



Organization for Tropical Studies



Global Health Issues in South Africa

*Undergraduate Summer Course
Orientation Packet*

When to Arrive

You should plan to arrive by noon (12:00 p.m.), on the first day of the program at the Johannesburg O.R. Tambo International Airport (JNB), and you can leave any time after 6:00 p.m. on the final day. For the start and end dates for your session please refer to your Acceptance Letter, website, or a member of the OTS Enrollment Management staff. Please book your travel arrangements accordingly.

Welcome

“Isihambe esithakazelwayo”

We would like to welcome you to the OTS Global Health Issues in South Africa program in South Africa! We are confident that this summer program will be one of the highlights of your college career. You will be challenged both academically and personally to examine complex health issues facing South Africa today. You will be further challenged not to view South Africa in isolation, but to make explicit and implicit connections to the broader global, economic, social, and political structures that shape and influence health in the South African context.

You will get to experience great places and see beautiful animals and plants. You will get to meet wonderful people from different social backgrounds and academic trainings and, hopefully, have a great deal of fun in the process! Our group will consist of approximately 25 students from the United States and South Africa, faculty, staff, and a number of visiting experts. During the summer, invited faculty will also spend time with the group and various guests will visit us for lectures and field exercises. You will have the opportunity to plan, develop, present, and write your own independent research projects. Additionally, you will participate in debates and critical discussions and reflect upon many other academic and cultural activities. Our group will be diverse and we expect that, with sensitivity to other people's backgrounds, perspectives, and opinions, you will not only learn a tremendous amount but will also develop strong and lasting friendships. This Orientation Packet contains very important information to help you prepare for your summer in South Africa. You should read it carefully, follow

the recommendations and suggestions we provide, and bring it with you to South Africa. If you have any questions, please contact the Communications Manager, Rinza Venter (rinza.venter@tropicalstudies.org) or the Program Director, Dr. Kate Abney-Barreiro (kate.abney@gmail.com). We are extremely excited to have you in our program!

A. GET WITH THE PROGRAM

1. Sites to be Visited

This program combines both formal and structured learning as well as field-based learning. In keeping with these methods, we will use several locations as our major research sites and other places for short visits of special medical, biological, or sociocultural interest. The key academic sites will include Johannesburg (in the Gauteng province), the Wits Rural Facility (in Acornhoek, Mpumalanga, near Kruger National Park), and HaMakuya (in the Limpopo province in the far north of the country). We will end the program in Skukuza, the main camp of Kruger National Park. Detailed descriptions of these and other sites can be found in the next section.

From these sites, we plan to make additional day and weekend trips for cultural activities and engagement, research, playing sport, sightseeing, shopping, and many other activities. You will be informed about these brief trips as the program progresses.

The weather in Limpopo and Mpumalanga Province in June is mild to warm during the day but the evenings can be very chilly. The 2010 Soccer World Cup, South Africa was considered, on average, to have experienced the coldest weather in the history of the games. It is certainly worth bringing warm clothing for your stay in Johannesburg as well as the early morning game drives in Kruger National Park. You don't necessarily need to bring a down jacket (although Laurence does bring his) but do bring something warm, as the weather clearly can be unpredictable. You will see a full list of recommended clothing at the end of this packet.

2. Description of Sites to be Visited

Johannesburg

Our program begins in Johannesburg, where we provide you with the background context on the political and social history of South Africa and set the academic pace for the rest of the program. Our short stay in Johannesburg includes a visit to the Apartheid Museum, Constitution Hill, and Johannesburg Art Gallery. As you listen to the lectures along with the site visits, pay particular attention to the history of South Africa and how it connects with current challenges in health today. Johannesburg, "the city of gold", for instance, has been one of the key centers in South Africa that offset the migrant labor system. Pay attention, therefore, to how the history of mining intersects with health challenges like tuberculosis as well as those related to sexual and reproductive health.

In Johannesburg, you will be staying in a backpackers' (hostel) facility in a very safe part of town from where we will be conducting our daily field trips as well as the orientation lectures.

