of me as calm, kind, well-educated, and capable; an image of which I am incredibly proud.

Hopefully I can continue to project this in the future, regardless of where I live or who I am surrounded by. Whether or not this image reflects on global citizenship is not something that interests me, as I reject the term. What is of more importance than negotiating a proper definition of global citizen, in my mind, is a simple recognition of the humanity of others. You need to cook with others, discuss with others, laugh with others, ask others about their stories, and also be able to laugh at yourself when you need assistance removing the hook from a fish's mouth. All of this must be paired with a kindness and willingness to delve into the motivations and perceptions of others, as well as an awareness of your role and influence throughout interactions. I think it is called empathy.

- Nathan Malachowski –  
Senegal

### COMING HOME:

Home is a confusing word now. I love my family and my friends just as much as when I left but I am not the same. I think I realized that NY and the house where I grew up will always be my main home. I take pride in my home country and in my home state but I don't want to forget Costa Rica and all the people that I met. I don't feel foreign at home, I just miss things about Costa Rica. The first day when I woke up in my

bed I missed waking up and seeing all of my friends. I miss rice and beans, I miss the biological station and Monteverde, I miss the Spanish. I think it is possible to make the world your home by remembering the things that you love in all the places that are important to you. Placing importance on the skills you obtained and the people that you met is essential when trying to maintain your connection to study abroad. This is referenced in the article. There are many ways to keep in touch and remember. I have already watched the news in



Spanish and talked to my friends on Facebook. I did a hike the other day that has always been a hike that I wanted to do. I don't want to lose anything I just want to preserve all the memories.

Laura – Spain

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Before this study abroad experience I had never been the homesick type. I had gone away to camps when I was younger and was never the homesick child, when I was 7 and went to swim camp for a week I think I was the only girl that didn't cry. I didn't get homesick when I went away to college and I really was not even worried when I was leaving I was so excited. But with these things I still had so many common, comforting things around me, I could still run away when I wanted to. Obviously going almost 10,000 miles away for four and a half months didn't really leave me with that option.

Before leaving for Australia I was honestly terrified of the homesickness. I had only heard good things about the program and how incredible of an experience it was but it was really hard to grasp that I was leaving everyone and everything I knew behind for four and a half months. While in Australia I experienced homesickness in waves, and when they came it was really bad. Usually I would get homesick if I was sitting in my room with nothing to do, not too surprising. One thing I didn't expect was to be getting homesick when I was traveling or having a great time. There were just so many times that I would think wow I wish my family/friends were here because I know how much they would love this and I want to experience it with them so bad. For example, New Zealand was my favorite place that I



but also it felt like the hardest to get through because everywhere I went I could picture my dads' and a few of my friends' reactions to everything.

Emily Byers - Australia

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I made a very close friend in Sevilla, who came from Alabama. The last week that we were in Spain, she sat next to me and listed all of the reasons that she was excited to go home. She would see her boyfriend, her family, eat the food she enjoyed and missed, start new projects like going on mission trips with people that she knew.

Another night, we were watching the sunset with a few other friends. She asked to take a picture of her alone, with the city behind her. She described it as a shot that would say, "This is my home!" The way she said it, though, was emptier than the way she embellished on her established home in the states. She was proud of its appearance. But in the way she spoke about Sevilla, nothing compared to the

way she spoke about Alabama. Readjusting, or experiencing "reverse culture shock" is never the same as seeing, experiencing, comprehending and making sense of something for the first time. We go back to what is familiar. It may be weird at first, but it's what's familiar. Even if we are changed, it reminds us of what we were and how we got to be that way. What's more, even if we were challenged to become a different person, there is not a high chance that we can maintain that person when we return to where we come from. That "home" and what it has made of us will soon be forgotten.

Meagan Roppo – Spain



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