



Dartmouth College

Environmental Studies Program
6182 Steele Hall, Room 113
Hanover, NH 03755-3571 USA
PHONE: (603) 646-2838
FAX: (603) 646-1682

Douglas T. Bolger, Ph.D.
Professor of Environmental Studies,
Director Africa Foreign Study Program

Michael Cox, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies

Karen Bieluch, I.Ph.D.
Practice-based Learning Specialist
Environmental Studies Program

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Dear Students, Parents, and Families:

This letter contains important details regarding the Africa Foreign Studies Program (Africa FSP). The Africa FSP travels to South Africa and Namibia. Professor Michael Cox will lead the first half of the program (South Africa) and Doug Bolger the second half in Namibia. Karen Bieluch will support the program from campus and organize preparatory activities during the summer. ***We welcome you to the program and look forward to traveling with you throughout Africa!***

PROGRAM DATES

Arrival in South Africa: **Monday, 11 September 2017**

Departure from South Africa: **Tuesday, 14 November 2017**

ARRIVAL AT JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

Students must secure their own airline tickets to and from Johannesburg O.R. Tambo International Airport. Students should **ARRIVE on Monday, 11 September no later than 4:00 pm local time.** Arrival before 1:00 p.m. is preferred because of late-day traffic. We cannot meet flights or arrange for accommodation on earlier dates. We strongly discourage students from arriving on an earlier date and arranging their own ground transportation for personal safety reasons. On 11 September, we will meet all students at the airport and arrange their transportation to Curiosity Backpacker in Johannesburg. The academic program begins that evening. We will provide additional arrival details and contact information as the travel date approaches.

TRAVEL DURING THE PROGRAM: On October 12, students will fly from Durban, South Africa to Johannesburg, South Africa. They will then fly from Johannesburg to Windhoek, Namibia, arriving in Namibia at 9:25 p.m. Tickets for this air travel are purchased by the Africa FSP.

DEPARTURE FROM THE PROGRAM: The program ends on Tuesday, 14 November 2017. On that date the student group will depart Windhoek, Namibia at 6:40 a.m. and arrive in Johannesburg Tambo Airport at 8:30 a.m. Thus, your return flight home from Johannesburg must be comfortably later than 8:30 a.m. because you will have to clear immigration, retrieve your baggage, and check-in for your outbound flight. We recommend a return flight no earlier than 1:00 p.m.

To coordinate transportation to and from O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, we need **finalized travel information on or before 14 July.** Send confirmed flight itineraries to Karen Bieluch by e-mail or at the above address. If you have any questions regarding travel, feel free to contact Karen Bieluch or Doug Bolger (contact details below).

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Off-Campus programs office (Guarini Institute) has already informed you of their mandatory health and safety briefing. We will also have a mandatory meeting specific to our program in the first week of the summer term with Dr. Virginia Brack of Dick's House. Among other things, Dr. Brack will discuss the necessary immunizations as well as the malaria prophylaxis needed for our program.

Monitor your email carefully for the announcement of the date of this meeting. Also, you are responsible for responding promptly to other important emails we will be sending over the coming months. Do whatever you need to do to make sure that you do not miss or forget about these important communications.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The program is comprised of three courses ENVS 40, 42 and 84. We will discuss the details of the academic program, excursions, readings, and syllabi at an orientation meeting during the summer term. You may review last year's syllabi by going to our FSP webpage (<http://envs.dartmouth.edu/foreign-study>) and clicking on the link in the upper left titled "AFRICA FSP SYLLABI AND DOCS."

HOUSING

Students stay in a combination of backpacker lodges, wildlife park lodges, cabins, and camping. We are camping approximately half of the program.

FOOD

Most of our meals in Africa will be provided by the tour operators with whom we work. If you have food restrictions based upon preference, religion or medical reasons (intolerance or allergy) accommodations can be arranged. We have already requested your food preferences from you and will pass this on to our vendors. Vendors will plan appropriate menus and amounts of vegetarian food.

PACKING

Detailed packing suggestions will be provided to students during the summer. In general, students should try to travel as light as they possibly can. Again, if you don't want to wait until summer for this information you can see last year's packing list at (<http://envs.dartmouth.edu/foreign-study>)

PROGRAM EXPENSES

See the letter from Off-Campus Programs that you received in late May. That letter contains information about tuition, airfare, and out of pocket expenses on the program.

