
London Winter Session

December 28, 2016-January 18, 2017¹



Study Abroad Program Guide

Prepared by Debi Street

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¹ I appreciate helpful advice from Leonard Chew, Greg Hall, Lucy Lin, Elliott Ogorek, RJ Tan, Fung Shing Wong and Andrew Yeo, and the 2014/15/16 London winter session students, in the preparation of this Handbook.



DESTINATION:
LONDON

SPECIAL NOTES REGARDING OUR DESTINATION

Climate

Winter can be grey and cold, sunny and cold, or wet and cold. Every variation of cold will be available for our adventure! Dress in layers. Hats, scarves, gloves and warm socks are a must. While it is unlikely to snow, it will often feel very cold. London is full of old buildings that typically alternate between drafty/chilly and overheated, so having a layer to peel off (and put back on) is important. We also spend much more time outdoors in the elements (walking between destinations, waiting at bus stops) than people from car/taxi cultures might expect. Jeans and sweaters are appropriate dress for most of our activities. Although you may find them most comfortable, sweats, pajamas, tracksuits and running shoes (called trainers in the UK) may make people sneer and think "tacky" in very fashionable London. For at least one or two occasions, having something dressier to wear than daily jeans and sweaters would be nice: dress, skirt, or trousers for women and casual business dress shirt/trousers for men would be most appropriate.

Transportation

Every student will receive an Oyster card upon arrival that is good for the Underground for Zones 1 and 2 for the duration of the program. We will travel to program activities via foot, the Tube (underground), buses, and over ground trains. You will learn how to "queue up" (line up) politely to board public transportation in our first few transportation experiences. Remember, putting a bag or (worse) your feet on an empty seat in public transportation is the height of rudeness on a crowded public transportation system. Your public transport travel fare entitles you only to occupy the space of a single seat—if you can find one! Impress people with how courteous UB students are, even in unfamiliar surroundings. Be sure to surrender your seat to disabled or injured passengers, the elderly, or pregnant women—in short, anyone who is less able to stand than you are.

You will do more—much more—walking than you are accustomed to; having VERY comfortable footwear is essential. Wear your most comfortable shoes on the plane and pack another equally comfortable pair. That way, your feet can always be dry/warm. Wet feet get cold; London is cold. Wet feet are prone blisters; London is wet. This is essential: bring/wear comfortable shoes.

London is a safe city, but students are encouraged to be **very aware** of their surroundings (pickpocketing can happen in crowds) and to always walk in groups at night. Do not take cruising mini-cabs, call for UBER or a taxi if you need one, or take one of London's iconic regular taxis.

Food

We will certainly be paying a lot of attention to food! You will have opportunities to dine out at ethnic restaurants and markets for course-related activities; we'll plan for at least one "full English breakfast" and fish and chips from one of London's best "chippies." Stay Club has equipped kitchenettes that you should use, especially with good supermarkets nearby and street markets on our academic agenda. Preparing some meals (breakfast and packed lunches especially) is a real money saver in expensive London—spend the pounds you save on dining "at home" or "from home" for other activities. Most prior students said that they did not really understand how expensive food can be in London, and wished they had prepared more meals for themselves (cereal for breakfast, packing a sandwich for lunch rather than buying one, bringing along snacks and water—buying water is incredibly costly, kind of silly/wasteful if done daily, and adds up fast).

There are restaurants and cafes everywhere, some spectacular, others awful. There is decent food at the Camden Market, but even market foods "adds up." Food can be very expensive if you are not careful. Many supermarkets and street markets have high quality, reasonably priced food. However, prices in restaurants range from somewhat to very expensive and serving sizes are often small by US standards (but sensible by any other standards) and expensive by hawker standards. Buying food to take away is usually cheaper than eating in. If you see two prices on the board when you order food at a cafe counter, the lower price is for takeaway. Nearly any type of cuisine imaginable can be found in London. Expect to possibly participate in/contribute to one or two potluck meals.

