SMITH COLLEGE IN PARIS

2015-2016 STUDENT HANDBOOK

Photo by Martine Gantrel
## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE SMITH COLLEGE PROGRAM IN PARIS

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PART A: PARIS INFORMATION

TENTATIVE 2015-2016 CALENDAR

(The French universities’ calendars will become available in August 2015)

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<tr>
<th>Orientation Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, August 28 – Friday, September 11:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, August 28, 2015: All students arrive in Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, August 29: 10:15 a.m.: First meeting, Reid Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, August 30: 6:15 p.m.: Arrival of host families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, August 31: Acclimatization in your new home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, September 11: 9 a.m.: Orientation classes begin at Reid Hall</td>
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<td>Noon: Orientation classes end</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, September 14 – Late December: Courses begin at Smith and Consortium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, September 14: Courses begin at Smith and Consortium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courses begin at Paris 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-September: Courses begin at Paris 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, December 19: Winter vacation begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, January 3, 2016: Winter vacation ends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, January 4: Optional interterm activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>During the month of January: Certain examinations at Paris 4 and Paris 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-January – Late May: Spring Semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, January 18: Regular classes begin at Smith &amp; Consortium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late March – Early April: Spring vacation at Smith &amp; Consortium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, May 28, 2016: Close of the Smith program in Paris</td>
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</table>

Each French university sets its own calendar, which is usually published shortly before the beginning of the fall semester, in mid-August. Smith students are expected to attend all class meetings, and must not make return or vacation travel plans until the definitive calendars of the various universities have been published. The Director’s supervision of the group begins on arrival in Paris, on August 28, 2015 and extends to the end of the Smith program, on May 28, 2016 (or, in exceptional cases of academic necessity, at a slightly later date). Neither the Director nor Smith College is responsible for students prior to the opening of the orientation session, on August 28, 2018, during regular vacation periods, or after the official close of the program on May 28.
Bienvenue dans le programme de Smith College à Paris!

This Student Handbook is intended to offer assistance as you make the decisions that will shape your experience abroad. As Directors of the program, and with the help of our wonderful Associate Director, we will be available for guidance and assistance throughout the academic year, but it is up to you to make the most of your year in France.

The opportunity to spend a year abroad is the opportunity to explore another culture. We urge you to look around, listen, reflect, and ward off the spell of received opinion. We urge you to go to France with an open mind, to explore an environment different from your own, and to muster a sense of irony as you endure certain inconveniences—transportation strikes, for example—that may occasionally interrupt your daily routine. We urge you to try to put your own habits and preferences into perspective. You may be grouchy in the morning, but in France not saying bonjour is not acceptable; you may want only peanut butter for breakfast, but in France real butter is better and more readily available. We urge you to see your year abroad as an adventure that will cause you to discover new ways of living and learning. The primary objective of study abroad is study, abroad, but you may find that your intellectual experiences, like your emotional experiences, will come from a wide variety of sources both within and without the classroom. This year, in short, is likely to change your life forever.

Living with a French family is at the heart of the Smith in Paris program. In order to make a success of it, you will have to adjust to your family’s routines and to respect their habits and preferences when it comes to meals, to the use of the kitchen, the bathroom, the phone, and to smoking and listening to music and making noise. Only by attempting to adjust your routines to those of your host family will you learn better to appreciate certain aspects of French culture—as well as certain aspects of your own.

Committing yourself to a year of study away from the United States probably means taking greater responsibility for your own education and life than you have in the past. We will gladly help you make informed decisions about your academic program and personal welfare while serving as liaisons between Smith College and local French academic and governmental institutions. But the success of your academic endeavors will lie largely in your own hands.

Your year abroad will provide a great deal of personal and intellectual growth. It assumes that you are capable of making reasoned and informed decisions, and that you will hold yourself accountable for the consequences of your actions. As Directors, we will do whatever we can to make this year rewarding, enjoyable, and memorable by challenging you to do your best as a scholar and to be at your best as a guest in a foreign country and as a citizen of the world.

We hope you have a wonderful year in Paris!

Peter Bloom and Martine Gantrel
Student Visa

No more than ninety days before departure, but well before mid-July, you must apply in person for an extended stay visa from the French Consulate nearest your home. Smith College and Smith in Paris will provide letters to assist you in doing so. You are responsible for all visa-associated fees, for understanding and abiding by the application requirements, and for assembling and submitting the application materials in accordance with the French consulate’s instructions. You will be staying in Paris at the pleasure of the French government and must therefore follow visa rules and regulations to the letter. We recommend you apply for your visa early in June. Please don’t put it off.

