



# Organization for Tropical Studies



## Global Health Issues in South Africa

*Undergraduate Summer Study Abroad 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.

### **Siyakwemukela!** **(Welcome!)**

We would like to welcome you to the OTS Global Health 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 academically and personally to examine complex health issues facing South Africa today. You will further be challenged to view South Africa, not in isolation, but to make explicit and implicit connections to broader global economic, social and political structures that shape and influence health in the South African context.

You will get to experience great places, see beautiful animals and plants. You will further get to meet wonderful people from different social backgrounds and academic trainings, and hopefully also have a great deal of fun in the process. Our group consists of 15 to 25 students from the United States and South Africa, faculty and staff members 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, participate in debates as well as critical discussions and reflections in 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 that you will 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, Nicolette Davids-Petersen ([nicolette.davids-petersen@tropicalstudies.org](mailto:nicolette.davids-petersen@tropicalstudies.org)) and the course director, Dr. Laurence Kruger ([laurence.kruger@tropicalstudies.org](mailto:laurence.kruger@tropicalstudies.org)). We are excited to have you in our program!

## **A. GET WITH THE PROGRAM**

### **1. Sites to be Visited**

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

From these sites, we plan to make additional day and weekend trips for academic purposes, cultural activities and engagement, research, playing sport, sight-seeing, 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, five years ago, was considered, on average, to have experienced the coldest weather in the history of the games. It is certainly worth bringing warm items of clothing particularly for Johannesburg as well as the early morning game drives in the Kruger National Park. That is not to say bring down jackets (although Laurence does bring his), but at least something warm as the weather clearly can be unpredictable. At the end of this packet, we have provided you with a full list of recommended clothing.

### **2. Description of Sites to be Visited**

#### **Johannesburg**

Our course 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 course. Our short stay in Johannesburg includes a visit to, amongst others, the Apartheid Museum, Constitution Hill and the University of Witwatersrand. As you attend lectures, along with the site visits, pay particular attention to the history of South Africa – and how it links to 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 labour system. Key to the story is how the history of mining intersects with health challenges such as tuberculosis as well as health challenges related to sexual and reproductive health. In Johannesburg you will be staying in a

travel hostel facility in a very safe part of town, from where we will be conducting our daily field trips, as well as receive 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 the opportunity to become immersed in the rich social world of northern South Africa. During this period, the group will interact closely with host families during a three day homestay, spend time experiencing what life is like in this arid part of South Africa. Students 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). In this time, drawing further on the history learned in the Johannesburg leg of the program, you will have the opportunity to further learn about health challenges in Venda, as well as how the history (along with present day leadership) in the area still influences and shapes many of present day challenges. This is an important part of the program, and make sure you use it to learn as much as you can, but also to share about your cultural and social practices with the people you encounter (as people will most likely also be interested in *you*).

### **Wits Rural Facility**

The trip 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 the Kruger National Park. The staff at Wits Rural Facility have arranged a diverse and interesting program with several activities involving the local community (visits home based care workers and different healing interfaces). From Wits Rural Facility we will also visit the Blyde River Canyon (weather permitting) and surrounds. Wits Rural Facility has dormitory style accommodation with communal bathrooms. It has a quiet, relaxed atmosphere and there are no shopping areas nearby.

### **Skukuza**

This is by far, the largest camp in the Park, where we will finish the summer course. The main OTS South Africa offices are also situated in Skukuza. Here, you will have access to computers, a scanner, telephones, and email. At Skukuza, you will find a post office, a full-service bank (including an ATM) and a general store where you can buy books, newspapers, souvenirs, snacks, basic drugstore items, and film. Skukuza also has restaurants. You can make use of the tourist camp to relax and get out of the dorms in your free time. Kruger National Park sees approximately one million tourists every year, many of whom spend time at Skukuza. You will be in frequent contact with tourists who will probably ask you what you are studying. Please be courteous at all times and willing to explain who you are and what the OTS program is all about. The continuation of this program in South Africa depends upon maintaining good relations with the staff and guests at Kruger National Park.

