

GHANA SEMESTER

A Handbook for Ghana

Spring 2017

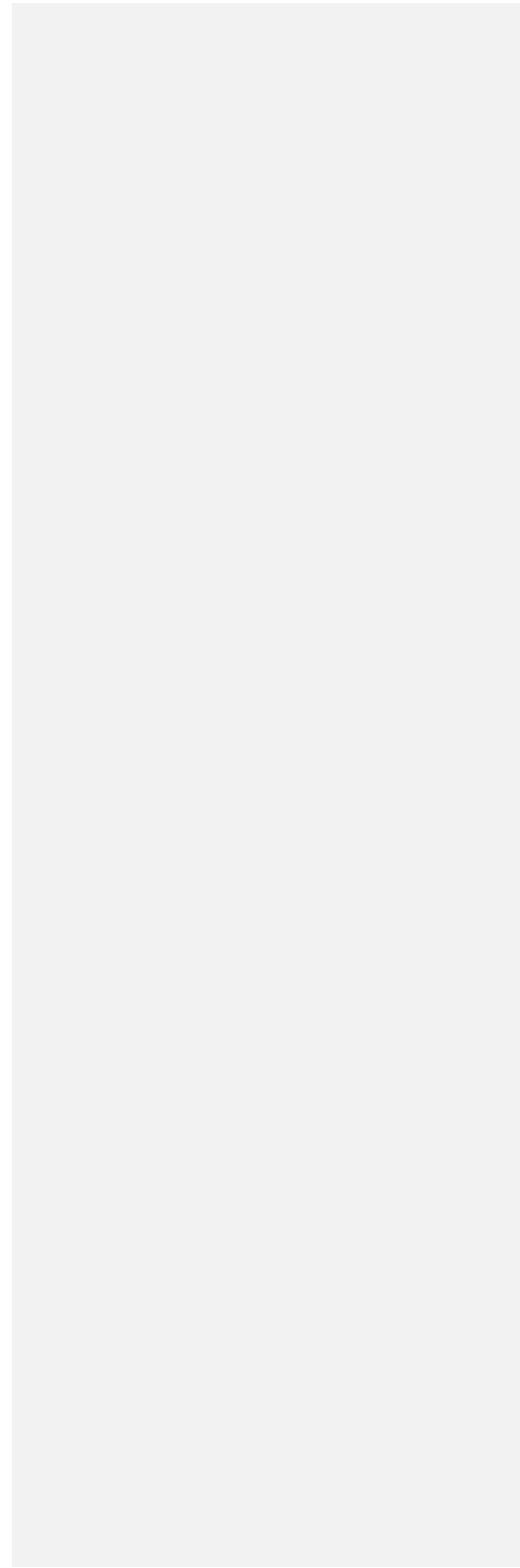


TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Ghana 2017 Preparation Handbook</i>	4
<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>Ghana Facts</i>	4-5
<i>The Academic program</i>	7
<i>Where will you Study:</i>	7-8
<i>Trip Timeline</i>	8-9
<i>A Semester in Ghana</i>	10
<i>Preparation</i>	10
<i>Medical Care and Concerns</i>	12
Health Concerns	12
Medical Insurance	14
<i>What to Pack</i>	14
Clothes	14
Medical/Personal Items:	16
<i>Life on the University of Ghana's Campus</i>	18
<i>Communications & Technology</i>	20
<i>Travel</i>	22
<i>Authority and discipline</i>	25
<i>General Recommendations: A Summary</i>	26

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GHANA 2017

PREPARATION HANDBOOK

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Introduction

You are about to embark on a wonderful learning adventure! Spending a semester away from Calvin or Sewanee will teach you an enormous amount about the world and yourself. The courses you take and the trips through the country expose you to the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of Ghana. This semester will give you the experience of living in an economically poor country, one where social relationships and cultural awareness are crucial. You will come to appreciate the diversity in the world through your experience of different cultural practices and living situations. Through these experiences, many students have further developed their vocational goals.

Living and studying in Ghana will not always be easy. You will become frustrated when things don't go as planned or things are not as efficient as you would like. Developing skills of patience, flexibility, and the ability to laugh at yourself and your situation are crucial for a good experience. At times you will be challenged to take risks, by trying new things (like food), introducing yourself to people you don't know (like Ghanaians in class or in the dorms), and asking hard questions about yourself and your own culture. The students who have the richest experience from this semester are students who take those risks and work outside of their comfort zone.

Your professor will guide you as you work through the many learning experiences you encounter. Professor Patterson has first-hand experience with many of the cross-cultural concerns that you will face, and she has rich insight and knowledge. She led the Ghana semester in 2008 at Calvin, and she has worked with students from both Calvin and Sewanee on internships and research projects in Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Ghana. She and her family have lived, worked, and studied in several African countries.

Ghana Facts

Basic Demographics:

- Population: 26,327,649
- Life expectancy at birth: 66.18 years
- Literacy: 76.6% (men: 82%, women: 71.4%)

Society:

The various ethnic groups in Ghana are an important part of the geographical, political, economic and cultural makeup of this country. You will find that people are largely distributed throughout the country based on ethnic background, and that ethnic background is a major determinant of the language spoken. However, English remains the national language. These groups and specific languages also play an important part in Ghana's bipartisan political system as the Ewes tend to support the NDC and the Ashanti's support the NPP.

English is commonly used in urban settings, but in rural settings the use and comprehension of English can be limited. Twi is most common in Accra and functions as an informal dialect in Southern Ghana. It is the language of the Akan people who form the largest single ethnic group in Ghana.

Major Ethnic groups:

- Akan 47.5%
- Mole-Dagbon 16.6%
- Ewe 13.9%
- Ga-Dangme 7.4%

Major Languages

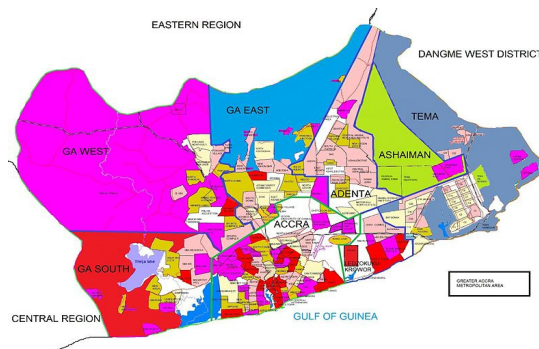
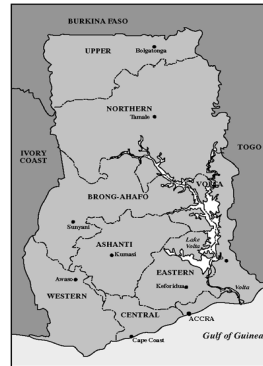
- Ashanti Twi: 16%
- Ewe: 14%
- Fante: 11.6%

Religions:

Christianity has found a strong hold in this country, with approximately 70% of the population calling themselves Christian. The form of Christianity practiced in this country is generally evangelical and charismatic. Furthermore, Ghanaian Christians tend to hold naturally conservative beliefs. Major characteristics of Ghanaian Christianity that you will quickly notice are the long church services, the focus on songs in services, diligence in tithing throughout the churches, high church attendance, and a complex interaction between African traditions and Christian faith. Muslims tend to be more concentrated in the northern part of the country, while Christians are more concentrated in the South.

Major Religions:

- Christian 71.2%
 - Pentecostal/Charismatic 28.3%
 - Protestant 18.4%
 - Catholic 13.1%



- Other 11.4%
- Muslim 17.6%,
- Traditional 5.2%,
- Other 0.8%,
- None 5.2%

Geography and Climate:

Ghana has two seasons, warm and rainy, and hot and sunny. The *rainy season* generally ends in September and is characterized by consistently overcast skies, high humidity, and occasional thunderstorms. The *dry season* has consistently high temperatures, often reaching over 90 degrees Fahrenheit. These weather trends are consistent throughout the country. In the Volta region you might find cooler temperatures in the mountainous areas, while the northern regions may be hotter.

Ghana is not a "jungle," but a rainforest and savanna or grassland-like environment. The northern region is hot and dry, while Accra is more tropical. Plan to sweat! After a few weeks in Ghana, you will become acclimated to the temperature. Many places will not have air conditioning, but building ventilation and fans are often good and breezes will cool you off. You will learn to dress in light-weight clothes appropriate for the climate.

The dry season ends in late March or early April with the coming of the first rains in southern Ghana. Rain continues into June. In July there may be a period of reduced rain in southern Ghana, though rain continues in the North. When you arrive in January, you may experience the hot, dry Harmattan winds from the north.

- *Area:* 239,460 sq. km (about the size of Illinois)
- *Border countries:* Burkina Faso (north), Côte d'Ivoire (west), Togo (east)
- *Coastline:* 539 km
- *Climate:* tropical; hot and humid in south; hot and dry in north
- *Capital:* Accra (2.269 million)
- *Regions:* 10 administrative regions

Economy:

It is difficult to compare the economy of Ghana to that of the United States. An important distinction is that Ghana's economy is largely run by the informal sector, meaning that about 80% of the population works in businesses that are unregulated by the government. These include small sellers, traders you may see in the marketplace, and domestic service workers. Ghana's economic and agricultural infrastructure is limited, which slows the pace of economic activity. Another important distinction is that Ghana has a largely cash based economy, meaning credit cards are generally not accepted at stores or restaurants. Credit card use has become more common in high-end hotels, but credit card fraud is problematic in Africa and thus, it is not recommended to use your card. (Do plan to have one, though, in case of emergency.) While in Ghana you will need to get used to carrying cash with you everywhere, as it is the preferred payment.