HaMakuya

HaMakuya lies just outside Kruger National Park in close proximity to Punda Maria, a northern rest camp in the Park. Situated in the Venda district in the Limpopo province (north of the country), HaMakuya offers you the opportunity to become immersed in the rich social world of the Venda people. During your time in HaMakuya, you will interact closely with host families during a three-day homestay and spend time experiencing what life is like in this arid part of South Africa. You will learn more about rural conservation efforts and also about the interaction between people and parks (e.g., the economic spinoffs

of tourism derived from conservation areas). During this time, further drawing on the history learned in the Johannesburg leg of the program, you will have the opportunity to further learn about health issues in Venda as well as how the history (along with present-day leadership) in the area (as a former apartheid Bantustan) still influences and shapes many of present-day challenges. This is an important part of the program, so make sure you use it to learn as much as you can, as well as share your cultural and social practices with the people you encounter (as people will most likely also be interested in *you*).

Wits Rural Facility

The journey from HaMakuya to Wits Rural Facility will take you through different rural and peri-urban areas of South Africa as we drop off the Drakensberg Escarpment down into the Lowveld. We will stop for a break in a town along the way to pick up snacks, cash, and other personal items. Wits Rural Facility is located in a nature reserve on the outskirts of Kruger National Park. The staff at Wits Rural Facility has arranged a diverse and interesting program with several activities involving the local community (visits by home-based care workers, different healing interfaces, potential visits to hospitals as well as a local school). From Wits Rural Facility, we will also visit the Blyde River Canyon (weather permitting) and surrounding areas. Wits Rural Facility has dormitory-style accommodation with communal bathrooms. It has a quiet, relaxed atmosphere and there are no shopping areas nearby. If you have mail that needs to be sent, the mail will be taken to a local post office or to Skukuza.

Skukuza

Skukuza is the main camp in Kruger National Park (KNP) and we will finish the summer program there. Skukuza is KNP's headquarters and, by far, the largest camp in KNP. Kruger National Park hosts approximately one million tourists every year, many of whom spend time in the camp. Our accommodations at Skukuza are at School Journey Service in the tourist camp, which feature two large dorm rooms. In and around Skukuza, you will have the opportunity to see many plants and animals. Inside the camp, you might spot different birds, lizards, and thick-tailed bush babies. Warthogs, vervet monkeys, and banded mongooses also like cruising through the camp during the day. Our main OTS offices are situated in Skukuza. Here, you will have access to computers, a scanner, telephones, and e-mail. Skukuza also has a large general store where you can buy books, newspapers, souvenirs, snacks, and basic drugstore items.

Site	Description	Accommodations	Shops	Phone	Email	Recreation
Johannesburg	Commercial capital of SA. Given its reputation as the social melting pot of SA, many suggest it is also the social heart of the rainbow nation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 – 4 per room • Bathroom inside your room • Small restaurant on site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near major shopping centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cell phone reception • public phones 	Wireless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied!!!
HaMakuya	Located in the North of SA near the northern section of the Kruger National Park (KNP). Very remote, near the beautiful and friendly village of HaMakuya.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homestays for 3 nights; 4 people to a household sleeping on grass mats... prepare to challenge yourself! • Remaining time at lovely research camp located on the Mutale river in very comfortable en-suite tents (6 to a tent) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local village shops only (we will stop at shops on the way to HaMakuya) 	No	No. Also no electricity. Power via a generator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer with the locals • Running • Plenty of space to explore and go for long walks around the camp
Wits Rural Facility	Situated 50 km (about 31 miles) outside of Orpen gate west of KNP, in a rural area of South Africa. Nearest village is Acornhoek.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 per room • 2 rooms next to each other in separate "houses" • Bathrooms for men and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None in the camp; small village ± 25 km (15.5 miles) away for emergencies only • Opportunities to buy curios and beaded jewelery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public card and coin phones in next door camp ± 3 km (1.86 miles) away that we can drive you to during the day only • Cell phone reception 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimming pool at camp or next door camp ± 3km (1.86 miles) away • Volleyball • Can run and walk around the reserve freely
Skukuza	Main camp in KNP located in the South. All facilities available including post office and banks/ATMs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying in dormitories • 2-3 people per room • 3 showers and 3 toilets for everyone – Keep clean and consider others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-10 min walk to large shop at the tourist camp and in staff village. They stock everything: drinks, snacks, toiletries, curios, etc. • Restaurant and take out at main camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public phones in the tourist camp • Cell phone reception 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 recreational swimming pools in camp • 25 m swimming pool in village • Soccer, volleyball, Frisbee, game drives • Can run around the village in groups, before dusk ONLY