Alcohol

All participants will be of legal drinking age while in London. Every participant must behave responsibly in choices involving alcohol, as the abuse of alcohol endangers not only the individual who does, but other participants in the program as well. Alcohol **abuse** is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program, at the discretion of the program director. However, wine and beer (especially in friendly pubs) are certainly staples of the British culture of food and drink, and can be enjoyed in moderation. Remember, alcohol consumption is never mandatory and students should feel no pressure or obligation whatsoever to participate in the consumption of alcohol.

USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://www.visitbritain.com/en/US/>

<http://www.timeout.com/london>

From <http://london.usembassy.gov/uk4us.html> you can access many useful London/UK sites

THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Debra (Debi) Street, PhD, is Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University at Buffalo. She was a Research Scientist at the Florida State University (teaching a study abroad program for that university) and spent a semester doing dissertation research in London. She is a former Senior Research Fellow at King's College, London; a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of American; and, an elected member of the National Academy of Social Insurance (United States). Besides teaching on UB's north campus, Dr. Street also directs a spring semester-long study abroad program in London and frequently teaches at UB's south-south campus at UB-SIM in Singapore. An award-winning teacher, she is the recipient of the 2011 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching and the 2016 CISP award for Outstanding Contributions to International Education. Debi is also a theatre nut, a proud Canadian, a patriotic American, a Singaporean at heart, and an Anglophile who happens to also be a citizen of the United Kingdom!

Dr. Street is an internationally-recognized expert in issues associated with economic and health security across the life course, and she researches those topics comparatively. The Sociology of Food is a relatively new and growing academic interest of hers.

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ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Our program begins with an early-December north campus orientation session, and/or a Skype/email orientation session to UB-SIM that includes an overview of London and program specifics. Students are expected to monitor their UB email at least several times a week after program admission through December 18 to keep up with important information about activities and travel. After December 18, students are expected to check UB email daily for late-breaking and/or important information about the program. This is especially important for accessing up to date information about coordinating airline arrangements and transportation to student housing in London. Plan flights to arrive in London between 10 am and 2 pm (when you can check you're your accommodations. There is an expectation that students will have read some of the textbook/downloaded all of the readings, BEFORE arriving in London.

Program Description

2017 is the fourth year for the Winter Session in London program, SOC 358: The Sociology of Food (for undergraduate students). Graduate students will get credit as SOC 555: Advanced Topics: Sociology of Food. The program includes classroom lectures, readings, written reaction papers, homework, plus visits to many sites of interest associated with expanding knowledge about the

processes and relationships that characterize social experiences of food and water in the 21st century. We also have a busy cultural program. All course-related site visits will be on foot or via public transportation. All required activities are covered by the program fee. Optional activities are often free to students, but may sometimes have out of pocket costs associated with participation.

Course Description

Sociology of Food in London is an intensive 3-credit elective course focusing on the systematic study of the social processes and relationships associated with the production, distribution, consumption and disposal of food (and water). Students must be competent and confident in English to get the most out of the program, which requires some concentrated reading and writing.

Objectives

- Learn how to adopt a sociological perspective to ask/answer questions about food.
- Understand the globalizing political economy of food production and consumption.
- Consider the roles of class, gender, age, and culture in food consumption and how food patterns both reflect and shape social inequalities.
- Identify a variety of methods and techniques that might be used to scientifically explore the sociological and substantive importance of food production/consumption in the 21st century.
- Exhibit cultural competence when interacting with persons from different cultures and backgrounds, including people we encounter in London, especially our fellow UB companions.

Assignments

Students will receive a formal syllabus/description of assignments in early December. The required textbook is very accessible for non-sociology majors (it is written in a straightforward style that all students will find easy to understand), and should be purchased (and read/skimmed) early and brought to London (confirm to Professor Street by December 10 that you have acquired a copy). Tentative plans for graded work include completing a pre-departure survey, homework, short essays, class participation, and a group project. Graduate students should contact Professor Street to arrange the additional work required for graduate credit. Non- sociology majors are encouraged to think sociologically, but to also link course activities and themes to important components of their particular majors or courses of study. Communicate with Professor Street (dastreet@buffalo.edu) to discuss ideas about course assignments that can inform your major. Class assignments will be submitted via email to a dedicated email account unless otherwise instructed. All course work must be submitted by Wednesday January 18, 2017. Skipping assignments/missing deadlines/failing to fully participate in course and program activities will definitely result in lower grades.