- *Currency:* Ghanaian Cedi (GHC or GHS). \$1 = 3.95 Cedi
- *GDP/capita:* \$4,100
- *Percent population below poverty line:* 24.2% (est. for 2013)
- *Unemployment Rate:* 5.2%(est 2013)
- *GDP composition by sector:* agriculture (44.7%), industry (14.4%), services (40.9%)
- *Agriculture Products:* Cocoa, rice, cassava, peanuts, corn, shea nuts, bananas, timber.
- *Industries:* Mining, lumbering, light manufacturing, aluminum smelting, food processing, cement.
- *Inflation rate:* 17%

Political system:

Ghana is a stable democracy that has had six elections since 1992 and two peaceful transitions of power between political parties. The most recent election took place in 2012 and resulted in a victory for President John Dramani Mahama, a member of the National Democratic Party. Ghana is a de facto bipartisan system, with the two main parties being the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Analysts worry that patronage and ethnic politics are heavily ingrained in the political system, but politics generally takes place in a peaceful context.

- *Type of system:* Constitutional democracy
- *Executive:* President John Dramani Mahama (Chief of State and Head of Government)
- *Legislature:* Unicameral Parliament of 275 seats, elected by universal suffrage every 4 years.
- *Election Terms:* 4 years for parliament; maximum of two 4 year terms for president.
- *Next elections:* December 2016 (for president and parliament)
- *Legal System:* Based on English common law and customary law
- *Independence Day:* March 6, 1957

The City of Accra:

Accra, the capital of Ghana, is a large city of between 2 and 3 million people. It is the national center of politics, commerce and the arts. You will study at the University of Ghana, which is in Legon, a suburb of Accra. Travel into Accra proper is easy through public transportation, and throughout the semester, you will visit various places in the city often.

The organization of Accra will probably seem confusing to you at first. Purchasing a map is a good idea to help orient you to its various sectors. Maps are available in *The Lonely Planet* and *Bradt Guide to Ghana*. (See recommended reading list.) A large color map and satellite photo of the city from KLM can also be purchased at supermarkets and bookstores. Increasingly Google Maps also has major streets, restaurants, markets, and tourist sites available, and use of map applications on an I-Phone is increasingly common. Your first trips will be taken in groups to help you become acquainted with the city and with public transportation—the TroTro. Once you become familiar with Accra, you will increasingly visit its cultural centers and restaurants on your own. Feel empowered to use public transportation and explore! Although Accra may seem hectic and fast-paced, it offers so many incredible adventures and over time confidence will build up and transit will seem easy.

Historically, Accra was a village established by the British as the capital of their colony, known then as the Gold Coast. The British chose Accra as a capital because it was on the coast, close to the harbor at Tema. It was also located in a break in the coastal rainforest. The original inhabitants are the Ga people, and their language is still spoken widely in the city. Other peoples of Ghana migrated to Accra over the past century. Many of Accra's neighborhoods are concentrations of peoples of the same ethnic background or religion (as occurs in large U.S. cities). Ghanaians are proud of their multi-ethnic heritage, and Accra is a truly diverse and cosmopolitan city.

In 1957 Ghana became the first sub-Saharan African colony to obtain its independence from European colonialism. Ghana's first leader was the charismatic orator and statesman Kwame Nkrumah. He encouraged independence in all of Africa, and Accra became a center of intellectual and political excitement in the 1950s and 1960s. Nkrumah was educated at a historically black US college, Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. While studying there, he encouraged African-Americans to visit and reside in Accra, and he fostered ideas about pan-Africanism (unity among Africans and people of African descent in the diaspora). This heritage remains important to this day. In the years since Nkrumah's deposition from power, Ghana has maintained links to African-American intellectuals, and Americans of all backgrounds are welcomed with traditional Ghanaian hospitality. In its foreign policy, Ghana still tries to promote a bigger role for Africa in international

relations, and along with Nigeria and Senegal, Ghana is often seen as a regional leader in West Africa.

- *Area:* 66.8 sq mi
- *Population:* 2.269 million
- *Annual Growth Rate:* 2.19%

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

University of Ghana and Away

The Semester in Ghana program **with the interim** will have the following components:

January (3 weeks)—This is the interim course and there will be a few students from Calvin who will be on only this portion of the experience. There also will be a “co-director” Dr. Joe Kuilema from Calvin who will participate during this period. During these 3 weeks, there will be classes at Akrofi-Cristaller Institute (ACI; see below) and travel throughout Ghana. At ACI, students will stay in the ACI housing and have a homestay experience. ACI classes will focus on orientation, Ghanaian history, culture, and Christianity in Ghana. Travel will include visits to Kumasi (seat of the Ashanti Kingdom), Tamale and Bolga (in the north), and Cape Coast.

Beginning in the first week of February, there will then be about fifteen weeks of study at the University of Ghana (February-May). The semester also includes a trip to the Volta region, a four-day home stay in the village of Adenkrebri, a trip to an international paragliding festival, and a practicum placement. The first weeks of study at the University of Ghana in February will include an orientation to the university and to life in the bustling city of Accra. During the month of May, we will spend another weekend at the Akrofi Christaller Institute where we will “debrief”. This will provide students time to reflect on their experience of the previous semester.

Where will you Study:

The University of Ghana (Legon):

The University of Ghana in Legon is located about eight miles northeast of Accra on an attractive campus that is somewhat reminiscent of a Californian University. The University was founded in 1948 as the University College of the Gold Coast and became the University College of Ghana in 1957. This is the oldest University in Ghana, and in 1961 it was reorganized by an Act of Parliament as the University of Ghana, which allowed it to award its own degrees. The University has about 30,000 students and offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees. You will live on campus, taking 2-3 classes at the University of Ghana and two classes with Professor Amy Patterson. The two classes you will take with Professor Patterson will be located in a classroom associated with the Institute of African Studies at the University.

The ratio of the student population at the University is approximately 2 males to 1 female. Only about 5% of the faculty is female. The university welcomes many foreign students, so you will encounter students from other African, European and North American countries at the university. It is important to remember that, for the most part, university students are from upper and middle class Ghanaian society. This is particularly true for female students. Middle and upper class families are the most likely to recognize the value of higher education for women. Thus, the university is not a cross-section of Ghanaian society.

All Calvin and Sewanee students will enroll in The Introduction to African Studies class taught by University of Ghana professors and administered through the Institute for African Studies. The first 6 weeks of this class provides general instruction on contemporary Africa (e.g., lessons on African identity, Africa's role in the world.) The second half of this class students choose an elective, such as dance, drama, beginning language, drumming, etc.

In addition, you will enroll in 1-2 additional courses at the University of Ghana. You may choose from courses in any discipline, though you should ensure that these classes will help fulfill requirements for general education/core curriculum, your major, or elective credit. During 2016, students enrolled in classes in a wide variety of disciplines, including history, English, music, economics, religion, French, math, and geology.

The classes at the University of Ghana will most likely be larger than you are accustomed to, and professors will lecture more and have less discussion. Additionally, the use of technology will be less (not lots of readings on Moodle/Blackboard). You will also have to get accustomed to Ghanaian English, though the classes at ACI during the interim will help with this process. It will also be important for you to meet and know the TA (teacher's assistant) for the class, if the class has one. This person will provide invaluable information.

You should be prepared to be flexible in terms of the course enrollment process, which occurs at the end of January. There may be classes that were on the University of Ghana website that are not available, and new classes may be added to the offerings at the last minute. We will work through this process, with help from the International Studies Office at the University of Ghana. Patience and a long list of possible classes will be important! Every student in 2016 got classes he or she needed, though maybe not the first choice.

In your University of Ghana classes, there will be midterm exams (called "interim assessments"). These tend to occur in week 6-7 of the class (though this is not always the case). And each class will have a final exam. The final exams occur during a 3 week period in May, though they may occur during the reading period which is the week before the exam period. (Professors may make changes.)

Students are not allowed to **miss final exams at the University of Ghana classes for any reason....** Unless a student is in a coma! (This is a University of Ghana rule.) The final exam schedule is not posted until

1 week before final exams, thus it is impossible to plan until late April when one's final exam will be. For Calvin students, seniors will not be allowed to take an exam early in order to return for graduation.

Courses are listed at the University of Ghana website (below), under Academics/Departments, undergraduate courses. The usual practice is that students take classes at the 300 level or above. (It is possible to take 100-200 level classes, but these are large lectures.) Additionally, courses that end in an even number are offered in the spring. It is suggested that you make a long list of possible classes (at least 10!) that interest you, fulfill requirements, etc. and that you discuss this list with your advisor before you come to Ghana.

The key to coursework at the University of Ghana will be flexibility and open-mindedness. Through courses at the university you will hear unique Ghanaian perspectives on issues and you will gain exposure to different teaching styles. Additionally, you will meet Ghanaian students. These are irreplaceable learning experiences, which make a few hassles that might occur in terms of registration seem like small stuff!

Website: <http://www.ug.edu.gh/>

Professor Patterson will offer two courses, namely, The Politics of Contemporary Africa: Through the Country Lens of Ghana (which will focus on Ghanaian politics) and Practicum: NGOs and Development.

Practicum: NGOs & Development class will include exposure to Twi language and community research methods, as well as the major theories and ideas of development. It will also dovetail with your practicum placement. During the month of February, we will work to ensure that you have a placement that aligns with your interest. In roughly the middle of March (or before), you will begin to visit your placement site, primarily on Fridays. (Most university classes do not meet on Fridays). The observations you make at practicum placement will be incorporated into discussions in the seminar, and some of your assignments for the seminar will revolve around your work in the NGO. During the month of May (which is exam month at the university), you complete most of your practicum hours.

The Village of Adenkrebi:

During February and March, every student will spend four days living in the village of Adenkrebi, about 40 minutes outside of Accra. Students will typically travel in groups of 5-6, and stay in the same house. The house is located on the edge of the village by a man named Daniel Tetteh. His house is comparable to that of a middle class Ghanaian family, which is a contrast to the traditional housing makeup of Adenkrebi. The homestay period seeks to provide a time of complete immersion into Ghanaian village life. Students will engage in a number of activities such as farming, snail hunting, hiking, crab digging, and teaching at the local school. Calvin College has been building a relationship with the people of Adenkrebi since 2010. Many students look at this immersion into African culture as one of the most exciting times of their semester because of all the interesting experiences, the great food, and interactions with some of the friendliest people in Ghana.