3. Academic and Student Life on the Program

You will no doubt have many questions about what student life on the program will be like. For most of the program, you will be living with other students in large dormitory rooms, cottages with 4 – 6 students, and smaller cottages with 2 students per room. Because of these group living situations, we all have to be conscious of other people's comfort and convenience. We must keep our personal space organized (so keep your baggage to a minimum!) We also need to make sure that our comings and goings at night and in the early morning disrupt our fellow companions as little as possible. We will try to schedule short periods of time in every day when you will be free to go for a run, play soccer or Frisbee, take a swim, amble over to the grocery store, write postcards, or catch up on your reading and studying. The intent, when possible, is to give you one free day per week with no scheduled events. You may use this time to catch up on work or to take a mental break.

The program will be an **intense** academic and social experience and we expect everyone will have ups and downs. We will schedule times for you to meet individually and in groups with the faculty in order to receive feedback on your coursework and to express any concerns. We will also have regular debriefs, particularly if we have had a challenging day, to allow an open space to share and reflect where we are in our personal and academic growth on the program. Because of the rigors of the academic schedule and the constraints of group living, however, we will not be able to tailor this program to meet everyone's individual needs and desires. So, it is important to reach out to one of the staff or to the Student Representative Council if you feel your needs are not being accommodated. We will try to accommodate everyone but, in some cases, we will not be able to make everyone happy.

4. Meals and Special Dietary Requirements

Meals are provided by our caterers, Shadreck and Co., who refer to themselves as AggyShadow Catering Company. The food is fantastic and regularly cited as one of the highlights of the program. Therefore, we warn you in advance about the possibility of expanding waistlines! The menu is highly varied and dinners usually consist of a variety of choices of side dishes (with an occasional and highly-sought-after dessert menu). The program caters for those with special dietary restrictions (i.e., vegetarians and vegans) or food allergies but **please list all such restrictions/allergies on the OTS Medical Form** so that Shadreck can prepare accordingly.

B. LOGISTICS

1. Passport Information

If you do not have a passport, please apply for one immediately! You will be asked to provide your passport information to OTS on several registration forms. **You must ensure that your passport has two facing blank pages. This is extremely important, as students without blank pages in their passports HAVE been turned away at the border.** Also, make sure that your passport is valid for at least six months after the end date of the program.

If you plan to enter South Africa before the program officially begins, or extend your stay after the program ends, making your stay in South Africa longer than 90 days, you must contact your regional South African Consulate to apply for a Visitor's Visa.

If you are not a US citizen, contact your regional South African Consulate or Embassy immediately to determine passport and visa requirements. Should you need proof of program participation, please contact Dr. Ed Stashko, OTS Vice President for Global Programs and Partnerships, at edward.stashko@tropicalstudies.org for assistance.

2. Airline Reservations

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements. Please note that, if you choose to arrive earlier or depart later than the scheduled program dates, you must make your own arrangements for transportation, lodging, and safety.

If you will arrive at JNB prior to the start of the program, we recommend staying at the **Airport Lodge-Emerald Backpackers** (www.airportlodge.co.za). It is located about 4km (or 2.5 miles) from the airport and has an hourly shuttle pick-up from JNB. If you wish to travel after the program has ended, please contact the program staff for advice.

3. Money

Please do plan to have enough money for personal expenses. You will be required to pay for health care, mail, sodas, and souvenirs. It is hard to set a standard for you to follow, but keep in mind the following (the exchange rate is currently R13.5 = \$1.00):

A can of soda is about R7.00;

A bottle of mineral water is about R9.00;

A 500 ml fruit juice is R7.00

Phone card: R50 (you can call the US for 15mins or so)

Average meal at a restaurant is between R50-R80

Souvenirs are not expensive but, after a few, they do add up to quite a bit. A nice, mid-sized Zulu basket will cost about \$15 in a store. Beautiful wire and bead key chains and animals can be purchased from the craftspeople directly for a couple of dollars. They make wonderful gifts and their purchase also helps support the local economy.