Grading and Conduct

Students will receive a letter grade for the course. Expectations for students will be appropriate for their level of education and experience. One expectation is that students will read the entire textbook, much of it before they arrive in London. Student grades can be enhanced or deteriorate depending on students' willingness to acclimate and adapt to the study abroad experience.

Frequent debriefing will be available to help students discuss concerns or resolve conflicts, to accommodate needs and requests, and to assist students with assignments. Students must behave in ways that reflect favorably on our home nations and the University at Buffalo, who we represent. While behavioral problems are not anticipated, any that arise will be dealt with quickly, firmly, and fairly. Serious infractions (such as illegal activity, aggressive behavior, failure to attend class activities without a valid excuse, or willful damage of property) may result in dismissal from the program.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students will stay in shared accommodation in Camden, a vibrant area of central London. Each two-student studio has an equipped kitchenette, private en-suite shower/toilet, and a small study area. Same sex students will share rooms. Costs for accommodations are included in the Program Fee. We will study in classrooms at Stay Club the first week, then at the CAPA Study Center in South Kensington for the second and third weeks.

ADVICE ON MONEY, COMPUTERS, PHONES, ETC.

You can withdraw money at ATM machines or exchange cash at currency exchange bureaus. Both currency exchange bureaus and ATMs are located in every airport terminal. Many Marks and Spencer (a UK department chain) service desks offer favorable rates of exchange and low commissions. Do not use storefront non-bank exchange bureaus, they often have hidden charges that mean you get fewer pounds for your dollars. There are many ATMs all around London, just like in any US city or in Singapore. However, keep in mind that making many small withdrawals from an ATM machine can rack up expensive bank fees; it is usually less expensive to withdraw one larger amount and pay a single bank fee than to make a series of small withdrawals with a fee each time. Check with your bank before you leave home and select a debit card from a bank that has no or small fees for foreign transactions and ATM withdrawals. Credit cards can be used in many places, although some small cafes, street markets, and pubs operate on cash only. We recommend that you notify your bank/credit card companies and tell them you will be traveling to London. Most banks question purchases and withdrawals made abroad and if they have not been notified they may put a stop on your debit card withdrawals and credit card purchases.

Money for Students from the US

Your credit card will automatically convert the local charges into dollars on your statement, often with a service fee (in most cases) that shows up on your monthly statement. The advantage is the written record of purchases and that you won't need to pay until billed. However, despite the convenience (carrying a credit card is highly recommended) it can be very easy to overspend. Carry at least some cash and be disciplined about purchases. I mainly use cash, using an ATM/debit card to get it, usually at the airport as soon as I get to London. You get the bank's exchange rate, but there is usually also a fee per transaction. Before departure, find out how much your bank fee is per transaction so that you are not unpleasantly surprised and make sure your bank account allows for international withdrawals. Double check that your PIN number will work abroad! Not all ATM cards automatically do: some need activation. There also may be problems if your debit card is linked to a savings account vs. a checking account. Make sure you contact your bank and check what it will cost and how to use your debit card/ATM in London before departure.

Do not buy traveler's checks, almost no one uses them any longer. Do not carry large amounts of US currency, but have some as a back-up that you can exchange in a pinch, in case of difficulties with your credit or debit card. It is probably a good idea to arrive in London with at least 100 gbp (Great Britain Pounds) which you can order ahead from your bank (plan ahead, it takes several days) or get at your departure airport. To summarize: Use cash whenever possible (using an ATM card to withdraw cash as necessary) and keep very close track of debit and credit card usage and fees.

Money for Students from Singapore

In general, the advice is not very different in terms of “general” suggestions for handling money. According to Singapore experts, best to change currency at money-changers away from the airport, where rates may be slightly better. Popular places include People's Park Complex (near Chinatown), Mustafa (near Serangoon) and Lucky Plaza—it also depends on which of the many money-changers you use. Some heartland money-changers offer good rates too. You want to have enough GBP cash for small purchases/daily use. Credit cards are useful for booking coach/train/plane tickets and hotels for short trips, although many charge a higher than prevailing exchange rate and add a 1% commission charge on top of it, which can add up. The advantage is that you get some reward points and have less cash to carry around. Debit cards are good for point-of-sale purchases, because there is no commission other than the exchange rates, but for ATM withdrawals there is a bank service charge from the Singapore side, and only British debit cards can be used for online purchases. Notify your bank/credit card holder that you will be traveling internationally. Activate credit/debit cards for overseas transactions before departure.