Our accommodations in Skukuza are at the Skukuza Science Leadership Initiative campus. These accommodations consist of 2 large dormitories, a kitchen, dining, and lecture area. You will have access to the tourist camp to shop, swim, make calls, or do laundry. During the day, you can walk (in groups of three or more) to our offices to use the Internet. Skukuza is in a malaria area. As the mosquitoes are more active between sunset and sunrise, you will have to avoid the mosquito problem by not swimming after 6:00 pm. At night, you should be covered and liberally sprayed with insect repellent. There are many animals and plants to be seen in and around Skukuza. Inside the camp, you might spot different birds, lizards, and thick-tailed bush babies. Warthogs, impala, baboons, vervet monkeys, and banded mongooses also like cruising through the camp during the day. Unfortunately, without a game guard, we will not be allowed out of our vehicles anywhere in the park. Large predators, elephants, hippos, buffaloes, and rhinos are too dangerous for us to even think about relaxing this rule. There will, however, be frequent opportunities to go on game drives during which you are sure to see many of the animals you associate with African savannas.

Site	Description	Accommodation	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 country.	2 – 4 to a room, on suite ablutions, small restaurant on site.	Near major shopping centres	Cell phone reception, public phones	Wireless	varied!!!
HaMakuya	Located in the North near the northern section of the Kruger National Park. Very remote, near the beautiful and friendly village of HaMakuya.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Homestays for 3 nights, 4 people to a household sleeping on grass mats...</li> <li>•Remaining time at lovely research camp situated on the Mutale river in very comfortable en-suite</li> </ul>	Only local village shops but 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"> <li>•Soccer with the locals</li> <li>•Running</li> <li>•Plenty of space to explore and go for long walks around the camp.</li> </ul>
Wits Rural Facility	Situated 50km outside of Orpen gate west of KNP, in a rural area of South Africa. Nearest village is Acornhoek.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•4-6 people per room</li> <li>•2 rooms next to each other in separate "houses"</li> <li>•Separate ablutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•None in the camp – small village ± 25km away for emergencies only.</li> <li>•Opportunities. to buy curios and beaded jewellery.</li> </ul>	•Cell phone reception.	Yes, intermittent internet for research purposes available. Can purchase internet vouchers for recreational use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Swimming pool at camp or next door camp ± 3km</li> <li>•Soccer, Volleyball, Frisbee, Cricket</li> <li>•Exercise: No predators – free to run and walk around the reserve</li> </ul>
Skukuza	Main camp of the KNP situated in the South. All facilities available including Post office and Banks/ATMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Staying in dormitories</li> <li>•2-3 people sharing</li> <li>•3 showers and 3 toilets for everyone – Keep clean and consider others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Large shop at the tourist camp and in staff village - 5-10 min walk. They stock everything: drinks, snacks, toiletries, curios etc.</li> <li>•Restaurant and take-aways at main camp</li> </ul>	Cell phone reception.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•2 recreational swimming pools in camp</li> <li>•25m swimming pool in village</li> <li>•Soccer, volleyball, Frisbee, game drives</li> <li>•Exercise: Can run around the village in groups, before dusk ONLY</li> </ul>





### 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) and make sure that comings and goings at night and in the early morning disrupt 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 course will be an **intense** academic and social experience and we expect everyone will have ups and downs. We will schedule times for students to meet individually and in groups with the faculty in order to receive feedback on their course work and to express their 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 through 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, regularly cited as one of the highlights of the program, and we warn you in advance about the possibility of expanding waistlines! The menu is highly varied and usually dinners consist of a variety of choices of side dishes (with the occasional and highly sought-after desert schedule / menu). The program caters for those of you with special dietary requirements (i.e. vegetarians, vegans) or food allergies but please notify us **well in advance** so that Shadreck can prepare accordingly.

## **B. LOGISTICS**

### **1. Passport Information**

If you have not already obtained your passport, you should do so immediately. You will be asked to provide this information to OTS in several Registration Documents. **You must ensure that you have two facing blank pages in your passport. This is really important, as people HAVE been turned away at the border for this reason.** Also, be sure that your passport is valid for at least six months after the end date of the program.

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

Non-US citizens should immediately contact their regional South African Consulate to determine passport and visa requirements. Should you need proof of program participation, please contact Brooks Bonner ([brooks.bonner@tropicalstudies.org](mailto:brooks.bonner@tropicalstudies.org)).

### **2. Airline Reservations**

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

For those students arriving prior to the start of the program, we recommend staying at the **Airport Lodge-Emerald Backpackers** (<http://www.airportlodge.co.za/>) located about 4km from the airport and has an hourly shuttle pick-up from OR Tambo airport in Johannesburg. If you wish to travel after the programme, please contact the 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 here for you to follow, but keep in mind the following (the exchange rate currently is R14.20 = 1 US Dollar):

A can of soda is about R10.00;

A bottle of water is about R 14.00;

A 500 ml fruit juice is R14.00

Average meal at a restaurant is between R80-R100

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 who make beds, clean 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 students 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, when you attend the homestays, if you wish to bring a gift for the host family, we would advise school materials (pens,

pencils, notebooks) and old magazines/textbooks. The children and scholars greatly appreciate the contribution!