In addition, most places we stay have cleaning staff that will make your bed, clean the bathrooms, and sweep the areas we live in on a daily basis. Often, these hard-working individuals are paid a very meager salary and it is customary to show our appreciation by leaving tips behind at the end of our stay at each site. Generally, we encourage you to leave about R35 per week, but we understand that not everyone can

afford to do so. Tipping is optional but whatever you can contribute will be greatly appreciated. Furthermore, during your homestay, if you wish to bring a gift for your host family, we would advise you to bring school materials (pens, pencils, notebooks) and old magazines/textbooks. The children and scholars greatly appreciate the contribution!

5. Health Care

a. Medical Care

If you do not have health insurance, you need to arrange for coverage during your time in South Africa. If you do have health insurance, please make sure that your health policy covers medical expenses while you are in South Africa. You **must** have health insurance with international coverage in order to participate in this program.

Before coming to South Africa, please make sure that you are up to date with all your immunizations. Kindly check with your family doctor or the travel health clinic at your college or university for current recommendations. The OTS program will be traveling with a complete first aid kit. You must, however, bring adequate supplies of any prescription drugs that you will need. If your doctor advises against taking a large supply of medication with you, s/he should provide you with a written diagnosis and the suggested prescription to facilitate proper dispersal by a South African doctor. It is possible that the same drug will not be available on the South African market. Therefore, a similar drug would be administered to you by South African doctors.

In addition, bring supplies of pain relievers or other medication(s) that you would usually use if you are prone to headaches, ear aches, allergies, cramps, intestinal disorders, yeast infections, and so on. Anti-fungal/athlete's foot cream will also be handy as well as hydrocortisone (for itchy bites). Some things that are really important to bring to South Africa are mosquito repellent spray, sun block, and hats. Other useful insect deterrents are candles with citronella for those times that you would like to sit outside and relax after sundown. These items can also be purchased in South Africa and are generally available at all of the Kruger National Park camp shops. You may also want to bring a mosquito net.

Traveler's diarrhea is a common ailment. If you are susceptible to changes in gut flora, you should bring something to combat diarrhea or relieve discomfort. This ailment is quite common but of short duration. One way to prevent transmission from person to person is to ensure that you do not share drinking cups, cans of soft drinks, or water bottles. We will be doing quite a bit of travel. So, if you are susceptible to motion sickness, you should bring appropriate medication (such as Dramamine).

In the event of a serious illness or injury, good medical care is available. There are two doctors based at Skukuza. Both are very adept at diagnosing malaria and tick bite fever. They also have their own dispensary and, therefore, we do not need to go to town for medication. If the medication that you need is not available at the doctors' office in Skukuza, it can either be ordered or one of the OTS staff will go into one of the nearby towns of Nelspruit or Hazyview (the two closest towns) to pick up the medication.

b. Counseling Services

Issues in emotional health may arise during a study abroad experience. Being new to a country and a program can expose you to unexpected stress that can detract from the overall experience. Professional counselors are available to help with various types of stress-related problems. Please reach out to one of the staff members either individually or to the Student Representative Council if you would like to see a counselor.

c. Immunizations

Please check with your family doctor immediately for professional advice regarding immunizations. In addition, you should check the [Centers for Disease Control's Travelers' Health Website](#) for the latest updates on diseases in South Africa and recommended vaccinations. However, please consider the following vaccinations:

- **Booster shots:** Make sure you are up to date on all your immunizations.
- **Tetanus:** This is good for 10 years; however, we advise you to consider having a booster shot if your last one was more than 5 years ago.
- **Diphtheria:** Boosters should be taken every 10 years. They are typically administered together with the tetanus shot. This is called the Td vaccine.
- **Typhoid:** Please make sure you are up to date with this immunization.
- **Hepatitis A:** This may afford protection against this highly-infectious disease.
- **Hepatitis B:** Highly recommended for everyone.