Computers and other electronic equipment

Your accommodation has wifi access and free wifi is widely available in London (many libraries and museums, some cafes, McDonalds, Starbucks, etc., the number of wifi hotspots has grown exponentially in recent years). You will be able to access computers in the Study Center routinely (after the first week) for email and course work during business hours. While you do not need to bring your own computer to London—you might find having it very convenient for course work. One thing I cannot emphasize enough: you will enjoy London MUCH more if you REALLY limit time online/using social media. Streaming movies and constantly updating Facebook/ Instagram will actually undermine your enjoyment of the program. We'll have a 24 hour challenge early in the program to “go bare”—spending an entire day without using any personal electronic equipment... and that may be one of your best days in London! Limit calls/texts/messages home to an absolute minimum—if you are mature enough to be in London, you are mature enough to go for several days in a row without talking to your parents. Let them know you safely arrive, and then ask them to treat you like a mature adult who they will see in a few weeks. You'll enjoy London more if you are (mind, body, soul) fully IN London. Brag about your adventures and show spectacular travel photos once you get back home. Doing that from London verges on gloating, and that's not nice.

Phones Generally

Constant texting and talking on the phone really undermines the value of the study abroad experience. When we are involved in any program activity—that is, in a classroom, on a walk, traveling to or from a site, in a museum or library, at a meal—during ALL class/program time, texting and talking on the phone are off limits (unless you have my prior permission). If you must be in communication with someone not in our program, keep conversations brief and texts to a minimum. Chronic texting/talking during program activities will result in grade deductions.

While you may want to touch base occasionally with families and friends (to let them know that you arrived safely and when to pick you up at the airport upon return), advise them not to expect daily contact. Communicating back home takes you out of the London social mix, heightens homesickness, undermines social relationship formation, and actually makes you something of a nuisance to me and fellow students. It interferes with full enjoyment of London. If you want to be in constant touch with people at home, staying home is probably the best choice. There is not much point coming to London if you do the same old things you usually do at home. So...liberate

yourself from constant contact with the familiar—dare to live “offline”—and fully embrace the adventure—new city, new people, new ideas, new friends, new conversations. You can only immerse yourself in London and our course if you are fully present, not tethered to your technology.

As a matter of courtesy in a busy, crowded city, do not walk in/obstruct public places while reading or sending texts or taking photographs. Step out of the way and stop to do those things, so that busy passersby who work and live in London can get where they need to go. Otherwise your awareness of surroundings declines, making you a potential target for pickpockets and your slow pace arouses the ire of busy people who need to dodge around people who thoughtlessly stroll and scroll. Such discourteous and self-centered behavior singles out such individuals as thoughtless persons who are not smart enough to appreciate and adapt to a culture where courtesy is still highly valued.

Phones for American Students

Contact your cell/mobile phone carrier and find out if your (typically locked) US phones will work in London—my guess is that they will, but that it could be expensive to make calls (that might be okay, you could decide to just notify people that you arrived safely via email, and decide not to make a phone call from London unless you have free wifi access or there's an emergency). You can also use phone cards to call the US, and Skype/Facetime are other good ways (if you don't spend hours using them) to keep in touch. If you happen to have an unlocked phone, read the "phones for Singapore students" below.

Phones for Singapore Students

Most students from Singapore who studied in London recently brought along smartphones and used Giffgaff mobile, because it had a generous data/3G allowance, unlimited UK texts, and free calls between Giffgaff users. Last year that cost 12 GBP/month for a goody bag consisting of 250 minutes of local calls and unlimited data. International calls are relatively cheap too at 3p per minute to the US and 2p to Singapore and roaming is supported in many European countries if you travel elsewhere at the end of the program (works by credit top-up, separate from the goody bag package). Although you won't be in London for an entire month, this might be cost-effective. However, Giffgaff operates differently from other operators in that it doesn't have physical stores from which to purchase the SIM cards. It works by word-of-mouth and relies on existing users to introduce new users. You probably need a Giffgaff friend in London for this to be practical to set up. I may be able to help out with a reliable contact if interested in Giffgaff.