Once you have received your visa, scan the photo and signature page of your passport and the page containing your visa and send them via email attachment to the Associate Director, Mme Charlier, at mcharlie@smith.edu.

Packing

Do not over-pack for your year abroad. Paris is a modern city that offers everything you could possibly want or need. Clothing in Paris is expensive, but there are bargain stores and sales with prices that can seem reasonable even when converting dollars to euros. (As we prepare this Handbook, in the spring of 2015, the cost of buying euros with dollars is low. You’re in luck!) Personal care items are also available everywhere. See Part B, below, for more advice about packing.

Items to pack in your carry-on (NOT in your checked luggage):

- Your passport and visa, and photocopies copy of each (in separate locations).
- Your ATM card (from your US bank), which will allow you to withdraw money at the airport. Check with your bank prior to departure to make sure that your card is authorized for withdrawals overseas.
- An extra 100 €, for incidental expenses during the first days of your stay in Paris, including transportation from the airport.
- A change of clothes and basic toiletries, in case your luggage is lost.
- All prescription medications (including birth control), in their original packaging.
- Your laptop computer.

Other items to bring to Paris in your checked luggage:

A few extra passport-size ID photos, for your own use. (On arrival in Paris you will need to make extra French ID photos, at the machine at the Vavin métro stop, for example; French photos will be needed for various administrative documents.)

- A small gift for your host family.
- A small supply of over-the-counter medications as needed.
Shipping

It is possible to ship packages from the US to Paris via the Post Office or private carriers (Fedex, DHL) at reasonable expense, but you should know that there have been repeated incidents of items that do not arrive or packages that have been pilfered en route. Also: private companies may pick up your things at home, but may also deliver them only to Charles de Gaulle airport—which will mean an inconvenient schlep. Our recommendation is to pack smartly and to consider paying excess baggage charges for an additional suitcase you bring with you to Paris. More important: look critically at everything that you deem essential for Paris, then leave half of it behind. Remember: apart from certain prescription medications, for which you will have to make special arrangements, everything you will need is available in Paris in one form or another.

ARRIVAL IN PARIS

Day of Arrival

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements in order to arrive in Paris on or before Friday, August 28, 2015. You will spend your first night in Paris, at the program’s expense, at the Hôtel Pullman Paris Montparnasse, where you should go on arrival. It is opposite the Gare Montparnasse, at 19, rue du Commandant Mouchotte (phone: 011 331 44 36 44 36).

The Hôtel Pullman Montparnasse is a large, comfortable hotel that is a mere ten-minute walk from the Smith Center at Reid Hall. If you arrive at the hotel before noon, your room may not be ready, in which case you may leave your luggage at the hotel and come to Reid Hall. The Director will be there to welcome you. By order of arrival at the hotel, you will be assigned a roommate and a room with two twin beds.

Because you are likely to be jetlagged, please set your alarm or order a wake-up call for Saturday morning no later than 9 a.m. After your morning ablutions, you should pack your bags and bring them down to the lobby. The hotel will store the bags for the day, and will return them to you in the evening when your host families come to pick you up. You will be walking from the hotel to Reid Hall (a ten-minute walk), where we will provide a nice breakfast. (Do not have breakfast at the hotel unless you wish to pay for it yourself.) You will spend the rest of the day in briefings and completing a number of administrative procedures.

If you arrive in Paris before August 28, you must make your own arrangements for lodging. You should of course feel free to contact Professor Peter Bloom, the first-semester Director, and make arrangements to visit the Smith Center at Reid Hall. Professor Bloom will be in the office from Monday through Friday, August 24-28.

Transportation from the airport

Bus: The best and least cumbersome way to get to Hôtel Pullman Paris Montparnasse is on the Air France bus, le car Air France, which you will find at both Charles de Gaulle and Orly airports.
The bus goes to the Gare Montparnasse, which is directly across the rue du Commandant Mouchotte from the Pullman Montparnasse. The fare from CDG is about 19 € (euros). You should reserve a place on the bus online, prior to leaving the US, at http://www.lescarsairfrance.com/en/tickets-and-prices/all-our-products.html#c25 [you will want “one way, CDG→Paris” or “one way, Orly→Paris”]. Doing so guarantees a seat, saves money, and removes the need to find euros in cash on the spot. You will see the hotel as you step off the bus at the Gare Montparnasse.