Regional Excursion Trip: Volta

In March, students will travel to the Volta region for a 3-4 day trip. During this trip, students will be able to explore the cultures, languages, traditions, and environment. Some of the best experiences of the semester occur on trips like this as students are exposed to the many traditions and cultures of this diverse country. During this trip, we visit Cedi Beads (which yes, makes beads, which are a traditional adornment in Ghana), and the Akosombo Dam, Kakum National Park, Vli Falls, the Tafi Atome monkey sanctuary, and Krobo Hills.

The Akrofi-Christaller Institute (ACI)

The Akrofi-Christaller Institute is located in Akropong-Akuapem, a small city about 1-2 hours from Accra. It was founded in the mid-nineteenth century by Swiss Reformed missionaries and is currently associated with the two major Presbyterian denominations in Ghana. The Institute carries on mission research, offers graduate degrees in African theology, and provides educational opportunities for Ghanaian pastors seeking further training. The director of the Institute is the Rev. Dr. Benhardt Quarshie.

Nkawkaw Paragliding Trip (late March)

During spring (most likely, Easter weekend), we will travel to the community of Nkawkaw which has hosted a world-known paragliding festival with professional gliders from Europe, Asia, and the USA. Students will be allowed to paraglide (in tandem) with a professional, if they so choose. (You don't have to if the thought just terrifies you!) They will need to pay for the cost of the paragliding (300 cedis in 2016), while the semester program will cover the cost of transportation, lodging and food for the excursion.

Link to the website for the festival: <http://www.ghanaparagliding.com/>

Aboakyer Festival (Winneba) (May)

It may be possible during May to visit the "deer hunting" festival of the Efutu people in Winneba, a city along the coast. The festival commemorates the founding of the community when the people were able to establish the present settlement through the help of their tribal god, who still protect them. The festival, in which deer are hunted and brought to the ancestral spirits, is thought to be over 300 years old. The 2016 semester program did not include this, and exam schedules may preclude such a trip. But it is a possibility!

More information on the festival is available at:
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/tourism/aboakyer.php>

2017 Timeline

January 5: Calvin interim and semester and Sewanee semester students leave USA

January 6: Arrive in Ghana

January 25: Calvin interim students return to the U.S.

January 25-27: Semester students sign up for classes (Wed-Friday).

January 25: Move into International

Student Hostel (ISH).

Monday, January 30: University of Ghana classes begin and orientation occurs.

January 31-Feb. 2: Patterson's courses begin (Politics of Africa; and NGO class)

February 17: Deadline to add/drop courses at the University of Ghana.

February & March (Starting Feb. 17): Adenkrebi homestays (3-4 days, 5 students at a time).

Early/mid-March—begin practicum experience one day a week

End of March: Visit Volta region (3-4 days)

April 14 & 17: Good Friday and Easter Monday (no classes).

April 14 -17: Paragliding Festival (tentative dates)

April 28: University of Ghana classes end

May 1-5: University of Ghana Revising/Reading week

May: Potential visit to Winneba's Aboakyir festival

May 1-26: NGO Practicum Placement (working at site around exam schedule)

Saturday, May 6-Sunday, May 21: University of Ghana exams

May 14: Ghana Farewell Celebration

May 22-24: Travel to Akropong. Semester final retreat.

May 26: Return to US.

Please also be aware of the **following national holidays**, which may influence your class schedules at the University of Ghana:

Independence Day - Mon, March 6, 2017

Good Friday - Friday April 14, 2017

Easter Monday - Monday, April 17, 2017

May Day - Monday, May 1, 2017

AU Day - Thursday, May 25, 2017

A SEMESTER IN GHANA

A semester in Ghana is hard to imagine. It's natural to be both eager for the adventure and at the same time apprehensive about your ability to handle living in a new and different culture. It makes sense to spend some time reflecting on how you can make your semester the best and most rewarding experience. Many students who participate in a study abroad program say afterwards that it was a very important and formative experience. Never before have they had such a variety of sensations, survived so much pressure, met such different people, and learned so much about themselves.

Most participants usually don't describe the semester as entirely stress-free. There will be some strenuous, difficult, and uncomfortable periods during the semester. The greatest achievement of the semester is often described as learning to cope and function as a resident and not as a tourist. As a person in a foreign land, it is important to endure the uncomfortable for the sake of enjoying the enriching experiences of living abroad. At the same time, students find life in Ghana to be at a much slower pace than is typical of the U.S.

It is valuable for students to come with a realistic understanding of themselves and their own culture. All students will find aspects of Ghanaian culture that are hard to resonate with or comprehend. The most successful students are able to acknowledge that their likes and dislikes are mostly based on what they are used to, and they find they can handle the differences without getting frustrated and wanting to change things.

Mental Preparation

1. Make a list of possible goals and objectives. What do you want to see develop in your academic courses, friendships, and your personal and if applicable, your spiritual life?
2. What help or cooperation from others will you need to achieve these goals? Are you expecting your classmates to be just like you with similar goals, habits, and attitudes? How tolerant are you of differences? How ready are you to adapt?
3. Think honestly and critically about yourself. The better grasp you have of who you are, the more accurately you can anticipate what you might struggle with through the semester.
4. Think about ways that you may cope with being homesick or lonely. For example, you might keep a journal, read extra books, or listen to music. Think about how you will handle the potential "down periods."

PREPARATION

Find books in your local library or bookstore about African history, geography, and culture. Rent films by African directors and seek out members of your church and friends of your family who have visited Ghana, Nigeria, or other countries in West Africa. Some suggested books, films, and websites with information on Ghana are listed below.

Suggestions for Pre-Trip Reading

The Ghana guidebook:

- Philip Briggs, *Ghana: The Bradt Travel Guide*. (5th edition is most recent-2010)
- *Lonely Planet West Africa*. Lots of information on the region, with a good section on Ghana.

Helpful websites with information on Ghana:

- *CIA Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>
- Ghana Page, through the University of Pennsylvania's African Studies Program, http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Country_Specific/Ghana.html (This has lots of links to other websites)
- Ghana Web provides great articles on current events and provides a thorough background of the country and culture. <http://www.ghanaweb.com/>

Books on the history/politics of Ghana and Africa:

- J. G. Amamoo, *The New Ghana: The Birth of a Nation*
- John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*
- Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*
- David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*
- Robert Calderisi, *The Problem with Africa*

Memoirs by American visitors to Africa:

- Sarah Erdman, *Nine Hills to Nambonkaha: Two Years in the Heart of an African Village*. A memoir of two years' Peace Corps service in Ivory Coast, Ghana's Western neighbor.
- Maya Angelou, *All God's Children Need Travelin' Shoes*. An American poet looks for her roots in Ghana, with very mixed results.
- Tanya Shaffer, *Somebody's Heart Is Burning: A Woman Wanderer in Africa*. A visit to Ghana and other countries by a young writer who is not always aware of her own biases.
- Nancy Lundgren, *Watch and Pray*. Rich ethnography of Fante village life in Cape Coast, Ghana written by an anthropologist.

Important West African writers:

- Ama Ata Aidoo (Ghanaian)
- Ayi Kwei Armah (Ghanaian)
- Kofi Awoonor (Ghanaian)
- Buchi Emecheta (Nigerian)
- Chinua Achebe (Nigerian)
- Wole Soyinka (Nigerian)

Films about Africa or by African directors (also look for other films by the directors named):

- *Forts and Castles of Ghana*, narrated by Danny Glover
- *The Africans*, PBS series narrated by Ali Mazrui
- *Mooladé*, directed by Sembene Ousmane (Senegal)
- *Yaaba*, directed by Idrissa Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso)

Planning your Budget

It is hard to say how much money you should bring for these expenses as everyone spends money at a different rate. Food costs vary considerably. Going to a sit-down, off-campus restaurant can be \$5-15. There is a market near the dorms (the “night market”) that sells food cheaper (roughly \$2-3). If you go to any café on campus, you may pay \$4-6 for a full meal of a staple like rice, meat, vegetable, and a soda. In preparation for the trip to Ghana, most students bring around \$300 - \$600, which usually lasts well throughout the semester. Keep in mind, you will receive weekly food allowances that provide a good stipend for meals. Also, ATMs are becoming much more prevalent on and off campus, accepting different ATM cards and charging very low fees.

The cost of the program includes:

- Airfare to and from Ghana for Calvin Students. (Sewanee students will need to pay this amount. This is a University of South rule.)
- Room at International Student Hostel
- Tuition
- Field trip expenses
- Weekly food allowance
- Administrative fees

Expenses you are expected to cover:

- **Passport and Visa**
- Personal medical expenses (see below)
- Required immunizations
- Local transportation (tro tros or taxis)
- Recreation
- Dining out
- Personal weekend trips
- Paragliding at Nkawkaw
- Personal shopping, souvenirs
- Purchase of textbooks (Books and readings for the 2 classes by Patterson will be announced in November, so that you can purchase via Amazon or download.)

Commented [AP2]: Students—can you add to this in terms of budget amounts, etc. What you paid for, etc???

Commented [AP3]: Don and Dave can you double check this.
Are visas included in program cost? I found 2 separate statements on this.

Commented [AP4]: I thought visa was in the cost of program??

MEDICAL CARE AND CONCERNS

HEALTH CONCERNS

Use common sense to avoid illness: rest, take care of yourself, drink bottled or treated water, and eat right. If you feel ill, communicate this to others (your friends, roommate, or professor). We all need to look out for each other. Don't be embarrassed or afraid to ask for help!

On the other hand, it is good to be realistic. At some point in the trip you will get sick. Bathroom jokes will become normal and toilet paper will be a necessity! Don't panic about sickness or live in fear. Be conscious, attentive, and careful, but almost anything you contract can be easily treated.

When you first arrive in Ghana, it will take a while for your body to adjust to the new environment. There is a nearby clinic that Calvin has used for students; it is reliable, the physicians are well trained; and the care provided is good. Services at medical clinics in Accra are professional and are payable in cash (dollars or cedis). The cost of treatment is somewhat less than that of similar American facilities.