There are MANY other feasible options with UK mobile operators (like Orange, Vodafone and 3, with stores to purchase relatively inexpensive pay as you go SIM cards within blocks of where you are staying, for students who bring unlocked phones to London.

Phone matters are up to each student. This is the limit of my information about phones (which I use quite rarely in London). I have a simple mobile phone (it is not a smart phone, it is a stupid phone for text and calls only) that I purchased years ago in London and which I continue to top up when I am there—I don't have any additional expertise to share for iPhones or smartphone users.

Time

There is a five hour time difference between US Eastern time and London, and eight (usually) between Singapore and London. You will have some jet lag the first few days in London, but it passes quickly. Despite having somewhat warmer weather typically, London is further north than Buffalo—so daylight hours are very short for the first week we are in London. It gets dark around 4:30/5:00 pm. For Singaporeans, expect a HUGE change in heat and light—from the typical tropical 12 hours of daylight and warmth you are accustomed to. But that's okay, London is beautiful when she wears her cloak of city lights at night.

Londoners are noted for punctuality and good manners, so do not be surprised if lateness draws unwelcome attention to such inconsiderate behavior. All class activities will start on schedule, we will not wait for stragglers. Late students make the mistaken assumption that their preferences are more important than others, who should be kept waiting. No. Students who are late are being incredibly disrespectful of others. I am a stickler for punctuality—barring an emergency, I will always be on time (early). Same should apply to you.

Water

Water is safe to drink from all taps in homes/businesses in London. Save money and plastic waste by using a refillable water bottle rather than unnecessarily purchasing bottled water.

Food

There are no special warnings about food. European and British food safety laws seem to keep most people free of food-borne illness most of the time. Use common sense in terms of safe temperatures for cooking and storing food items for consumption in your accommodations.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Students are responsible for arranging their own air travel and ground transfer from the London airport to central London. It is best not to purchase your airline ticket until we know what time, exactly, we can start to check into student accommodations. Planning well will save hours of sitting around (tired) surrounded by luggage if you arrive too early, or check-in hassles if you arrive too late. Last year, several students traveled to other European cities before the program started and arrived late to London=bad outcome. Additional travel is best done at the end of the program. Arrive in London, with time built in to recover from jet lag/get your bearings, finish your course, then travel.

The main international airports are London Heathrow (LHR) and London Gatwick (LGW). If you want to coordinate travel with other students let me know when you fill out the program survey (coming in late October) and I'll put you in touch with others who want to do the same thing. I usually fly into LHR because I find it most convenient for where I live (also in Camden). You will receive clear directions for traveling to the Stay Club from both major London airports. Housing is available for check in on Dec 28, 2016. All students must leave flats the morning of Jan 18th.

Early arrivals/late departures cannot be accommodated. Students should plan travel to arrive in London at an appropriate time (morning) on December 28. That likely means an overnight flight the evening of December 27, to arrive in London December 28. Triple check travel plans to be sure you are booked to ARRIVE in London on December 28. What a way to end 2016/kick off 2017!!

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

All program participants must have a valid passport for travel to the United Kingdom that will be valid for at least six months beyond the end of the program. You will be issued a letter on official letterhead stating that you are university students who have prepaid tuition and accommodation costs, and which you should carry with you in case you need to show it upon arrival in London.

US and Singapore citizens do not need visas to enter the UK for this study program (although you must be able to show an airline ticket that proves you will exit the country at the end of the program). Citizens of other countries must check with the UK Border Agency to see what visa arrangements are necessary to enter the UK from Dec 28, 2016 to January 18, 2017. Students from other countries, who may require visas, are responsible for making their own visa arrangements. Study Abroad and CAPA staff can offer limited advice, but only enough to help you get started. Failure to make timely and appropriate visa arrangements would mean international students cannot join the program in London and may result in the loss of program fees.