Recommended medication:

Malaria is quite a significant risk in the Lowveld (Wits Rural Facility, HaMakuya, and Skukuza) where most of our time will be spent. Please bring anti-malarial medication with you. There are several different malarial prophylactics available. Consult your physician about the appropriate prescription for the areas you plan to visit and to ensure the prophylactics are administered correctly. According to the physicians in Skukuza who deal with malaria, the best product is Malarone.

C. COMMUNICATION

1. Important Numbers

OTS is a non-profit consortium of over 60 institutions in the U.S., Costa Rica, Australia, Mexico, Peru and South Africa that has been involved in training and education in tropical biology and resource management for over 50 years. OTS has two administrative centers relevant to the South African program:

Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS)

Organization for Tropical Studies

Box 90630

Durham, NC 27708 USA

Tel.: (919) 684-5155

Fax: (919) 684-5661

Email: undergraduate@tropicalstudies.org

The **Kruger Office (KO)** is situated in Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga.

Rinza Venter

Organization for Tropical Studies

P.O. Box 33

Skukuza, 1650

South Africa

Tel.: (+27) 16 735-4407

Mobile: (+27) 82 4226225

Email: laurence.kruger@tropicalstudies.org

rinza.venter@tropicalstudies.org

Both incoming and outgoing mail will pass through KO. Staff answering OTS numbers at KO speak English.

Telephone

There are telephones available in Johannesburg, Nelspruit, and Skukuza. These are pay phones and both local and international phone cards can be bought at the camp shops. Incoming calls you receive will have to be made to the OTS office at Skukuza. You will then be directed to return the phone call. It might be worth acquiring a South African mobile phone upon arrival in order to stay in touch (ask for our advice when you arrive!). We will have good cell phone reception at all of the program sites except in HaMakuya.

2. **E-mail and Internet**

You will have e-mail and internet access in Johannesburg and Skukuza. However, because access is limited, you will need to plan for it.

3. **Letters and Packages**

Letters and packages for you can be mailed directly to KO and you can pick them up when we are there at the end of program. Please also note that large packages require a post office/customs processing/handling fee of anywhere between R25 and R200. **Given your short time in country, we do not recommend that people send you packages as they might well arrive after you leave!** Letters, however, are a nice way to stay in touch during those times when you will be too busy or without internet

access. Letters can be left at all the reception areas of the camps and they will be mailed from there for you.

Your address while you are in Kruger National Park will be:

Your Name
c/o Laurence Kruger
P.O. Box 33
Skukuza, 1650
South Africa

D. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT TRAVELING IN SOUTH AFRICA

1. Safety

Your safety is one of our main concerns. We will do everything possible to make you aware of the risks and appropriate precautions at all sites. As you all know, South Africa is a country in transition and many issues of power, wealth, and politics are in a state of flux. In part, because of this, South Africa also has a very high crime rate, especially in urban centers. To minimize the risk of encountering dangerous situations, we will provide you with good preparation in these city centers. As a general rule, you should take precautions similar to those you would take in any populated area in an unfamiliar country. These include *not* accepting help at the ATMs unless one of the staff members is assisting you, *not* wandering off alone without informing one of the staff members, and *not* carrying valuables in crowded places, amongst others. When unsure about safety, what to carry, or where to go, please consult one of the staff members.

The major risks within Kruger National Park are wild animals and diseases. To minimize the risks of encounters with wild animals, we will travel in the field with armed game guards at all times. You must not leave the group when we are in the field and you must obey the instructions of the program staff and the game guards at all times. You will be informed of all relevant rules and instructions once you are in the Park.

Diseases such as malaria and tick bite fever are treatable but it is much better to prevent the disease rather than to treat it. We have strict procedures regarding keeping screens on windows, doors closed, using mosquito repellent, and covering up arms and legs during evening and night hours. It is also extremely important that you report any unusual symptoms (especially headaches and fevers) to the faculty immediately even if it appears that it is not “a big deal”. The doctors in Nelspruit, Hazyview, and Skukuza are excellent at recognizing and treating the most common ailments. You will likely be unaccustomed to the particular challenges presented by this environment, however, and we strongly urge you to take all recommended precautions.