You may discover that medical workers in Ghana are not as direct in their explanations about illness as American doctors. They may just provide medication without explanation. You need to be proactive about asking questions about your health and make sure someone is with you (e.g. Professor Patterson) to help ask questions if you go to a health clinic. It is also important to remember that health workers in Ghana are often equally as qualified as health practitioners in the US.

Stomach/Intestinal Disorders:

Minor stomach and intestinal disorders can be expected for the first few weeks and may continue off and on throughout the semester. During these bouts it is extremely important to rehydrate yourself. Drink clear liquids such as water, 7-up/Sprite, or Gatorade. Caffeine drinks (coffee, tea, and Coke) are not recommended if you have diarrhea. Also, following the "BRAT" diet for a few days can help get your system back on track: bananas, rice, apples/apple juice, and toast. Spicy foods and foods with high fiber will exacerbate diarrhea. If you have a high fever, severe cramping, blood in your stools, or diarrhea that occurs 6-8 times a day for several days, seek medical attention immediately. Such disorders can be caused from food poisoning. Be careful about eating food that is sold on roadside or market stands. Stick to food still hot from the stove that has been thoroughly washed in clean water or weak bleach solution.

Malaria:

Malaria is very common in Ghana. Learn to recognize its symptoms. These include fever, headache, sweating, tiredness, muscle ache, vomiting, and diarrhea. Go to the clinic or hospital immediately for testing and treatment if these appear. Most strains of malaria respond rapidly to medication. Do not allow yourself to become weak and dehydrated before you get medical attention. The best way to avoid malaria is to avoid mosquito bites and to take your malaria prophylaxis (Malarone, Doxycycline). Mosquitoes that carry malaria come out at dusk. When the sun goes down, it is wise to cover your body by wearing long pants, socks, and a long-sleeve shirt. Use insect repellent, keep screens closed, use insecticides in rooms, and sleep under a mosquito net. If you exhibit symptoms of malaria *after* returning to the US, seek medical attention and make sure to tell the medical staff of your travel to Africa. Additionally, make sure that you complete the full course of malaria medications when you return to the US.

Drinking Water:

Water is NOT safe to drink directly from the tap anywhere in Ghana. Non-bottled water should be sterilized by boiling it for 10 minutes or using iodine pills, or special filters, or a UV sterilizing pen (available in sporting goods stores, in the camping/backpacking section; follow the directions on the bottle-note these are not required but could be handy). The water in *sealed and labeled* 500 ml bags or bottles is safe to drink and is available nearly everywhere for approximately five cents. DO NOT drink water from unknown sources. It is wise to always carry a canteen/Nalgene bottle and iodine tablets OR a Sawyer water bottle with filter when traveling, in case you need to treat water. Then you won't be tempted to drink unsafe water. You also should not brush teeth in untreated water and, while many people will put ice in drinks, it is best not to (unless you know it is made with purified water). Most students manage with one of these products:

- Sawyer Water Treatment Bottle with Internal Filter or Separate Filter
- SteriPen UV water treater

Homesickness, Depression:

At some point, you will probably experience homesickness or culture stress. This is normal and often occurs after the excitement of a new place has worn off. Some students find the first few nights or even the airport to be challenging and emotional taxing. Talk to others and your professor about this: chances are that you aren't the only one feeling down. If you find that your low feelings continue (and you cannot sleep, eat, or do normal activities), please alert others.

Other medications for health conditions:

If you currently take medications in the United States for any health condition, you need to continue taking those medications while in Ghana. The semester abroad is not the time to "experiment" with your health. Additionally, please be aware that support for mental health issues (for example, through regular therapy sessions) is extremely limited in Ghana.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

It is your responsibility to be sure that you have insurance that covers illness or accident while you are abroad. You may do this in one of three ways:

1. Verify that you are covered for emergency care while outside the US or Canada by the insurance policy of your parents.
2. For Calvin students: purchase the Calvin-sponsored insurance, KnightCare.
3. For Sewanee students: Purchase a special policy designed for students studying abroad if you are not covered. For Calvin students, brochures on different plans are available in the Off-Campus Programs Office or on the HTHstudents.com website. For Sewanee students,

Regardless of the type of coverage you have, you will need to be able to cover your expenses for the short-term, because the insurance reimbursement will be done later and on the basis of receipts submitted. If the bill is large, Prof. Patterson may be able to advance you the needed funds and have Calvin or Sewanee charge your student account.

WHAT TO PACK

CLOTHES

Fashion is very important in Ghana, especially on campus. It is important to dress nicely, and while most Ghanaians are far too polite to say anything if you look sloppy, your roommates might give you a strange look!

Women

The students at Legon University dress elegantly, modeling Western clothing trends; they wear dresses, skirts or dressy pants, and nice blouses with their jeans as well as skinny jeans and leggings. Typically, Ghanaian women do not wear any pants higher than their knee, though, on campus it is becoming more common to see shorter skirts and shorts. In fact, the majority of women hanging around in the dorms can be seen wearing shorts. More casual or fashionable clothes may be fine on campus, but you will want capris/skirts/pants that reach your knees for off campus excursions or trips into town. Clothes can say a lot about a person whether intentional or unintentional and it is important to be especially aware of the message that you are sending. When off on excursions to places like Adenkrebi it is important to pack clothes suitable for crab hunting or outdoor hikes, and it is a much more laid back environment. It is ok to show your bare arms or shoulders except at church or visiting villages, queen mothers, and chiefs. Do plan to bring some shirts that do not show your shoulders. You will find that the climate can often make cotton uncomfortable, as you tend to sweat considerably while in Ghana. Many Ghanaian students wear small nightgowns at night, which are very lightweight and a good idea. Lastly, it is important to have nice shoes for church, along with wonderful daily walking shoes! You will be walking a lot and sturdy shoes are a must! Tevas, Keens—these are great for wearing around campus or on field trips and in villages.

Men

Ghanaian men, for the most part, wear slacks with a light oxford shirt or an African-style smock. While you can wear shorts, most men do not. To play it safe, dress conservatively on campus. A grunge look of ripped or worn clothing is not normal and will get you some strange looks. Jeans and cotton shirts (not T-shirts with writing) are fine. Informal is fine, but sloppy is not. Light oxford shirts can be great for daily use, as they breathe well and are dressy.

General Suggestions

Students on the semester wear different types of shoes depending on weather and outfit. Canvas hiking boots, Birkenstocks, Tevas, Chacos, flats, and dark colored sneakers are good for everyday use – be sure to have closed-toe shoes for excursions. On the occasion that it rains in Accra, mud becomes an unavoidable reality; be prepared to deal with these conditions. Shoes are an important aspect for social status. For going out or to church you should have a pair of dress shoes, but keep in mind that leather does not handle Ghanaian humidity very well, and has a tendency to mold. Flip-flops are acceptable, but they are not very sturdy for the significant amount of walking you will do. Save the flip flops (or sometimes called “shower shoes”) for hanging out.

Keep in mind, the clothes you take to Ghana will go through a lot of wear and tear:

MOLD – Avoid bringing anything made of leather (purses, belts, shoes, jackets). If you don't wear them every day, they WILL mold. (This is a fact of life in the tropics!) Several students in the past ended up throwing out their leather shoes.

DUST –Ghana has a lot of red dirt, which is hard to wash out. Red dirt is everywhere in Accra, and manages

to make its mark on any white shirts, pants, shoes, hats, socks, and skirts. Keep this in mind when deciding what clothing to pack. Shirts with 5% lycra don't shrink as much when being hand washed, so keep this in mind as you pick out clothing.

HEAT – Because of the heat, it is recommended that you bring tank-style undershirts to wear underneath shirts, which will make you feel and look better. Loose fitting clothes are most comfortable in the heat. Choose clothes with high natural-fiber content (for example, an 80% cotton shirt or blouse will be much more comfortable than one that is 60% polyester and 40% cotton). Some students have preferred athletic wear that is more breathable and sweat resistant.

COOL WEATHER – Bring an article of cool weather clothing, such as a sweatshirt, for the times we spend at higher elevations. It can get down to 55 degrees in the evening and after the humidity, it can feel cold. Also, long sleeved, cotton shirts are good for evenings, to avoid mosquito bites. Pack a rain jacket, for when it rains and for cool evenings.

ATHLETICS – If you like to run, this is definitely an option. You will not see many Ghanaians just 'going for a run on campus,' but a handful of international students do. If you plan to run or play a sport, bring enough socks. If you don't plan on this, you'll only need a few pairs. On campus, there will be opportunities to play tennis, soccer, and basketball. Women: If you run, don't plan on wearing your short-shorts. Knee length is better, just to avoid looks.

AFRICAN MADE – You can have lightweight African-style clothes made for you in Ghana at very reasonable prices. Women often purchase dresses, skirts, tops, and purses, while men can purchase shirts. These custom-made outfits are great as dress wear and for day-to-day use. This clothing can also be a great souvenir!

Additional Suggestions about Clothing:

- Light rain jacket
- Sunglasses
- Swimsuit (women will need a one piece suit and swim cap if they want to swim in the university pool... rules are rules!)
- Brimmed hat (It is the tropics and the sun is direct!) Hats are good for hikes and the beach.
- Cotton underwear is the most comfortable, given the warm climate. Bring a lot.
- Leave expensive jewelry at home, but bring a "wedding ring" (This is for ladies—if you don't want to be hassled.)
- A pair of high heeled shoes for church and going out.
- Ladies: If you like to wear make-up, you might bring some. You don't have to completely forgo your beauty. But remember that you will sweat a lot and that you may be pressed for time on group excursions, etc. You also will be sharing space (common bathroom, etc.)

MEDICAL/PERSONAL ITEMS:

Take enough for the semester. If there is a brand you are really attached to, bring two. Most items can be purchased in Ghana, but some prices are high. Remember that hair products, etc. take lots of room so use discretion!