#### **4. Health Care**

##### **a. Medical Care**

**If you do not have health insurance, you need to arrange for coverage during the course.** Please make sure that your health policy covers medical expenses while you are here in South Africa. You must have health insurance to participate in the 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 consultant at your college or university for current recommendations. The OTS program will be travelling with a complete first aid kit. You must, however, bring adequate supplies of any prescription drugs that you need. If your doctor advises against taking a large supply of medication with you, they should provide a diagnosis and the suggested prescription to facilitate proper prescription by a South African doctor. It is possible that the same drug will not be available on the South African market so a similar drug would be administered to you by South African doctors.

In addition, bring supplies of pain relievers, or medication that you would usually use if you are prone to headaches, ear aches, allergies, cramps, intestinal disorders, yeast infections, and so on. Anti-fungal/athletes 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 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 you do not share drinking cups, cans of soft drinks, or water bottles. We will be travelling quite a lot 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 that are based at Skukuza and 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. In the case of medicine not being available from the doctors' office, they can either order the medicine or one of the OTS staff will go into the nearby towns of Nelspruit or Hazyview (the closest towns) to pick up the prescription.

##### **b. Counseling Services**

Issues in emotional health may arise during a study abroad experience. Being new to a country and a program can expose a student 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 through the Student Representative Council.

##### **c. Immunizations**

Please check with your personal physician immediately, for professional advice regarding immunizations. In addition, you should check the Centers for Disease Control's Traveler's Health

Website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/safrica.html> for the latest updates on disease and vaccinations in South Africa. Please consider the following:

- **Booster shots:** Make sure you are up to date on all your immunizations.
- **Tetanus:** This is good for ten years, however we advise you to consider having a booster shot if your last one was more than five years ago.
- **Diphtheria:** Boosters should be taken every ten years; it is typically administered together with tetanus. 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.

**Additional 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, your best product is Malarone.

## C. COMMUNICATION

### 1. Important Numbers

The 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 49 years. OTS has two administrative centers relevant to the South African program:

North American Office (NAO)

**Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS)**

Organization of Tropical Studies

408 Swift Ave

Durham, NC 27705 USA

Tel.: (919) 684-5155

Fax: (919) 684-5661

Email: [undergraduate@tropicalstudies.org](mailto:undergraduate@tropicalstudies.org)

South African Office

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

Organization for Tropical Studies

P.O. Box 33

Skukuza, 1350

South Africa

Tel.: (+27) 13 735-5301

Mobile: (+27) 82 422-6225 [Laurence Kruger]

(+27) 84 585-6034 [Nicolette Davids-Petersen]

E-mail: [laurence.kruger@tropicalstudies.org](mailto:laurence.kruger@tropicalstudies.org)

[nicolette.davids-petersen@tropicalstudies.org](mailto:nicolette.davids-petersen@tropicalstudies.org)



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

### **Telephone**

It might be worth acquiring a South African mobile phone upon arrival in order to stay in touch (ask our advice when you arrive!). We will be in good cell phone reception except in HaMakuya. You will be able to purchase SIM cards in Johannesburg, Nelspruit and Skukuza. Incoming calls to students will have to be made to the OTS office at Skukuza. The students will then be directed to phone their parents.

## **2. Email and Internet**

You will have email and internet access at Johannesburg and Skukuza. However, because access is limited, you will need to plan for it. Students often struggle with course enrolment for upcoming semesters, so you may want to organize this via the registrar office before you come.

## **3. Letters and Packages**

Letters and packages can be mailed directly to the Kruger Office (KO) where you could pick them up at our last site in the course. 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 are however a nice way to stay in touch during the time where you will be too busy or off email lines. The letters can be handed in at all the reception areas of the camps and they will be put into the mail from there.

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

*Your Name*  
c/o Laurence Kruger  
P.O. Box 33  
Skukuza, 1350  
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, but 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 ATM's unless one of the staff members is assisting you, not wandering off alone without informing one of the staff members, and 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 the 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 we are in Kruger. Students must not leave the group when they are in the field and they 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 and doors closed, using mosquito repellent, and covering up arms and legs during evening and night hours. It is also extremely important for students to report any unusual symptoms (especially headaches and fevers) to the instructors immediately even if it appears like it is not 'a big deal'. The doctors in Nelspruit, Hazyview and Skukuza are excellent at recognizing and treating the most common ailments. Most of the U.S. students will be unaccustomed to the particular challenge 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 (they 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. This will be given to you in the beginning of our time together.
- Do not engage in reckless or risky behavior such as getting heavily 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. All students 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 Female Travelers**

Women's rights in South Africa are perhaps 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 how to limit your exposure to this kind of treatment.

