

# A GUIDE FOR **STUDENTS OF COLOR ABROAD**

Studying abroad can open up your world in ways you may never have thought possible. For students of color, studying abroad may simply require a bit of planning and a few questions as you choose a program, but the BW Study Abroad Center is here to help. How racial and ethnic identities are defined and understood vary by culture. While you're abroad, you may be part of a racial or ethnic majority or minority for the first time in your life. Or, you may have to think about your identity in a new way in light of the local norms and expectations, in ways that other students with different backgrounds may not.

Understanding the environment that you would enter in a study abroad program is very important. This should not, however, prevent you from taking advantage of the rich experiences offered through studying abroad. You may find that confronting and learning to interpret the host country's ethnic and racial perspectives in a new context can help you grow and ultimately feel more secure with your identity. We encourage you to have early discussions with a Study Abroad Advisor about race and ethnicity, which can help you develop a realistic understanding of how your identity might play into the experience in different locations.

## **RESEARCH OUR PROGRAM OPTIONS**

### **INDEPENDENT OR FACULTY-LED PROGRAMS**

If you choose an Independent program, you would live for a semester or year abroad in another country and take classes at the host university. If you choose a Faculty Led program, you would take a class at BW and travel as a cohort with two faculty leaders to a country for 2-3 weeks at the end of the semester.

### **VISIT OUR OFFICE**

When you're ready and prepared to discuss the topic of studying abroad, come and talk to the Study Abroad office. Our team will be able to give you information on the basics of studying abroad, the breadth of programs available to you, transferability of academic credits, location-specific information and travel advice. Take in all of the information, review the opportunities that fit your academic goals, and discuss possibilities with family, friends and maybe even some other students of color you know who have studied abroad too.

## **SELECT A PROGRAM**

### **LAWS OF STUDY ABROAD DESTINATION**

Put your safety first. Be sure to know the laws of the country you are traveling to. Before you leave, familiarize yourself with the customs and laws of your host country. Many countries have laws and protections in place governing race relations and discrimination.

### **HOUSING**

For our study abroad programs, there are three different varieties of housing depending on the program—apartments, on-campus housing, or with a host family. If you choose to live with a host family, be aware of the culture within the country to gauge the views your host family may or may not have.

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How is my ethnicity and/or race perceived in my host country?
- Are there stereotypes associated with my race/ethnicity?
- Does my host country have a history of ethnic tension, prejudice/discrimination or acceptance/inclusion with my ethnic group?
- Are there laws in the host country governing ethnic relations? Race relations?
- What protections are offered to ethnic or racial minorities?
- Am I going to be treated the same way in my host country as I am in the US?
- Will I be in the majority or minority for the first time?
- How will my personal ethnic or racial identity shape my experience abroad?
- How will I react if I encounter racism or other discriminatory behavior?
- How will I feel if I am the only minority in a cohort of other US Americans in my program?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### U.S. EMBASSY & CONSULATE INFORMATION

If you need help, contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. The nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate may be able to help if you run into problems overseas, especially if you feel you cannot approach local police or have had difficulties already. Consular officers will protect your privacy and will not make generalizations, assumptions, or pass judgement. Let them know about any inappropriate treatment or harassment you experience. If you are arrested, immediately ask the police to notify the U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

### EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- Diversity Abroad diversity and inclusion guide for racial and ethnic minorities (<https://www.diversityabroad.com/article/diversity-and-inclusion-abroad-guide>)
- Black and Abroad provides stories, tips and journeys from a community of black travelers (c)
- Transitions Abroad: Top 10 reasons to study abroad as an African American student (<https://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/study/articles/studyjul.shtml>)
- Hispanic Network Magazine: Top 10 reasons to study abroad as a Hispanic American student (<https://www.hnmagazine.com/2017/04/10-reasons-hispanic-american-students-study-abroad/>)
- Personal stories from students of diverse backgrounds who have studied abroad (<https://www.ifsa-butler.org/see-yourself-abroad/#section-5>)
- US State Department Country Human Rights Reports (<https://www.state.gov/reports-bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/>)

Adapted from Case Western Reserve University, Georgetown University, NAESA: Association of International Educators, Princeton University, and Yale University.



**QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!**

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