Some general suggestions:

- Always carry a photocopy of your passport and keep the original in a safe place (it can be stored in the OTS safe in Skukuza).
- Never carry more cash than what is absolutely necessary.
- Do not wear expensive jewelry and watches.
- Keep a tight hold on your belongings at all times in public areas.
- ALWAYS travel in groups.
- Always carry the phone numbers of the faculty with you. These will be given to you at the beginning of our time together.
- Do not engage in reckless or risky behavior (such as getting intoxicated).
- Always inform the staff where you will be and where we can find you, even if you are going on a brief jog around the inside perimeter of the camp fence.
- Inform staff immediately of any situation or person that causes you to feel in any way uncomfortable or threatened.

The phone number for the U.S. Consulate in Pretoria is (+27) 12 342-1048. You will be registered with the U.S. Consulate and they will have a copy of our itinerary.

Please check out the following website before coming to South Africa: <http://travel.state.gov>. Here, you will find tips on safety and travel before you make your move here. Your safety is our **first** priority.

2. Special Information for Women

Women's rights in South Africa are not recognized or realized in the same way as they may be elsewhere in the world. Sexual harassment, physical assault, and rape do occur South Africa. Here are a few guidelines as to how women may limit their exposure to these kinds of dangers:

- Never go out alone. Always make sure that you have a friend with you.
- Never accept an open drink from a stranger or even someone who appears "nice."
- Don't be overly friendly. Your intentions might be mistaken as an invitation.
- If you feel uncomfortable at any time, make sure you communicate this to your friends. Trust your intuition and remove yourself from the situation as soon as possible. Report any incidents immediately to one of the faculty. Remember, we are here to help you make your stay in South Africa as safe and enjoyable as possible.

3. Sexual Harassment

We are committed to maintaining a healthy and productive work environment. OTS has a strong policy against sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as all sexual conduct that is undesired by the person(s) to whom it is directed and provokes negative effects or impacts an individual in the following ways:

- Conditions of academic standing – these actions may occur in the context of the student-teacher relationship, such as grade alteration, dismissal from the program, or modifications of student evaluations.
- Productivity – these actions may affect the normal development of academic and field activities and result in a lack of motivation, low efficiency, absenteeism, and so on.
- General personal well-being – these actions may negatively affect your ability to participate in daily activities in the field or in the classroom.

Both overt and subtle forms of sexual harassment are strictly prohibited at all OTS facilities and during all OTS-sponsored activities. If you have any questions, complaints, or find yourself in need of any other assistance in this regard during your stay in South Africa, you are strongly urged to contact a member of the OTS faculty with whom you feel comfortable discussing your concerns. If, for any reason, you do not feel comfortable discussing concerns about sexual harassment with the faculty, we ask that you contact OTS' Vice-President for Global Programs and Partnerships, Dr. Ed Stashko, at edward.stashko@tropicalstudies.org or OTS' Enrollment Management Staff at undergraduate@tropicalstudies.org.

4. **Information Communication Technologies (Access to Wifi and Cell phone use in South Africa)**

The technological landscape differs greatly from what you may be accustomed to in your country of origin or the United States of America. South Africa's infrastructure is far less robust; affecting accessibility and quality of service. WiFi access is NOT pervasive and your cell phone may not work even if you have set up an international package. It is incumbent to you to arrange a cell plan in advance (or alternatively accept that your phone will not work here). Many students have (happily) gone without cell access the entire duration of the course, whilst others have experienced duress due to last minute planning. It is NOT the responsibility of faculty or staff to ensure your phone works, it is however your responsibility to make contact to loved ones when you arrive in South Africa. **WhatsApp is the application of choice for international texting when in WiFi range.** The app is free and if installed by your other users provides and cheap means to keep in touch as long as WiFi is present.

E. WHAT TO BRING

This section includes 3 checklists to help you pack for your trip:

1. Clothing and Personal Items
2. Essential Field Items
3. Almost Essential Field Items

As a general rule, travel as light as possible. It is hard to dictate the optimal numbers and kinds of bags you should bring with you, so these are just some useful hints. Avoid bringing large, hard suitcases. It is definitely better to bring a few smaller bags than one large suitcase that is difficult to haul around. In your luggage, you should definitely bring one small backpack to take on site visits and into the field. You can use it carry your water bottle, thirst quenchers, snacks and data records, as you need to be able to move fast and have your hands free. Expect any bag(s) you bring to get dirty and dusty.