- Never go out alone.
- Always try to make sure that you have a friend with you.
- Never accept an open drink from a stranger or even someone even if they appear 'nice'.
- 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 regarding sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as all sexual conduct that is undesired by the person(s) to whom it is directed, and that provokes negative effects or impacts in the following cases:

- Conditions of academic standing. These are actions that 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 are actions that may affect the normal development of academic and field activities, resulting in lack of motivation, low efficiency, absenteeism, and so on.
- General personal well-being. These are actions that negatively affect a person's ability to confront 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 an OTS member of staff with whom you feel comfortable discussing your concerns. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing concerns about sexual harassment with faculty, we ask that you contact our "safe-person", Karen Vickers ([vickerskaren@hotmail.com](mailto:vickerskaren@hotmail.com)). Further, you can also contact OTS' Chief Administrative Officer, Jennifer Kelley at [jennifer.kelley@tropicalstudies.org](mailto:jennifer.kelley@tropicalstudies.org).

## **E. WHAT TO BRING**

This section includes three check lists to help you pack for your trip.

- Clothing and Personal items
- Essential Field Equipment
- Almost Essential Field Equipment

As a general rule, travel as light as possible. It is hard to dictate the optimal numbers and kinds of bags you should bring 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 baggage you should definitely bring one small backpack to take on site visits/ into the field. You will be able to put water or thirst quenchers and some snacks in and your data records as you need to be able to move fast and have your hands free. Expect any bag you bring to get dirty and dusty.

For clothes, leave all the things that will cause you to overheat at home. Try cotton or cotton-blends. Label all your clothes, as this will make it easier to identify your own things if clothes do get mixed up. We spend our time in the field and in city environment so please pack for both.

For the city, you will need to bring what you would ordinarily wear back home, except that for the site visits (academic trips) you will have to bring modest and conservative clothing especially when visiting hospitals and/or patients. For the rest, the clothes you wear in the field 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 – 30°C/ 68F- 86F), 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.

The fully equipped OTS student brings all the items listed on the following three check lists. Nonetheless, your own personal habits and research interests should be considered in deciding what to bring. Students on our programs advise 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 Nicolette Davids-Peterson or Laurence Kruger.

### Check List # 1: Clothes and Personal Items

	<b>Valid Passport.</b>
	<b>Credit card, Money and/or Travelers Checks.</b> Most people use their credit cards to draw cash in SA (NB in rural areas there are often no CC facilities) and keep travelers checks as back-ups. <b>Don't forget your PIN numbers and <i>DON'T ACCEPT ASSISTANCE FROM STRANGERS!!</i></b>
	<b>Shirts.</b> 3 for Town, 3 for field, a few t-shirts. Women may want to consider bringing a few tank tops for the hot days.
	<b>Pants.</b> 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 the city periods. Bring smarter clothing for hospital visits and evenings out.
	<b>Shorts.</b> 3-4 shorts, women may want to bring a few skirts
	<b>Warm clothing:</b> although most areas we visit will be warm, the weather can change rapidly, so at least one warm jacket is essential (e.g. a polar fleece jacket). One or two sweaters may also be useful. Warm hats would be useful as would a pair of sweat pants.
	<b>Clothing for towns.</b> Bring a few sets of clothing for Johannesburg and Nelspruit, i.e. going out in the city.
	<b>Rain Jacket or poncho.</b>
	<b>Swimsuit.</b>
	<b>Wide brimmed hat.</b> A MUST!!
	<b>Underwear.</b> 7 pairs should be enough.
	<b>Socks.</b> 5 – 7 pairs. Bring a few that can be pulled up to your knees for the field as this will protect you from ticks.
	<b>Light hiking boots.</b> Heavy boots are not necessary and most field visits can be done in sneakers/running shoes, so hiking boots are optional.
	<b>Sneakers or Tennis shoes.</b>
	<b>Comfortable shoes to use for leisure.</b>
	<b>Teva type sandals and/or flip flops.</b>
	<b>Towels.</b> Towels are available at some of the sites but it is still advisable to bring two towels along for those places that do not provide towels. Perhaps also bring an easy dry towel.
	<b>Personal toiletries.</b> 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 you pass through the main centers. If you have your favorite brands, you should bring a supply for the whole semester in case you are unable to find the appropriate brands in South Africa.
	<b>Personal Medical Supplies.</b> The program has 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 Park, but you should pack enough of these items for our first two weeks in the field.
	<b>Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses and prescription,</b> in case yours get broken or lost. You should also bring extra lens solution (brands might differ in South Africa).
	<b>Sunglasses.</b> A must for those who want to prevent headaches and eye damage.
	<b>High rated sunscreen.</b>
	<b>Sewing needles, strong thread, extra buttons, safety pins, and shoe/boot laces.</b>
	<b>Insect sting kit.</b> If you are allergic to bee stings please bring an emergency adrenalin kit. <b><i>PLEASE inform the faculty of your allergy.</i></b>
	<b>Paperback books.</b> Bring a few and be prepared to swap with classmates.
	<b>Photos</b> of your family, college, hometown, etc. This is so we can all get to know each other better.