- Toiletries such as toothbrush & paste, deodorant (at least 2), hair products

- Basic first aid kit with rubbing alcohol, cotton pads, gauze, band-aids, antibiotic ointment, thermometer, ibuprofen, aspirin, cortisone cream
- Sunscreen (not easily purchased in Ghana and essential!)
- Handi-wipes- as weird as it sounds, these are great for wiping the red dirt off your feet!
- Antibacterial hand cleaner. Bring a lot, and at least one small container to carry in a backpack.
- Lip balm with SPF
- Insect repellent—should contain at least 35% DEET
- Rehydration salts (for treatment of traveler’s diarrhea) or Gatorade in packets
- Baby powder/Goldbond (helps against sweat and heat rash)
- Motion sickness medicine (for airplane, bumpy bus rides, etc.)
- Imodium and/or Pepto-Bismol, TUMS also (possibly a prescription diarrhea medication in addition to or instead of these, if they don’t usually work for you; most travelers’ clinics will give a prescription for Cipro, which helps if you have diarrhea that is bacterially caused)
- Multi-vitamins
- Dental Floss

CONTACT WEARERS – Bring your own supply of contact fluid, since your brand may not be available in Accra. Carry extra contacts (if yours are gas-permeable) and glasses as a backup.

GLASSES WEARERS – bring a spare pair. While it is possible to get glasses fixed, it is a real hassle.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION – Be sure you have enough for the entire time, since availability of your medication isn’t guaranteed. Keep all medications in their original pharmacy containers. Ask your pharmacist for a list of the generic names of any brand name medications you take.

WOMEN – You may want to bring:

- Cotton underwear—helps with the prevention of yeast infections
- At least one course of vaginal yeast infection medication
- A good supply of feminine hygiene products (if you want to ensure that you have a particular brand). For example, Tampons are not easy to find.

MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES:

- Bed linens. The university does not supply them. Past students recommend bringing 2 sets of sheets because of long drying times. At the end of the semester you may want to leave them behind
- Pillows can be purchased in Accra at Max Mart. Some students bring pillows, while others purchase them. A pillow is also nice for traveling in the bus on excursions.
- Mosquito net. Can be purchased at a camping store (e.g., Gander Mountain). They are great not only for keeping mosquitoes off, but also other bugs. This is crucial for preventing malaria.
- Twine and/or nylon rope (Good for tying up things, like your mosquito net, or making a clothes line)
- Portable fan--the dorm rooms do not have any
- Dirty clothes/laundry bag
- Bible and other books for recreational reading.
- Extra batteries (Standard batteries—AA, C, D—are available but expensive. Specialty batteries—like for a digital camera—may not be available. If you use rechargeable, take extra batteries in case your charger breaks down.)
- Headphones. These can be purchased, but are often lower quality and more expensive.
- Ear plugs. The dorm and bus can be noisy.

- Canteen/Nalgene bottle. **Sawyer water filter bottle.**
- Clorox wipes or Lysol wipes for quick cleaning dorm rooms. (Past students said to “bring lots” to disinfect furniture and closets that mold.)
- A light blanket or flannel sheet (after a while, 70 degrees might seem cold!)
- Flashlight for when power goes off (Electricity WILL go off, so be ready!)
- Swiss Army knife (make sure it is in your checked luggage). One with lots of gadgets like scissors, bottle opener can be very helpful
- Backpack or shoulder/tote bag (Backpacks are harder to watch in crowds, but better for weekend trips. For women who may carry a bag with valuables daily, it is good to have a bag with a zipper and flap that you can place over a shoulder with pouch that opens toward you.) Large camping backpacks can be good for longer excursions.
- Camera
- DVDs to share with the group--you will have a surprising amount of evening downtime. Also, watching a movie with your Ghanaian roommate might be a great cross-cultural experience.
- Photos of family and friends (Ghanaian students will love to see photos of your friends and family at home, and so will you!)
- Copy of health insurance card
- ATM card. As stated earlier, this is very useful for quick access to cash.
- Money belt or pouch that can be worn, if possible, under clothes (very important; pick-pocketing is fairly common in markets and crowded places)
- Sturdy packing tape for making minor repairs
- Umbrella
- A Summit Sleep Sack (great for homestays, travel); the insecticide treated kind can be very helpful if you don't have a net.
- Resealable “baggies” of various sizes, for storage (and to keep ants out of your food)
- Washcloths and towels that dry quickly (older worn out ones work best) (You can buy quick dry towels at travel stores, though they are more expensive.)
- A couple boxes of snacks from home-these are great to ‘break out’ when you’re really missing food from home. Granola bars, fruit snacks, candy bars, trail mix, or even travel coffee packets!
- Textbooks
- Flash drives
- Lock for your laptop
- Virus protection for your computer
- Photocopies of important materials (passport, etc. packed separately from your documents)
- Extra room and weight capacity in your suitcase for bringing things home.
- **Universal outlet adaptor.**
- Skip hairdryers, curlers, etc. It is too hot to use them and they take unnecessary room.
- Small souvenirs or presents for the friends you make in Ghana. Highly recommended!
- Command Hooks for hanging up mosquito nets and anything else in your dorm room.

Commented [AP5]: Calvin students: please add anything you think needed here. (or take away)

NOTE ON CAMERAS, COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS – Don't take anything you could not stand to lose to theft or failure. Such devices seem to be prone to breakdown. Ghana's electricity is nominally 220v, but varies. Most wall plugs take three square prongs (like the UK). All the plugs in the International Student Hostel are 220 and 3 prong. Many external power supplies accept either 120v or 220v current and require only an adapter. Other devices need a voltage converter also. Adapters are easy to find and relatively cheap in the markets, but in 2010 they occasionally broke. (Advice from a 2010 student-'I bought one in Ghana that broke, but I don't regret not buying one in the U.S. because of how much more expensive they are there. When ours broke, we shared; it got the job done.')

What you can buy in Ghana:

Remember that you are living in an urban environment, and even though you are far from America, you can

buy virtually everything you might need. A 2011 student once said “I was so uncertain of what I would be able to buy in Ghana that I packed a bunch of toothpaste, toilet paper, and soap. I was totally naive to the fact that I could buy almost anything I needed when I was in Ghana.” Don’t stress when packing about whether you will have enough of those sorts of essentials. Right next to the dorm is a small all needs store that stocks all the basic toiletries and food you might need. Trips to large urban markets and western-style grocery stores are very easily made, and will likely stock what you might need, although perhaps not in brands you are used to.

LIFE ON THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA’S CAMPUS

Arriving in Ghana—The airport!

According to previous program students, one of the most intimidating experiences of the entire semester will be when you walk out of the airport. There will be lots of people, you will be tired and jet lagged, and it will be hot. Try not to be overwhelmed. Prof. Patterson will not be permitted to enter the secure arrival area of the airport, but will meet you at the exit. Claim your bags, go through immigration and customs, and look for her outside the airport exit doors. Free carts are available to help with your luggage. Watch your bags carefully, because there will be large crowds. Also, make sure that your passport and money are in your money belt/pouch (not easy for anyone to grab). Young men may be very assertive in trying to carry your bags. Don’t let them, unless Professor Patterson says it is okay, as they will be looking for payment for their services. We will arrange for your transport from the airport. You do not need to tip anyone to load your bags, even if they demand “payment.”

First Few Days in Country:

For most of you (except those not involved with the interim), we will start at ACI in Akropong, which is outside of Accra. We will have orientation to the country, safety, health, etc., as well as classes on Ghanaian culture, Christianity, religion and development, etc. Then after 8 days, we will travel to Cape Coast, Tamale, Kumasi and Bolga. ACI will provide a good “starting base” as you acclimate to the climate, learn about the country, and have direct interactions with Ghanaians. You will feel prepared, then, when you start classes January 30 at the University of Ghana.

First Few Days at University of Ghana:

After our time during the interim, we will move to the university and into the International Student Hostel. In your first week on campus, you will need patience. There’s a lot of initial paperwork that has to be done. You will need to provide numerous photos and fees for visa renewal, registration with the international programs office which also requests a key deposit, registration with your dorm, possibly establishing a library card, and printing a student ID card. You will have orientation with the International Programs Office, also. Just be patient with the bureaucratic steps, particularly as we register for classes. (See above about the university and classes, and the need for flexibility!)

During these initial days, female students may be surprised by the great deal of attention they get from Ghanaian men. Be prepared to respond clearly and directly to unwanted attention. (Ghanaian women can give you tips on this during orientation.)

Language:

The national language in Ghana is English, and most Ghanaians speak it fluently. It is not necessary to learn the local language to communicate with most urban Ghanaians. On the other hand, knowledge of a local language earns respect. It is important to remember that communication may not go as smoothly as you would like, since local languages are used extensively. Twi is the predominant local language in Southern Ghana, although Ga is also widely spoken in Accra. You will be enrolled in a Twi language course for the semester.

If there is one message from past Calvin students, it was this: Speak Twi! It will get you smiles and conversations. It doesn't matter how well you speak, as long as you try. (Even just a Twi greeting will often get you a cheaper price on taxis.) In order to try to facilitate Twi speaking, as part of the NGOs/development class we will have some intensive Twi lessons at the beginning. Also, students may choose Twi for the 2nd half of their Introduction to African Studies class at the University (see above).

Housing:

International Student Hostel (ISH)

You will live in the International Student Hostel (ISH 1 or ISH 2). The Hostel is a short walk from the main campus and houses students from around the world, including many African students and some Ghanaians. Although we will request a Ghanaian roommate for you, there will be a need for flexibility as the University may simply assign you to a room without taking our requests seriously. The dorm rooms are spacious. They consist of two single beds, a desk, chair, closet space and a couple of wall shelves. (Sometimes rooms are missing some amenities.) There are no TVs or DVD players, but you can watch DVDs on laptops. The dorm is NOT air-conditioned and there are no fans in the room. Fortunately, it tends to cool down to a slightly more comfortable temperature in the evening. You may want to bring one light blanket if you get cold easily. All room spaces are prone to mold and dust; clean closets with soap and water regularly and don't close the closet doors. Shared bathrooms at the end of the hallways have no hot water, and the water supply is cut off from time to time. The showers are generally strong, but again, they are cold showers. With Ghana's climate, you will not want warm water anyways! When the water is shut off, you can haul water to your floor and store it in buckets in your room. Be aware that minor thefts (e.g. food, supplies) do occur in the hostel. You need to lock your room if you are not there (even if you just go down the hall!). And you should always lock doors when you are sleeping.