COMPUTERS and ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

The question of whether to bring your personal computer on FSP is a difficult one. In general, we discourage students from bringing their computers. This year we will supply five Mac laptops and five iPads with keyboards to share in student groups. Computers are needed for writing papers, composing photo essays and Powerpoint presentations, accessing the internet to find research articles, and reading PDFs of those articles. Ten devices should be more than sufficient for the demand the majority of the time. However, inevitably, there are crunch times that will require more careful management and sharing of these devices. At times, some may find that frustrating and stressful. If you anticipate that this will be a significant issue for you, you may want to consider bringing your personal computer. Remember that the College and our program will not take responsibility for your private property should it be damaged or stolen. We are travelling in hot and dusty conditions that require extra care to keep your computer safe and working. So, you must be comfortable with that risk if you decide to bring your computer.

PHONES

Some students choose to bring a phone. Unlocked GSM style cell phones will work with inexpensive local SIM cards in the region. We discourage students bringing phones because we feel it detracts from the experience of being in Africa; some students have a hard time disengaging from their smartphone. Having your own phone is not a necessity for most students. We can always be reached in case of emergency on the director's phone or the program's satellite phone (we will provide these contact numbers before you leave for South Africa). We are in towns on a regular basis (usually at least once per week) where phones and international phone calling cards and internet access are readily available to keep in touch with home. If you choose to bring your phone, please be aware that South African Airways, the carrier we fly with in South Africa and between South Africa and Namibia, prohibits Samsung Galaxy Note 7 devices from their aircraft. Thus, your phone may be confiscated by the airline prior to boarding.

Remember that all electronic items (computers, phones, cameras) are subject to theft, so it is up to each student thus keep them secure. Phone-snatching is a common petty crime in many urban areas.

PASSPORT AND VISAS

Passport: All off-campus program participants are required to have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the dates of a trip and that has at least two to three blank pages in the book. Keep a photocopy of the front page of a passport at home as well as with you at all times. The photocopy will expedite replacement of a lost passport. A scanned copy of your passport can be stored at the International SOS website (see letter from Off-Campus Programs). We have collected from each of you a copy of the photo page of your passport for our files.

Visas: For stays up to 90 days, U.S. citizens do not need a visa for South Africa and Namibia. Students staying longer should request one well in advance of the trip. Students traveling on passports other than those of the USA should consult embassy websites for visa requirements.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL DURING THE PROGRAM

Please note that during the duration of the program you may not travel independently. Our schedule is very busy and even on days where no specific excursion or activity is scheduled you are still expected to remain part of the group. These "off" days are scheduled to allow students to catch up on reading and written work or to rest after particularly strenuous stretches of the program

South Africa and Namibia have many opportunities for travel, particularly "adventure travel" that entice students. However, this simply cannot be accommodated within the program. Having students moving independently and interacting with vendors that are not known to us makes it impossible for us to safely manage the program. We encourage anyone that is interested in independent travel to plan for this after the end of the program.

BEHAVIOR

We do a great deal of planning to ensure that our program is safe. However, we cannot completely control individual risk-taking behavior. All students should avoid risk-taking during the program. Any injury or illness, even slight, affects all members of the program because we may have to re-route the entire program to access health care for the affected student.

Do not assume that you can handle each and every situation just because you have never had trouble taking care of yourself during prior domestic or international travel. Keep money and valuables on your person rather than leaving them on a seat, even if you are in the seat! Backpacks are also easy targets, especially on city streets or in shops. It only takes a second for someone to unzip your backpack, and you won't even know it!

General comportment: Be responsible, patient, and courteous. Many, many people work hard to make our trip possible – take time to be grateful for this.

In the places we visit many things may be done differently or take longer than you expect, for example, bank transactions or mailing a letter. We encourage you to see each moment, even frustrating ones, as part of your learning experience; keeping your sense of humor will help. In view of world events, it would be wise to avoid drawing unnecessary attention to yourselves. In practice this means: 1) wear unmarked clothing, rather than printed shirts with logos from Dartmouth or elsewhere in the States, 2) avoid loud and boisterous behavior, 3) avoid wearing ear-phones and not hearing what is happening around you, and 4) be discreet when you must show your passport and money.

In your travels with the Africa FSP, please wear neat, clean, and culturally appropriate clothes, including on the flights to and from the program. In other words, follow the same protocol that Dartmouth sports teams and clubs request when traveling.

We welcome your questions regarding the Africa FSP. We can be reached by e-mail or phone at the numbers listed below. Going back to Africa is exciting for us, and we look forward to sharing this experience with you.

Sincerely,

Doug Bolger
dbolger@dartmouth.edu
(603) 646-1688

Michael Cox
michael.e.cox@dartmouth.edu
(603) 646-0544

Karen Bieluch
karen.h.bieluch@dartmouth.edu
(603) 646-9895