KEEP YOUR IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND ITEMS SAFE

Do not bring irreplaceable items to London. Carry money, credit cards, passport, etc. on your person or store safely. Purchase a “wallet” to wear under your clothes (available online and at many stores, including even WalMart and Target in the U.S.), whether on a cord for around your neck and under shirts, or for under clothing around the waist. Losing money, credit cards, cash or (worst of all) your passport will make London memorable, but unpleasant. Be careful. Scan your passport and credit cards and leave a copy at home with someone easy to contact, and a PDF file that you store safely elsewhere and can access online can be a life-saver if you lose such items in London.

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

The London standard is 220V; most electronic equipment, including laptops, tablets, phones, etc. have built in conversion capacity, all that is required is a plug adapter. Other US electrical appliances (like curling irons, hair dryers, etc.) typically need expensive and heavy voltage converters (not just plug adapters) to be used. I recommend leaving electrical appliances at home. Singaporean voltages (I think) are the same as the UK. Regardless of whether your appliances need a voltage converter, you may need a special “plug” to fit into the wall sockets as they may not match US plugs. I am not sure if your flats will have those plug adaptors or not, but they can be purchased cheaply from many London shops if you need one.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

Guiding Principles:

- Traveling light is WAY better than struggling with luggage! This can't be overemphasized. You might have fewer "outfits" to choose from, but who cares? Buy a new scarf at a street market!
- Dark clothing, laundered regularly, is best. Pack for a week, not a month, and do laundry.
- Shopping is plentiful if you ever find that you need something you did not bring.
- Check with your airline for baggage allowances (number and weight varies widely by airline).
- Bring a small bag to use for excursions (a regular campus-sized backpack is ideal). It can probably double as your personal carry on item (check to be sure about carryon luggage limits).
- Pack your luggage and then walk around the block and up a flight of stairs with it. If that is a struggle, repack and eliminate some items. You must be able to handle your luggage by yourself.

Additional Observations:

- Winter weather in London typically ranges from cold to very cold.
- You will walk A LOT. You must have comfortable shoes. Do not buy new shoes unless you have time to break them in completely before you leave. If your feet hurt, everything hurts. Two pairs of shoes is a best (one on your feet, one (maybe) drying out).
- Plan for rapidly changing temperatures, inside and out, by dressing in layers. Shirt, sweater, and jacket; tights, pants, jeans, even silk long johns. Most British university students would rather be caught dead than be seen in public in sweats. Hoodies seem okay; sweats/PJs, not so much.
- Include at least one dress/skirt/dressy trousers for women and casual business attire for men (nice shirt, khakis) for special occasions, i.e. performances, special dinners, clubbing, etc.
- Although dress is casual for most course activities, if there is any different expectation in attire it will be communicated in plenty of time for students to adjust.
- Obviously, students are free to dress as they prefer for London's night life (though be forewarned that young men and women often dress up) and for other informal occasions.

Recommended Clothing:

- Jeans/long trousers (two or three)
- Shirts - long sleeves for layering
- T-shirts/turtlenecks/sweat shirts for athletic use and warmth as under/over layers.
- 1-2 warm sweaters, nice enough but also functional enough for everyday use in the cold
- Warm jacket or coat for cold weather and rain
- Underwear, maybe long johns and warm socks/tights
- Scarves, hats, and gloves, maybe ear muffs if you don't like winter hats.
- Casual shoes and/or boots, comfortable for walking. Weather may be chilly and wet.
- Think you will be going clubbing? Maybe a nice outfit for that.
- Something to dress up a bit (not formal, but at least a way to dress up from just jeans/Tshirts)
- Stating the obvious: you will NOT need a bathing suit, shorts, or sunscreen.

Personal Care*:**

- Travel size shampoo and conditioner, toothbrush and toothpaste
- Comb and/or hairbrush
- Antiperspirant, skin moisturizer and other creams
- Make up, razor/shaving cream, if needed
- Vitamins, daily OTC medications
- Over-the-counter generic brands of personal use and first-aid items

All of these items are readily available if forgotten and a trip to Boots pharmacy is fun!