There are often porters or vendors that come to the hostel providing services of goods such as dress making, tailoring and hair braiding. It is best to check with a Ghanaian to assure that you are receiving a fair price.

Younger boys hang around campus asking if they can run errands or carry things. Do not permit them to enter the dormitory. Make an effort to introduce yourself and get to know each of the porters, cleaners, and hall residents. It is important to know who's who in your hall. Alert hostel staff if you notice a stranger unaccompanied by a resident.

Lock your room and do not give out your room number to strangers. Women: men may ask you for your room number, and if you give it out, they may come around asking for you, even if you have only met them once. It is acceptable to say, "I don't accept visitors." As at home, never let someone you (or your roommate) don't know into your room. Also, men may ask for your phone number often. It is advised *not* to give it to them (in 2014 some female students said that people kept calling over and over when they didn't answer.)

Commented [AP6]: Anything else to add, CC students?

Money and Banking:

The currency is the Ghana cedi. As of September 15, 2016 exchange rates were approximately \$1= 3.95 GHC. Updated exchange rates are available at <http://www.xe.com/ucc>. Take your personal spending money in cash. Bring crisp and unmarked US \$50 or \$100 bills. Other bills (\$20s) can usually be exchanged, but at a less favorable rate and smaller bills damaged in any way are often rejected. Cash can be deposited in the program safe for security, as well as your passport. Ghana has a cash based economy, meaning that virtually all of your purchases are made with cedis and rarely with credit cards or checks. Do not bring traveler's checks. Few banks will exchange them and there will be a fee.

Bring an ATM card with a four-digit PIN number. There are several ATMs on campus, most of which accept Visa. Before you leave the US, if you will use a credit or ATM card, it is a good idea to tell your bank and credit card company that you will be using your card in Ghana (and potentially surrounding African countries). Otherwise, they may think your card has been stolen and deny payment.

When you exchange money at a Forex (Foreign Exchange), count the cedis you receive at the window and put them away before leaving the premises. There are two banks but no Forex bureau on campus. The rates at Forex bureaus are usually slightly better, and they are not hard to get to. There is one within walking distance of The International Student Hostel

Bargaining:

Part of life in Ghana is bargaining when you purchase goods at the market and in many stores. On the other hand, street vendors of food don't usually bargain and neither do tro tro drivers. Taxis, on the other hand, will. You will become experienced in bargaining, but it helps to remember that bargaining is about establishing social relations. It involves more than just "seeing who can get the best of the other person." Greeting the seller first is crucial for bargaining!

Neatness:

Many Ghanaian university students are graduates of boarding schools. As a result, they are accustomed to rising very early, making their beds immediately, and keeping their rooms tidy. Many Americans are thought of as slobs because they don't keep their room as neatly as the Ghanaians do. Ghanaians in general are very clean and neat people.

Social Relations/Hospitality:

Ghanaians are hospitable and generous and they may be shocked when Americans do not respond in ways that they expect. For example, when you first go into the room/home of a Ghanaian student, they will most likely offer you something to drink. If the student is eating, you will be invited to dine too. Do not sniff or smell the food before eating; that is considered rude. It is a good idea to bring small gifts to give to people, not immediately, but over time as you make new friends. Good ideas for gifts are things from your home-state or university. Strive to be respectful of the culture and people. Greetings are important and phrases of courtesy are important, particularly for elders. Remember "please" and "thank you."

Some people may not want their photos taken; always ask before doing so. On the other hand, many people in Ghana love to have their photos taken, but again, it is always good to ask. Finally, the phrase "next time" can be very helpful. If someone begs for money or wants you to buy something, and you don't want to contribute or purchase, you can politely apologize and say: "next time."

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

Internet:

There will be internet access in your classroom. There are also internet cafes around the University. The internet is good when it works, but from time to time it will stop. Internet service is not as readily available at field trip destinations. There is the option to buy internet credit for in the dorms from 10hrs for \$2.50 to 25hrs for \$5.00. According to the 2016 group, the wi fi worked at ISH, though could get bogged down at peak times. They suggested the best times to do wi fi were early morning or late at night.

It is absolutely essential that you **get What's App while you are in the states!** Ghanaians use it more than texting via their mobile phones because it's free. Students do have I-Phones, and if you can unlock yours, it is fine to bring it. (3 students did in 2016 and then they just bought a plan through one of the major providers—MTN.) Remember, though, that if you do bring your I-Phone you need to be careful with it. Phones are very easy to steal.

Laptops:

You are allowed to take a laptop with you, but there is a danger of theft. During 2016, every student brought a laptop. If you do bring a computer, make sure you have a good anti-virus program and that you run it often. Also, it might be a good idea to bring a laptop lock, or a small chain lock to keep your computer secure in your dorm room. The program will provide a printer for essential printing. (ie, a paper for a class that has to be printed).

Telephones:

There are no telephones in dorm rooms. You will be provided with a cell phone with a sim card and some initial minutes for the semester, if you do not bring your own. (This is included in the program cost.) Phone cards are easily purchased at most vendors in Ghana, and it is possible now to get inexpensive smart phones in Ghana. Many Ghanaians have I-phones.

The major telecommunications companies are MTN, Tigo and Vodafone. AT&T phone cards are not used in Ghana. Professor Patterson will be carrying a cell phone at all times for emergencies. Students should make sure to carry her number with them at all times while in Ghana (see "Emergencies" section).

Carrying your cell phone is strongly suggested! They allow you to communicate if you are lost or in an emergency. They also enable you to make arrangements with friends about meeting places. Calling cards bought in Ghana are relatively cheap.

Another way to communicate with the US by phone is having a family member or friend from the US use a prepaid phone card, which can be purchased from grocery and convenience stores. Have them ask for a card with low rates to Africa, and calls will cost between 10-15 cents per minute. (A couple of websites are www.callingcards.com or www.africancallingcards.com.) Another great way to communicate is by using video chat on Skype (www.skype.com). Most students found this to be the best form of communication, as it was free and the internet in the classroom was relatively reliable.

Commented [AP7]: CC students—chime in

Commented [AP8]: Katie and Krista: Can you clarify on the phones and especially What's App?

Past groups have found that the cell phones they received in Ghana were very useful in calling home. The rates for international calls were reasonable and, because minutes were so easily acquired, students used this cell phone service as their primary means of international communication. A 2011 student said: "I brought over an international cell phone to call home but regretted it as my Tigo phone worked great!"

Time:

Ghana is 4 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time in the U.S. until Daylight Saving Time ends at the beginning of November, and then there is a 5 hour difference. Ghana is in Greenwich Mean Time year-round.

Mail:

Mail service to and from Ghana is unpredictable. From the US to Ghana usually takes 7-10 days; in the other direction it may take longer. Occasionally, curious postal workers open letters, and occasionally letters disappear.

You can send letters to your friends inexpensively, but packages are very expensive to ship. Receiving letters at the Institute is reliable, but packages will usually be delivered to the Accra North station near Nkrumah Circle. Exorbitant customs fees based on the declared value will often be demanded here, but courtesy, patience, negotiation, and 'samples' from your package may bring down the price. Many students have preferred not to receive packages while in Ghana, as the hassle and expense of actually getting the parcel can be too much. Other students however, received packages on a fairly regular basis, and without too much trouble. It's kind of hit or miss with the postal service in Ghana.

Emergencies:

Professor Patterson will have a cell phone with her at all times on which you and your parents can usually reach her. The phone numbers will be given out this semester and will be printed on your emergency card, which you should carry at all times. In the event of an emergency, try first to contact Prof. Patterson by phone. If you are unable to contact her in Ghana, please feel free to call the Calvin College Off-Campus Programs office, 616-526-6382 or 616-526-6551 during office hours (or the Director's home -- 616.526.6369-- at other times). Though emergencies are rare, Calvin is experienced at responding to them, and we will do all that it can to help.

Additionally, Prof. Patterson will live on campus, a 3 minute drive or 10 minute walk from the International Student Hostel. You will visit her flat often for "communal meals." And you should know that if you ever need her assistance (or her family's assistance—Her husband Neil lived in Ghana, Senegal, and Zambia and knows a lot of stuff) you can contact us.

Textbooks:

Textbooks and novels are inexpensive in Ghana, but not always available. Most textbooks, other than novels, should be purchased before you leave for Ghana, online, etc. Be prepared to share your textbooks with other people. (You may want to arrange with other people in your group if you want to share books and costs. Two people to a book is a good number, but if you choose this, you may have to work ahead to get assignments completed on time.)

For Dr. Patterson's classes, she will ensure that you know the books before leaving the US and she will provide PDFs for any articles used.

For the Ghana semester program, textbook costs are generally very low. In past semesters, the textbooks

required have been provided or can be purchased at a low cost in Ghana. Also, bear in mind that course textbook for the University of Ghana classes will not be provided until you arrive in Ghana. For some classes, there may not be books, only handouts or lecture notes.

Libraries:

Some books and other resources are available at the main university library, where you can obtain borrowing privileges with a passport picture and your student ID. If a book is required for a course, it is likely *not* to be available here. It is difficult to find the materials listed in the card catalog since many students need to use the same books. Some books are 'hidden' by students for their private use, and occasionally pages will be missing.

Studying and Homework:

Quiet places for study can be hard to find. Though some students have reported that the dorms were crowded and noisy, others have said they were quiet and a good place to study. Additionally, the Calvin College classroom in the Institute of African Studies is open during business hours and it is quiet and air-conditioned. If neither of those locations prove adequate, the campus library is another option.