**Taxi:** The fare from CDG to the Gare Montparnasse is approximately 65 €; from Orly, approximately 40 €. If you are on the same flight as other students, it may make sense to share a taxi—although the driver will usually not take more than three passengers, and may not have room for luggage for more than two.

**Advice:** There are other ways to travel from CDG and Orly to Paris (the city buses or the suburban rail lines RER and OrlyVal), but only if you are easily able to carry all your luggage would it make sense to consider them. If possible, you should try to manage your luggage (two moderate suitcases or a suitcase and a backpack, and an over-the-shoulder bag) such that you can move it from one place to the next, for a short distance, on your own.

**Business Meeting**

Our first meeting will take place at Reid Hall on Saturday, August 29, at 10:15 a.m. We will serve coffee and croissants (real French croissants!), and begin to discuss urgent issues of personal health and safety, integration into French family life, public transportation, and cell phones. You will complete the paperwork necessary for your residence permit (carte de séjour) and your ATM card (carte bancaire). If all goes well, you will also receive your transportation card (Carte Imagine-R). You must bring your passport and visa to this meeting along with a photocopy of each document.

Experience suggests that you will feel overwhelmed by so much information, surtout que tout sera présenté en français, but you will hear much of it repeated over the early weeks of the year.
Comprehensive Fee

The comprehensive fee paid to Smith College includes:

- all tuition and fees related to instruction and enrollment at the Parisian universities;
- academic advising and assistance with university enrollment;
- housing in a French home;
- meals in your homestay, which include breakfast seven days per week, dinner five or six days per week, and lunch one day per week;
- a meal stipend for six lunches and one or two dinners per week when classes are in session;
- initial linguistic and cultural orientation;
- all expenses during scheduled program excursions and visits;
- a 40 € stipend to cover the cost of a simple téléphone portable;
- personal liability insurance (responsabilité civile);
- study abroad medical insurance;
- medical evacuation and repatriation coverage;
- Carte Imagine-R (year-long public transportation pass) and
- Carte Louvre (giving privileged access to the world’s greatest museum)

Students are responsible for all personal expenses including international airfare, books and supplies, phone calls, medical expenses, and personal travel.

Money

Spending. Throughout the year in Paris, an expensive city indeed, you will be entirely responsible for managing your personal finances. The amounts you spend on clothing, telephone calls, and travel will depend entirely on your own choices. We urge you to keep an eye on your spending and your bank account, particularly in the early weeks of the academic year. Restaurants and cafés are expensive! Save as much money as you can for special occasions and holiday travel.

Books and supplies: approximately 100 € per semester on books, course packs, and academic supplies.

Phone calls: approximately 20 € to 30 € per month for cell phone use. We urge you to be vigilant, and use Skype or iChat as much as possible.

Banking: The Associate Director will open a bank account for you at the nearby Banque Nationale de Paris (BNP-Paribas), which has branches everywhere in France. At our first meeting, you will complete the formalities with representatives of the BNP, and receive your carte bancaire (ATM card) and checkbook shortly thereafter. The program will deposit to your account approximately 400 € to cover your lunches for the first eight weeks; you will be able to access this money on receiving your carte bancaire. Thereafter, every eight weeks, the program will electronically transfer your meal stipends to your BNP account. See General Information for advice about accessing money abroad. See also Part B, below, for further advice about finances while abroad.
Language Pledge

By accepting the offer to participate in the 2015-2016 Smith Program Abroad in Paris, you have pledged to speak French at all times: at Reid Hall (in class, in the library, in the common spaces); during excursions and other program events; with the Director and Associate Director, with your host family, and—most challenging—with the other students in the program. If you abide by the pledge, you will make remarkable and rapid progress, and you will thereby enhance your entire experience abroad. We insist that you obey the pledge not in order to make your life difficult, but in order to improve your French. Your fluency—your veritable passport to life in France—will dramatically increase if you abide by the pledge.

Especially at the beginning of the year, you will find it tiring, and frustrating, to speak only French. If you stick with it, however, your efforts and perseverance will be richly rewarded. Please take the language pledge seriously. If you simply cannot do so, please honor those around you who do.