When choosing clothing, try cotton or cotton-blends. Label all your clothes, as this will make it easier to identify your own things if clothing get mixed up. We spend our time in the field and in city environment, so please pack for both.

For going into the city, you will need to bring what you would ordinarily wear back home. For site visits and academic trips, you will need to have modest and conservative clothing - especially when visiting hospitals and/or patients. For going into the field, the clothes you wear are in for a rough time. This is a wonderful area and it is marvelous to sit outside at night – just make sure that you have long pants and long sleeves to keep the mosquitoes at bay. It is warm during the day (20°C – 30°C/68°F – 86°F) but can get very chilly in the evenings. Think about being able to dress in layers to stay comfortable. A good knit hat will help to keep you warm in the evenings and early mornings.

You will be fully-equipped if you bring all the items listed on the following 3 checklists. Nonetheless, your own personal habits and research interests should be considered in deciding what to bring. Previous students on our programs have advised us that they might not have packed enough of the following: small field notebooks, batteries, Ziploc bags, aspirin, bandanas, vitamins, alarm clocks, more socks, and some **city clothes**.

If you have any questions about what to bring, please contact the OTS office in North America, or Rinza Venter or Laurence Kruger in KO.

Checklist # 1: Clothes and Personal Items

	Valid Passport.
	Credit card, Money and/or Traveler's Checks. Most people use their debit cards to withdraw cash in SA (NB: in rural areas, there are often no ATMs) and keep traveler's checks as back-ups. Don't forget your PIN number and <i>DON'T ACCEPT ASSISTANCE FROM STRANGERS!!</i>
	Shirts. 3 for going into the city, 3 for wearing in the field, and a few t-shirts. Women may want to consider bringing a few tank tops for the hot days.
	Pants. 2-3 pairs of pants. Sturdy, loose-fitting pants are best for the field because of the thorns and thick bushes (many students prefer a pair of Nylon pants; e.g., North Face pants). You will need a pair of jeans for cooler evenings and for wearing in the city. Bring nicer clothing for hospital visits and evenings out.
	Shorts. 3-4 pairs of shorts. Women may want to bring a few skirts.
	Warm clothing. Although most areas we visit will be warm, the weather can change rapidly. At least 1 warm jacket is essential (e.g.; a polar fleece jacket). 1-2 sweaters, warm hats, and a pair of sweat pants would also be useful.
	City clothing. Bring a few sets of clothing for going out in Johannesburg and Nelspruit.
	Rain Jacket or poncho.
	Swimsuit.
	Wide-brimmed hat. A MUST!!
	Underwear. 7 pairs should be enough.
	Socks. 5 – 7 pairs. Bring a few that can be pulled up to your knees for the field, as this will protect you from ticks.
	Light hiking boots. Heavy boots are not necessary and most field visits can be done in sneakers/running shoes. So, hiking boots are optional.
	Sneakers or Tennis shoes.
	Comfortable shoes to use for leisure.
	Teva or Chaco-type sandals and/or flip flops.
	Towels. Towels are available at some of the sites but it is still advisable to bring 2 towels along for those places that do not provide towels. Perhaps also bring an easy-dry towel.
	Sleeping bag. This is your bedding for your homestay in HaMakuya.
	Personal toiletries. Most items are available at the camp shops but women should note that, while tampons and sanitary pads are mostly available, it is worth stocking up when we travel through the main centers. If you have a favorite brand, you should bring a supply for the whole summer in case you are unable to find the appropriate brand in South Africa.
	Personal Medical Supplies. We will have a first aid kit but you should bring your own vitamins, aspirin, antiseptic, hydrocortisone cream, Band-Aids, etc. You will be able to purchase most of these things once we get to Kruger National Park but you should pack enough of these items for our first 2 weeks in the field.
	Extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses and vision prescription in case yours get broken or lost. You should also bring extra contact lens solution (as brands might differ in South Africa).
	Sunglasses. A must if you want to prevent headaches and eye damage.
	High-rated sunscreen.
	Sewing needles, strong thread, extra buttons, safety pins, and shoe/boot laces.
	Insect sting kit. If you are allergic to bee stings, please bring an emergency adrenalin kit. <i>PLEASE inform the faculty of your allergy.</i>
	Something to read.
	Photos of your family, college, hometown, etc. This is so we can all get to know each other better.