Laundry:

There are laundry rooms on each floor of ISH Hall. These rooms do not have washing machines or dryers, but four big sinks for handwashing. This means that yes, laundry in Ghana is done the old fashion way, by hand. A clothesline is provided to dry your laundry in the building's courtyard. Some students in the past have also opted to do their laundry in large buckets in the outside courtyard or on their dorm porch.

There are also several laundry services available on campus. The closest can be found in the dorm directly across from Legon Hall. Here, someone will wash your clothes in a washer and dryer (instead of by hand). They wash all of the clothes in hot water, and usually get them back to you in a timely manner. The cost is determined by weight (roughly 3 GHC/kilogram). An average load can be roughly \$5.

Meals:

You can eat in one of the university cafeterias on campus where rice, yams, bread, beans, plantain and fufu (pounded cassava and yam served with stew) are staples, or at nearby privately-owned restaurants, which are somewhat more expensive but offer a more varied menu. Vendors on-campus sell a wide variety of Ghanaian foods, as well as fresh fruits, peanuts—called groundnuts—and other foods. For health reasons, it is best to eat only fruit that can be peeled, peanuts, and prepared foods served hot immediately after cooking. Chinese and Indian restaurants can be found off campus, as well as pizza, hamburgers, and ice cream.

Vegetarian dishes are not as easy to find on campus, although you can ask for some dishes 'without meat.' Vegan might be even more difficult, since even if it is veggies it may have been cooked with dried fish or fish sauce.

In terms of gluten free, this is tricky too, because often spices include monosodium glutamate (MSG). If you ask about gluten free at some restaurants, they may not know what you are talking about (unless it is a restaurant that caters to Westerners).

You will not be able to cook in the dorms unless you have a Ghanaian roommate who brings his/her appliances (microwave, stove, refrigerator).

TRAVEL

Travel In and Around Accra:

Transportation to Accra is arranged at the main gate of the University, near the Institute of African Studies. Taxis are the most expensive way to travel, but are quick and convenient. Less expensive are the minivans (“tro-tros”) which run frequently to destinations announced by their drivers and “mates.” Once you arrive in Accra you will learn where the tro-tro parks are for the return trip to campus. Although you’ll quickly get to know the city, some helpful places to start exploring include:

- *Max Mart* - A Western-style grocery store stocking many British and American goods (in case you forgot something). Located near the barracks and “37” (a tro-tro station). There is a coffee bar on the 2nd floor with good lattes and a comfortable place to study.
- *Game* - A Western style store with American and British goods; larger (and potentially cheaper) than Max Mart and Koala; some have compared it to Target. This opened in 2007 at the Accra shopping mall at Tetteh Quarshie Circle (Yes, a real shopping mall!)
- *Shoprite* - A South African grocery store chain found throughout Africa, the “Wal-mart” of African chains. This opened at the mall in 2007.
- *Osu* - A section of town with many restaurants and stores catering to Europeans. An expensive area of town, but interesting to visit. The *Koala* store here also stocks foreign foods and other items. In Osu you will also find a great burger restaurant, an Irish pub, and many nightclubs.
- *Jamestown* - A rougher area of town where you must travel in a group, this is an interesting, though poor, area of the city. Here you can find a large market and access to a beach.
- *Downtown* - See Independence Square and Arch, the ocean, and visit the Accra Stadium, where lively soccer games are held on Sundays, or find the British Consul with its large library.
- *Nkrumah Circle* - A major tro tro station that can connect you to many other areas of the city, region, and country. Here you can also find an art market with an overwhelming supply of paintings, wood carvings, clothing and brass moldings.
- *Teshie* - An area of beachfront hotels and restaurants. This area also provides access to transportation throughout the country.

Independent Travel:

There may be a little time at the end of the term (after exams) for travel around Ghana independently. If you plan to travel to another country, you need to plan ahead and get your visas very early. Always travel with a companion so that you will have help and care in case of illness or emergency. Ghana has very little crime and crime is taken seriously by Ghanaians, but you should nevertheless be on guard against pick-pockets. Outside of Ghana, where you are less familiar with the surroundings, be especially alert. Inform Professor Patterson of your travel plans. If you are unavoidably delayed in returning to the study center, telephone Prof. Patterson on her cell phone as soon as possible. If you leave Ghana for personal travel, it is your responsibility to make sure you have the necessary visa for re-entry into Ghana.

Re-entry visas are best acquired before you enter Ghana, but you can decide on this when you are going through the initial paperwork for entering the country. During the time of independent travel however, many students find that staying in Ghana and spending the week on a beach resort is both relaxing and affordable.

Visitors from Home:

As you make your plans, you may be thinking of sharing the experience with friends and family by inviting them to visit you in Ghana. Calvin's Off-Campus Programs Office has found that it's helpful to have a formal policy about the role of visitors in our off-campus programs, which we reprint here:

While we understand the desire of family and friends to visit students who are away from home and campus for a significant length of time, such visits can be disruptive and therefore harmful to group cohesiveness if not done with sensitivity to other students and the program director. The following policies and procedures are based on our experience with such situations.

Any visitor to a Calvin off-campus program must notify the program director at least 3 weeks in advance. (Prof. Patterson; aspatter@sewanee.edu)

Family and friends should plan their visit to coincide with vacation and/or other periods of free time for students. If this is not possible, family and friends are urged not to visit at times when group excursions are planned. Dates for group excursions will most likely not be finalized until the first month in Ghana.

Students whose family or friends are visiting while classes are in session are not excused from classes or program excursions in order to be with visiting family or friends.

Visitors may not stay in the student's room. Visitors should stay in a hotel or youth hostel.

If you plan to have visitors, they must complete a waiver and release form and give it to the Program Director on the first day of arrival. The waiver is available online under Parent Resources at: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/off-campus>.

Recommendations from past students:

- JazzTones (Ask around for it; it has moved locations since the guidebooks were published. Very chic café-like atmosphere, also live jazz music on Wednesday nights.)
- + 233. Another Jazz Club and about a ten minute drive from campus. A very chic atmosphere and reasonably priced.
- Paloma restaurant--same complex as Champs, outdoor restaurant with live music, best place to get Alfredo pasta, which is very hard to come by
- Makola Market (market by main Accra station)
- Circle Market (market by Circle TroTro station)
- Osu is fun to explore and visit anytime of the day.
- The Bush Canteen, located on campus. Traditional Ghanaian food stand with rice dishes, fufu, kenkey, and red red. NOTE: Students from the 2012 had issue with the food quality here: eat with caution!
- The Coffee Cue--on campus cafe that serves breakfast and lunch. Try the oatmeal with milk and sugar or order a drink of fresh pineapple juice or iced coffee.

- Ryan's Irish Pub. Authentic and chic Irish Pub. Although a bit more expensive than other places, this has proved a very popular place for students in the past.
- Jerry's is a small drinking spot relatively close to campus. Although nothing special, it is at a convenient location.
- Pizza Inn. Tuesday night two for one pizza deals!
- Chicken Inn. Right next to Pizza Inn, and with great chicken club sandwiches.
- Tantra. A nightclub in Ghana. Although a bit pricey it had a great atmosphere.
- Bella Roma-European club in Osu. Very expensive but very classy. Plays a good mix of American and Ghanaian music.
- Escobar. A smaller nightclub with a great modern ambiance.
- Papaye. They have pretty good fast food, including cheese burgers, fries and club sandwiches.
- La Gazette: This place is amazing! It's a small French bakery/restaurant with good bread, ice cream, and the most amazing desserts (located on Spintex Road just across from Papaye)
- Smoothy's-Delicious smoothies! Located in Osu on the main street. Great atmosphere and delicious smoothies. Be sure to get the mango and avocado ones at the beginning of the semester while they are still in season. Also, FREE INTERNET!
- Shangri La Hotel Pool: It's a few tro-tro stops from the university (towards Accra) and only about 5 Ghana Cedi's to swim. It's a nice place to relax; well maintained. Good pizza and good service.
- Osu food court has deep dish pizzas and a nice bakery with coffee (cheaper than Max Mart)
- Max Mart: we would go there to study often, have some coffee and get some work done in the air conditioning. Their sandwiches are the best in Accra.
- The Lebanese restaurant in the Niagara hotel. Very popular in past semesters.
- French Cultural Center: They often show movies or have live bands come in and play.
- Although several seamstresses regularly visit the International Hostel, the 2011 students recommend a seamstress in the Bush Canteen.
- Students tended to attend church on campus, often at the Legon Interdenominational Church. There are also Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, and other services on campus.
- Football (soccer) games at the stadium in downtown Accra are always fun.
- Across Liberty Dr. (The main road in front of the University), there are a bunch of small food stands and hangout spots for normal everyday Ghanaians, all within walking distance.
- Thyme Out is a cool place to go "out" on campus; good Asian food.
- Cinderella's. (A club.)
- The Basement is a very nice restaurant on campus in the Central Cafeteria building.
- Odo Rise cafeteria in Akuafu Hall is a great place to get lunch on campus, as is Farmer's Kitchen just outside Akuafu.
- The plays put on by the Theatre department are very good.

AUTHORITY AND DISCIPLINE

Counseling and Support

Professor Patterson is happy to help students in their efforts to understand and adapt to Ghanaian culture. Support is also available when students encounter unexpected difficulties, such as sickness, accidents, or unpleasant news from home. There will be several times to informally get together with Prof. Patterson dur-

ing the semester. These can be opportunities to unwind and decompress about your experiences. In addition, the group will have weekly “communal meals” during which we can chat, joke, and spend time with Patterson’s family (2 girls and husband).

When, in the judgment of the director, the student’s family, academic advisor, or college administrators should be notified about a student experiencing difficulty, the director will do so. Normally, this will occur anytime the student is involved in an accident or is hospitalized, is in danger of losing academic credit or of being dismissed from the program, exhibits signs of prolonged depression, or is found guilty of disciplinary offenses at the University of Ghana.