Orientation Session: Monday, August 31 – Friday, September 11, 2015

The orientation session provides an intensive and rewarding initiation to academic, political, and cultural life in France. Orientation courses will touch upon important aspects of modern French culture and politics, provide you with the critical historical backdrop necessary for understanding contemporary events, and attend to your skills reading and speaking French. During orientation you will also visit cultural and architectural monuments in and around Paris and explore the various quartiers of the city.

The Session d’orientation is intensive. You will have classes and scheduled activities from Monday through Friday. Your regular, required, first-semester language course will begin during the first week of the Session d’orientation and continue to the end of the first semester. You will be placed in one of two groups depending on your level in French as assessed by your TCF score.

During the orientation session, the Associate Director will offer a mini-course on Paris pratique—on the practical aspects of negotiating student life in Paris. You will have a short guided visit to the campuses of Paris 4 and Paris 7. The Director will be available throughout the session to meet individually and with the group to discuss orientation courses and concerns, to consider academic-year courses and issues regarding university life in Paris, and to treat whatever other concerns you might have.

At the end of the orientation session, we will celebrate the occasion with a two-day excursion to a site in France of historic importance. The details of the fall 2015 excursion will be announced before the end of the spring 2015 semester.
Academic Year: Monday, September 14, 2015 – Friday, May 28, 2016

Students normally take four or, on rare occasion, five courses each semester in Paris and usually earn 16 Smith credits per semester. All Smith in Paris students take a mandatory French language course in the first semester. Your remaining courses—to be decided upon in close consultation with the Director—will be taken at Smith, at the Three-College Consortium (with Hamilton and Middlebury), at Paris 4 or Paris 7, and/or, if you are a major in one of the fields, at one of a number of arts institutions. Selected students will also take courses at Sciences Po.

Courses specific to Les Sciences à Paris

Students in the Sciences à Paris Program are full participants in the orientation activities and are normally required to take the appropriate in-house French language course in the first semester. They are also expected to enroll in the first semester seminar “Sciences comparées: pratiques et perceptions,” where the professor and guest scientists will explore the importance of intellectual and cultural context in the practice of science. A second semester course, “Pratiques des sciences à Paris,” will provide students with the opportunity to address challenges in the practice of science, and will support students engaged in scientific coursework, independent scientific projects, and internships in the sciences.

Smith and Consortium Courses

Courses at Reid Hall and at the Three-College Consortium, all taught by French professors (whose course topics will be announced in August), will begin on September 14. In the first semester, students often take the required language course at the Smith Center, an academic course at Smith, an academic course at the Three-College Consortium, and a course at Paris 4 or Paris 7. Other students take only the required language course at the Smith Center, a course at the Three-College Consortium, and two courses at Paris 4 or Paris 7. Other students take only the required language course at the Smith Center, and three courses at Paris 4 or Paris 7. You will determine your academic program in consultation with the Director during the opening weeks of the program.

University Courses

In accordance with your major field, you will be enrolled at either the Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 4) or the Université Paris Diderot (Paris 7). Some government or economics majors may also enroll at the Institut d’Études Politiques (Sciences Po).

For university courses, you must follow all requirements set by the professors. In some cases, you will be asked to complete additional written or oral assignments that will be administered by a Smith College tutor. Such assignments will work to your advantage, enabling you to avoid a situation (common to French students) in which your entire grade turns on the result of a single final examination.

Many university courses will often be offered in a format different from the one with which you are familiar. At the Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 4), you will sit in both large lecture courses
(cours magistraux) and smaller sectional meetings (travaux dirigés or TD). At the Université Paris Diderot (Paris 7), you will sit in classes, large and small, which are autonomous: some of these, not divided into cours magistraux and TD, will meet once per week for three consecutive hours.

Three aspects of the French academic experience will stand in sharp contrast to their American counterparts:

1. French students are generally more autonomous than American students with regard to how much, and how fast, they work. Few French professors give out detailed syllabi with specific weekly assignments. They more commonly present a one-paragraph course description and a three- or four-page bibliography, expecting as they do that you will take the initiative by doing the readings yourself, at a measured pace, throughout the semester. This is crucial when you have to prepare a comprehensive final exam.

2. French classrooms tend to be more teacher-centered than many classes at Smith. As at Smith, French university professors know considerably more than you do about their subjects, but they let it be known (as we warm and fuzzy Smith professors do not) that their opinions and interpretations take precedence over yours. You may miss a certain amount of "discussion"; but please remember that listening to a well-constructed lecture can be (and often is) as stimulating as participating in a discussion with your professors and peers.