Other essentials:

- Small organizer to hold passport etc., such as a "neck wallet" that hangs inside your shirt, that way you don't have to worry about potential thefts or losses.
- Camera/i-device/folding umbrella/sunglasses
- Prescription medication/birth control pills, etc. in original containers, carried on plane with you
- Addresses/phone numbers/etc. for contacting friends and relatives

Important Suggestions:

You are responsible for hauling your own luggage at both ends of the trip. My best advice: travel with a single wheeled suitcase (small enough for an overhead compartment on board) plus a small duffel bag or backpack as your personal item. Check with your airline for size and weight limits for carryon luggage and personal items you will bring onboard the flight. One legendary US student brought a single wheeled carryon and backpack for an ENTIRE four month semester in London. So you can be certain that a carefully packed wheeled carryon and a backpack holds more than enough stuff for a three weeks and would mean absolutely no risk of lost luggage!

At minimum, carry essential medications, your textbook, contact lenses/glasses, a change of clothes and "starter" toiletries with you on the plane. Remember that you may need a doctor's note or prescription to import prescribed drugs or medical necessities into the UK (checking is your responsibility). Carry-on liquids must meet airline size specifications (remember, liquid is very heavy, so why bring it at all?). Checked bags sometimes get lost. In three years there have been five

cases for winter session students alone, of “lost” checked luggage—return has taken from less than 24 hours to five days.

Just in case, you will be more comfortable if you have necessary items with you. Lacking a toothbrush or change of underwear after a long journey is not pleasant, and being without needed prescription medication could harm your health. But dragging too much stuff along isn’t pleasant either, and your roommate won’t appreciate stepping over your surplus stuff. Know the difference between what you **need** in London (bring that) and what you think you *might want* (leave most of that at home) and you will be well-prepared for this adventure.

Use your London adventure as an opportunity to live for a couple of weeks as a sophisticated urban minimalist—a savvy traveler, not an annoying tourist. It is not the things you bring to London, but the experiences you take away, that will make this a wonderful learning and life adventure. Acquire knowledge, memories, new friendships, once-in-a-lifetime experiences, magnificent (in)sights and flavors, and manage all of that with as little “baggage” as possible (less stuff, less prejudice, a more open mind than usual). If you do that, you will make the most of this study abroad experience.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

UB Study Abroad Programs:

Mary Odrzywolski
Director, Study Abroad Programs
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Buffalo, New York 14260

Office Phone: +1 716 645-3912 (business hours: Mon-Fri 8:30am-5:00pm)
Emergency Phone: +1 716 645-2222 (UB Police – 24 hours)
Fax: +1 716 645-6197
E-mail: maryodrz@buffalo.edu or studyabroad@buffalo.edu

Police/Fire/Ambulance emergencies in London: 999

Professor Street (personal phone in London, available 24 hrs): +44 777 223 4748

United States Embassy in London

24 Grosvenor Square
London, W1A 2LQ
United Kingdom
Switchboard from US: 011 44 2074 999000
Direct dial in London: 0207 499-9000

In the case of an emergency involving a U.S. citizen **outside of office hours**, telephone on:

01253 501106 if dialing from the UK; 011 44 1253 501106 if dialing from the U.S.; or International dialing code +44 1253 501106 if dialing from elsewhere. In the case of an emergency involving a U.S. citizen **during office hours**, you can telephone the Embassy on: 02890-386104 if dialing from the UK; 011 44 2890 386104 if dialing from the U.S.; or International dialing code + 44 2890 386104 if dialing for elsewhere. **Office hours** are Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm, except closed on American, British, and Northern Irish holidays. **The above numbers are for emergencies only.**

Students from UB-SIM who have an emergency (we do not anticipate any) would contact the high commission of Singapore for assistance.

High Commission of the Republic of Singapore in London

9 Wilton Crescent
Belgravia London SW1X 8SP

Tel: +44 (0)207 235 8315
Fax: +44 (0)207 245 6583
E-Mail: singhc_lon@sgmfa.gov.sg

Students of other nationalities joining the program should obtain (before leaving for London) the emergency contact information for their consular/embassy organization in London.