Checklist #2: Essential Field Items

	Binoculars. Even if you are not a bird enthusiast, these are essential for the trips to Kruger National Park. Most leopards and cheetahs are also only detected through binoculars.
	Flashlight. These are essential, especially to make sure there are no nighttime encounters with snakes and scorpions.
	Headlamps are essential.
	Batteries. These should either be alkaline or rechargeable. If you use rechargeable batteries, please bring your charger with you, as none are available at the camps.
	Pocket knife. The Swiss Army-type with multiple functions is best. Pack your knife in your checked luggage and not in your carry-on bag.
	Travel alarm clock.
	Wristwatch.
	A backpack for daily field use. This must be big enough to hold a water bottle, notebooks, and snacks while out in the field.
	Insect repellent and good anti-itch cream.
	Tick repellent spray or lotion.
	Lecture and Field Notebooks. We recommend you use one as a notebook throughout the program so that you have your notes in one place. These can also be purchased in Hazyview or Nelspruit.
	Several pencils and ballpoint pens.
	Water bottle/canteen. YOUR MOST IMPORTANT ITEM!
	A plastic folder to store handouts.
	Laptop Computer/Tablet Our laptops are PCs. It is advisable that you bring your own device. Check to see whether your computer and camera are covered on your (or your parents') homeowner's insurance policy. OTS will not assume responsibility in case of damage, loss, or theft. However, safety of your equipment (from theft AND damage) is our highest concern. We will try our best to ensure that computers are safe while traveling. Also, please make sure your antivirus software is up-to-date.
	Travel Adaptor a quick online search will reveal what you will require! One is enough!
	Sense of Humor. A must for long, hot days in the field when nothing is going as planned!

Checklist #3: Almost Essential Items

	Camera. It's a good idea to also remember a UV-filter or a haze filter to protect your lens. If you bring a digital camera, make sure you have the cable to download your photos onto a computer (and always remember to ask for permission before taking pictures of people).
	Extra batteries. The shops mainly sell sizes AA and AAA.
	Watertight, plastic bags to store camera, flash, film, and calculator.
	Music to listen to on the long trips between sites.
	Musical instruments. If you can play – <i>Please don't forget!</i>
	Flash drive and/or external drive. Advisable to help with the exchange of information. An external drive is essential if you take a great deal of photos.
	Old books / magazines for our school outreach program. OTS has an outreach program with the local schools in HaMakuya and it would be great if you can bring at least 3 old books and magazines that you no longer use to be given away.

F. OVERALL EXPECTATIONS

The OTS experience provides you with a fantastic opportunity to learn about global health issues in a way that is not likely available to you at your home institution. You will have the chance to interact with resident and visiting faculty on both professional and personal levels. The interactive nature of the program provides an amazing learning experience. However, the program can be academically and socially intense at times. Unlike the structured schedules you may be used to at home, this program relies heavily on your commitment and personal time management skills. We hope not to intimidate you but rather to excite you about the challenges and learning opportunities that await you. Please come with a curious and motivated attitude and you will be well rewarded. Much of the success of the program depends upon your recognition that the more you put into it, the more you will get out of it!

Many students who have participated in the OTS programs in South Africa have reported that they are life-changing experiences. Not only do we hope to leave you with a greater understanding of socio-ecological systems and global health issues but you will also have numerous cultural and personal experiences and interactions with classmates and faculty that will create lasting memories. You will likely gain insights into who you are as a person and will make friendships that will last a lifetime.

It is best that you come with few expectations (outside of the academic ones). The best way to prepare yourself is to read and re-read all the material that we send you and then open your mind to a completely unique learning experience. You and your classmates will come from different backgrounds and academic experiences and it is difficult to design a program that tailors to each of your needs. However, the OTS staff in OTS South Africa is committed to facilitating both your academic and personal experiences and we are sure you will have a great summer!