3. French university coursework depends conspicuously upon strict and defined methodological approaches. An "explication de texte" or a "commentaire" requires that you follow an explicit format in completing the assigned task. Such methodological rigor may be unfamiliar to you, but the Session d'orientation and the Methodology course you will take during the first semester are meant to help you master these new techniques.

If you feel lost during the first few weeks, don’t panic, c’est normal. The Director will help you by offering advice and, as needed during the semester, by providing you with a tutor. Please remember that there is much to learn from unfamiliar circumstances. You are not in Paris to attempt to recreate the American liberal arts college experience, but rather to come to grips with and absorb a different approach. Indeed, the key to your year abroad will be adapting to something new. Navigating large lecture courses, taking notes, and synthesizing a lot of information at the end of the semester will, we believe, be a highly profitable and enriching experience.

Most of the courses of Paris 7 take place on the central campus in the 13th arrondissement. Paris 4, on the other hand, uses three main campuses. Most classes at the L1 and L2 level are offered at either the Centre Malesherbes (in the 17th) or the Centre Clignancourt (in the 18th); those at the L3 level are offered either at the main campus, "La Sorbonne" (in the 5th), or at specialized institutes such as Institut d’Histoire de l’Art or the Institut de Géographie. The campus of Sciences Po is compact and spread over several buildings in the 6th arrondissement. Travelling to classes, you will become quite expert in navigating Paris by métro and bus.
University Exams

Students at Paris-Sorbonne are usually exempted from taking final exams, but students at Paris Diderot are expected to take all final exams. It is your responsibility to learn precisely what all of your professors expect in terms of written work, oral reports, and final examinations.

Language Proficiency Testing (TCF)

On April 25, 2015, you will take the TCF (Test de connaissances du français), a standardized test of linguistic competency, the French counterpart of the TOEFL, which is intended to provide a snapshot of the current level of your language mastery. In the spring of 2016 you will take the TCF again: this will provide a snapshot of your language mastery after a year of study in France, and an official certificate of that competency, which you might want to include in your CV.

Calendars

Only when the university calendars are published will we be able to confirm the dates of your vacations. Most university courses will begin between mid- and late-September. Normally there is a one-week vacation in February, and a one-week vacation in late April and/or early May. You must not make travel plans until you have in hand the dates of your university’s vacations.

Internships

Internships on the Smith in Paris program are usually discovered by the students themselves. The director is happy to assist you in locating an internship, but the primary responsibility rests with you. Internships come in many forms. Normally, and in accordance with Smith policy, they do not result in academic credit. The OIS-Paris website lists some of the places where Smith in Paris participants have recently worked as interns. Please keep in mind that the French internship system is highly regulated in order to protect both students and mentors from excessive work and unremunerated responsibility.

Scientific Internships

Since Science internships are often more skill- and preparation-specific, the director will, in conjunction with scientific advisors at Smith, help Sciences à Paris students find internships that match their competence. Please note that while every effort will be made to help SAP students secure internships, such internships cannot be guaranteed.

Community Service and Extracurricular Activities

If you so desire, we would certainly encourage you to pursue volunteer work, le bénévolat, in various associations that work on socially relevant issues. Service placements provide an opportunity to meet those involved in the “real life” of the city, people—fellow volunteers and clients—whom you might not otherwise meet, and to give something back to your host city and country. We would also encourage you to participate in extracurricular activities such as singing in a student choir, playing on a sports team via your university athletic membership, or participating in a cultural association, a dance group, or a cooking club. This is often a great way to make friends outside of the Smith group.
ACADEMIC POLICIES

Credit

Smith policies require that you take at least 16 credits per semester while abroad (normally these convert to four 4-credit courses). This, with one credit for the orientation session and one credit for the first-semester methodology course, will result in a total of 34 credits for the year. With the permission of both the Director and the Dean for International Study, you may earn up to 38 credits for the year. Only in extenuating circumstances, requiring the permission of the Director, the Dean for International Study, and the Class Dean, may you carry fewer than 16 credits during a particular semester. (You will still be expected to complete 32 credits for the year.) No courses are awarded more than four credits without the specific approval of the Dean for International Study.

Grades

Grades earned during each term abroad are recorded on Smith College transcripts. Grades for courses taken at the Smith Center, at the Three-College Consortium (Smith, Hamilton, Middlebury), at Sciences Po, and at the French university are converted to Smith College grades according to a table of equivalences posted in the Smith Center in Paris. For Smith students these grades count in the calculation of the grade point average, for Latin Honors, and for membership in Phi Beta Kappa. (Other colleges and universities may treat study abroad grades differently. If you are a guest student, please consult with your home institution.)