The program director has the responsibility for maintaining order and an atmosphere within which the students can feel secure and make progress toward the program’s objectives. On those rare occasions when a student’s behavior disrupts good order, endangers the reputation and good standing of the program, or seriously affects group safety or morale, the director will intervene.

Intervention usually occurs in two stages. First, a student is counseled about the disruptive behavior and warned. If the behavior persists, the student may be placed on a probationary status or dismissed from the program. The student is given the opportunity to present his/her own case to the director, but the director has the authority to make the final decision, in consultation with the relevant authorities at Calvin and/or Sewanee. Serious infractions may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Involuntary Dismissal from the Program:

Any student dismissed from the program by the director may submit a written account of the circumstances of his/her dismissal for inclusion in his/her personal file. For Calvin students, the program director is required to inform the Office of Off-Campus Programs and the Office of the Registrar of the dismissal and its reason. For Sewanee students, the Office of the Dean and the Associate Dean of Global Education will be notified. No refunds are given to students dismissed from the program. Any unpaid balance on the student’s account will be due and payable at the time of dismissal.

Keeping Safe on Campus:

Calvin College will do its best to provide a safe and healthy environment for you during your off-campus program, but we cannot eliminate all dangers and risks. Listen to and heed the advice of persons connected with the program—the Health Services travel nurses, your instructor, and persons invited by Calvin to assist in your orientation in Ghana. These people are experts—take advantage of their knowledge! By following their advice, you can lessen the chances of an incident, accident, or illness.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: A SUMMARY

Food and Drink:

- Eat fruits and vegetables only if they are peeled; if you eat prepared food, make sure it is served *hot*.
- Drink only bottled, bagged (sealed), or boiled water. Better yet: Get a Sawyer Water bottle with filter!
- Don’t accept bottled drinks that have been opened out of your sight. Ask the server to bring the

- bottle to your table unopened. (“Bottled” water has been known to come from the kitchen faucet!)
- If you are of legal age and choose to drink alcoholic beverages, be aware of your limits and of your heightened vulnerability. Your reflexes will be slower and you are more likely to appear to be a good target for pick-pocketing, etc. Statistics show that for a high percentages of incidents that occur on study abroad programs (e.g., theft, sexual assault), alcohol use/abuse was a factor.
 - Keep an eye on your beverage (As in the US, drugs can be slipped into it while you’re gone.)
 - Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer.
 - If you are uncertain about the sanitation of specific food or drink, it’s best to avoid it.

Money and Other Valuables:

- Most crimes are those of opportunity (such as purse/bag snatching and pick pocketing).
- Keep your passport, credit cards, insurance card(s) and money in a money belt or neck pouch that is tucked away under your clothes except when you need it. While in Ghana, you may leave these items with your professor for safekeeping at the Institute for African Studies.
- Be aware of your surroundings; don’t get so involved in looking at the sights that you become an easy mark for a pickpocket or mugger.
- Tro-tro stations and crowded markets attract pickpockets. Be especially vigilant at such places.
- Travel light. The more luggage you have, the more vulnerable you are to theft
- Mark your luggage both inside and out with your name and a contact phone number, and mark it distinctively, so that you can spot it quickly as yours if someone tries to walk off with it.
- Have at least two sources of money (Credit card/debit card) in addition to cash, and keep them separately. If you are robbed of one source, you will still have a way to get money.
- Make photocopies of your passport ID page, credit cards, tickets and other travel documents. Carry a copy with you, and leave one at home, too, as a back-up. Also, scan and email a copy to yourself.
- Leave expensive jewelry and other valuables at home.
- Don’t carry or flash excessive amounts of cash.
- Alcohol use makes it more difficult for you to be aware of your surroundings!

Travel and Sightseeing

- Violent crime is rare in Ghana, but you must take reasonable precautions as you would in any large city: avoid traveling late at night, avoid traveling alone, and use common sense. Women should not travel alone in some parts of the city, even during the day. Petty theft is a problem, so protect your money and belongings. White skin is often equated with being rich; therefore, it is important to take precautions such as locking the door to your room, even when you are in the room. Always walk in groups at night, even on campus. In general, follow the advice of the Program Director and University and APMC staff.
- Campus security is seriously understaffed. Their policy is, “You are responsible for your own safety, on and off-campus.” Don’t count on their assistance, but do treat them with respect.
- Women should never travel alone, away from familiar areas. Verbal remarks and *cat calling* are very common in Ghana, requiring women to be direct in potential responses.
- Read up on the area that you’re planning to visit; the more knowledgeable you appear, the less you look like a potential target.
- Complete the Independent Travel form before you travel on your own, so that your instructor has as much information as possible about your plans. If your plans are somewhat indefinite when you

- leave on a trip, keep in touch with the instructor or someone at home by phone or e-mail.
- Ask staff at your hotel or hostel about areas to avoid; they are usually reliable sources of local information.
- *Follow your instincts*—if you hail a taxi, ask about price before getting in, and negotiate with the taxi driver. If you feel uncomfortable about the driver, send the taxi on its way.
- *Practice situational awareness*—Pay attention to what is occurring around you.
- **Avoid overuse of Alcohol!!! For most problems that occur on study abroad semester programs—thefts, muggings, sexual assault—alcohol is a factor. Alcohol use makes it more difficult to be aware of potential threats.**
- Stay on major streets as much as possible after dark. If you see people loitering in your path, turn back and head to a place where there are people around.
- Avoid giving out your name or personal information. Your name may be used to make a personalized souvenir that you will feel obligated to buy. Your personal information (phone#/address) could lead to persistent phone calls and text messages, and potential unwanted visitors.

Miscellaneous:

- Keep your cell phone and contact information for your instructor with you at all times.
- Avoid large crowds, especially if they are politically motivated. In the event of civil unrest, keep a low profile. If you are away from the group, try to contact the nearest embassy or consulate of your home country for advice.
- If you have a chronic medical condition (diabetes, asthma, food allergies, etc.), be sure you give full information to your instructor BEFORE the group leaves for Ghana, so that he/she can be helpful if needed.
- Have enough medication with you to last the semester. Avoid changing any medications prior to or during the semester. Do not stop taking your medications unless so directed by medical personnel.
- Don't take photos of military officials and/or installations.
- Credit card fraud is a problem in Ghana. If your card is lost or you suspect fraud, report it to your company immediately.

Female Students:

Female students will sometimes encounter harassment, but uncomfortable situations can usually be avoided by taking the following precautions:

- Dress conservatively. While short skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, they may also encourage unwanted attention.
- Avoid walking alone at night or in questionable neighborhoods.
- Be aware that some men from other cultures tend to mistake the friendliness of North American women for romantic interest.
- Avoid eye contact with unknown men.
- Be straightforward and firm if propositioned; you may have to deny propositions multiple times.
- Recognize that the stereotype that American women are morally loose and uninhibited about sex is quite prevalent.

Medical Emergencies:

- You must have medical insurance that covers you outside North America. If your own policy doesn't cover you outside North America, check with the Off-Campus Programs Office (Calvin) or the Sewanee Study Abroad office about policies that do provide this and can be purchased on a short-term basis.
- Be sure you know the regulations of your insurance coverage regarding prior approval for care. Keep your insurance card or a copy of it with you.
- If you require medical attention while away from home, you will be asked for payment, in cash, at the time of service. You can apply to your insurance company for reimbursement, provided you have receipts—be sure to get them! Your bill may be less than your policy's deductible, however.
- If you have a medical condition that should be known when receiving medical attention, wear a med-alert necklace or bracelet. Also, be sure that the Program Director is aware of your condition.

HIV and Study Abroad:

Since AIDS is more prevalent in Africa than in North America, we include this information from the Centers for Disease Control about how to avoid becoming infected with HIV (the virus that causes AIDS).

AIDS, the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency virus (HIV). AIDS breaks down the body's immune system and makes the body prone to infections such as tuberculosis and pneumonia and cancers that may be fatal. There are no known vaccines to prevent AIDS. AIDS is a chronic illness.

The World Health Organization states that "AIDS is not spread by daily and routine activities such as sitting next to someone, shaking hands, or working with people. Nor is it spread by insects or insect bites. And AIDS is not spread by swimming pools, food, cups, public transportation, plates, toilets, water, air, touching, hugging, coughing or sneezing". It is spread by sexual contact and exposure to infected blood.

Getting Medical Care:

If you need medical care overseas, ask Professor Patterson for recommended physicians, hospitals and dentists. When you seek treatment, make clear that you expect high standards of hygiene (use of disposable gloves by care givers, use of new needles in packages). Take a friend or Professor Patterson with you, so that you both can ask questions about health-care treatment.

Blood Transfusions: While many countries such as the US, Canada, and parts of Europe have mandatory screening of donated blood for the HIV virus, not all do. In some locales, determining the availability of HIV-screened blood and blood products may be difficult. Because of obvious uncertainties, consider these precautions:

- If you are injured or ill while abroad, avoid or postpone any blood transfusion unless it is absolutely necessary.
- If you do need blood, try to ensure that screened blood is used.

Injections: Be sure any medical facility uses only sterilized or freshly opened needles and medical instruments. The Centers for Disease Control recommend that diabetics or other persons who require routine or frequent injections carry a supply of syringes and needles sufficient for their stay abroad. Keep in mind that carrying needles and syringes without a prescription may be illegal in some countries. It is suggested to take a note from your doctor.

Suggestions From Past Students:

- “Waakye lunch”
- “ Keep a journal and write about the little things you won't remember, also take lots of pictures with your Ghanaian friends you make or meet for only a day, even if it's awkward.”
- “Invest in people’s lives. For real.”
- “Take risks and be open to new things.”
- “Travel by tro tro whenever possible... it’s a much cheaper and more satisfying experience.”
- “Fan choco and fan ice--the most refreshing Ghana experience.”
- “Take videos!”
- “Be in constant prayer, asking God to help you discern, discern, discern.”
- “Go to Escape Three Points at some point during free travel.”
- “Refrain from using social media a lot. Soak up all the time you have there and be intentional!”

Notes...