## Checklist #2: Essential Field Items

	<b>Binoculars.</b> Even if you are not a bird enthusiast, these are essential for the trips to the Kruger Park. At most sightings, leopards and cheetahs are also only detected through binoculars.
	<b>Flashlight.</b> These are essential, especially to make sure there are no night time encounters with snakes and scorpions. <b>Headlamps are ideal.</b>
	<b>Batteries.</b> These should either be alkaline or rechargeable. If you use rechargeable please bring your re-charger with you, as none are available at the camps.
	<b>Pocket-knife.</b> The Swiss Army type with the multiple functions is best. Pack your knife in your luggage and not in your carry-on bag.
	<b>Wristwatch.</b>
	A <b>daypack</b> for daily field use. This must be big enough to hold a water bottle and notebooks as well as snacks while out in the field. Please ensure that the pack can be carried on your back, as you need to have your hands free.
	<b>Insect repellent and good anti-itch cream.</b>
	<b>Tick repellent</b> spray or lotion.
	<b>Lecture and Field Notebooks.</b> We recommend you use one for notebook throughout the course so that you have your notes in one place. These can also be purchased from Hazyview or Nelspruit.
	<b>Several pencils and ballpoint pens.</b>
	<b>Water bottle/canteen.</b> YOUR MOST IMPORTANT ITEM!, lunch box and travel mug
	A <b>plastic folder</b> to store handouts.
	<b>Pocket calculator.</b>
	<b>Sense of Humor.</b> A must for long hot days in the field when nothing is going as you planned it to!

## Checklist #3: Almost Essential Items

	<b>Camera.</b> 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).
	<b>Flash.</b> And don't forget to pack extra <b>batteries</b> . The shops mainly sell size AA and ANA.
	<b>Watertight, plastic bags</b> to store camera, flash, film, and calculator.
	<b>Discman or iPod</b> and <b>CDs</b> or an <b>iTrip</b> for the long trips between camps.
	<b>Musical instruments.</b> If you can play – <i>Please don't forget!</i>
	<b>Laptop Computer.</b> Our program will use PC-based laptop computers. It is advisable that you bring your own Laptop. Check to see whether your computer and camera are covered on your (or your parents') homeowner's insurance policy. <b>OTS will not assume responsibility in case of damage, loss, or theft.</b> However, safety of your equipment (from theft AND damage) is of our highest concern, so we will try to ensure that computers are safe during travel periods. Also, please make sure your antivirus software is up-to-date.
	<b>Flash drive and/or external drive.</b> Advisable to help with transfer of information. External drive very NB if you take a great deal of photographs.
	<b>Old books / magazines for our schools outreach:</b> OTS has an outreach program with the local schools in HaMakuya and it would be great if you can bring maybe three (or more) old books and magazines that you no longer use to give 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 institutions. You will have the chance to interact with resident and visiting faculty on both a professional and personal level and the interactive nature of the program provides an amazing learning experience. However, the course can be academically and socially intense at times. Unlike the structured schedules you may be used to at home, this course relies heavily on students' 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 course depends upon you and recognizing that the more you put into it the more you will get out of it!

Many students who have participated in the OTS South Africa programs have reported that it is a life changing experience. Not only do we hope to leave you with a greater understanding of socio-ecological systems and global health issues, but you will 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 bar the academic ones. The best way to prepare yourselves is to read, and re-read all the material we send you and then open your mind to a completely unique learning experience. Many of you will come from different backgrounds and different academic experiences and it is difficult to design a program that tailors to everyone's needs. However, the staff on OTS South Africa are committed to facilitating both your academic and personal experiences and we are sure you in for a great semester!