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grading Option

While enrolled on your Smith program abroad you are expected to take all courses for letter grades. In order to request taking a course with the S/U option, you must:

a) confirm with the appropriate department chair that the course will count in the major or minor, if indeed it is a “major” or “minor” course;
b) seek, prior to the ninth week of the semester, permission to do so from the Director, the Dean for International Study, and the Class Dean. Please remember that at Smith College a maximum of 16 credits taken S/U may be counted towards the degree.

If approved, you need to download the S/U application form from the Smith College Class Dean’s webpage, sign it, and ask your Director (as instructor and adviser) to sign it as well. The form then needs to be faxed or scanned/emailed to the Office for International Study. The form is available at: http://www.smith.edu/registrar/documents/ChangeofGradingOption.pdf

Guest students must confirm with their home school advisers that the S/U option is acceptable.
Advising

The Director, in consultation via e-mail with your on-campus adviser or advisers, serves as your academic adviser in Paris, helping you to select and then approve your courses. It is your responsibility to ensure that courses taken in Paris will count towards your major (if you intend them to be). The Director will work closely with you to facilitate these conversations. Prior to departure, please consult with your major adviser, make sure that she or he will be available during your time abroad (and if need be find the names of his or her replacement), and be prepared to provide the Director with your adviser’s e-mail address.

Attendance

During the year in Paris, you are expected to attend all classes and take all scheduled exams. Classes are generally held Monday through Friday; some Saturday sessions may occur. Unless group excursions are planned, Saturdays and Sundays are days free for travel and individual plans. You may not begin official vacations early or extend them beyond the given dates.

Music Performance and Studio Art Courses

Music performance courses and studio art courses are normally not offered at European universities. Music majors and studio art majors should consult with the Director, who will attempt to find suitable alternatives, although in certain areas options are limited. For music majors and minors, and for studio art majors, lesson and studio fees are usually covered by the program.

Language Courses and Independent Study

Credit is not awarded for a beginning modern foreign language course. Given the value placed on study within the local academic context, students may not plan on arranging independent study or special studies.

Smith College Policies

Unless otherwise indicated in this handbook, all Smith College policies published in the Smith Bulletin apply to the Smith programs abroad.
SMITH ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

The regulations and requirements of the Smith College Academic Honor Code apply to all students on the Smith College programs abroad. The Smith College community at home and abroad maintains that any evasion of the spirit of the Academic Honor Code constitutes a violation of the Code.

The Smith College Academic Honor Code is found at: http://www.smith.edu/sao/handbook/socialconduct/honorcode.php

The Honor Code requires you practice intellectual honesty in all oral and written work. You may seek the advice of a faculty member or a tutor regarding written work; you may seek assistance from friends and native speakers about a limited number of specific linguistic problems. You may not submit work that is not your own. You may not submit work that has been translated, rewritten, or significantly revised by a third party. When quoting from secondary sources, you must follow the format suggested by the relevant instructor; in case of continuing doubt, you may consult with the Director.

Examples of specific infractions of the Honor Code particularly relevant to students abroad include:

- the submission of a paper that is not your own work;
- the submission of a paper for more than one course;
- the use of outside sources—web sites, secondary materials, another student’s findings—without proper attribution;
- receiving extensive, substantive assistance from a member of a host family or a friend;
- using translations or published notes without specific permission from the instructors;
- Unless specifically authorized, you may not read in translation a work that has been assigned in a language other than English. If you have any doubt about any question of intellectual honesty, please consult the Director.

Suspected infractions of the Honor Code should be reported to the Director. In cases of clear violation, the Director will inform the Dean for International study, who may refer them to the Dean of the College.
LIVING IN PARIS

Housing

All students enrolled in the Smith College program in Paris live in French homes with single rooms of their own. You will not be permitted to make independent housing arrangements while enrolled in the Smith program in Paris. Room and board agreements are negotiated by the College on a year-long basis; commitments to host families are made well before students arrive in France. Once you have settled into your French residence, it is no easy matter to make a change. You must therefore understand from the beginning that your housing arrangement, whatever it may be, represents a year-long commitment. In rare cases, and despite good-faith efforts, serious incompatibilities may arise between a student and a host family. In such cases, we will make every effort, first, to mediate the problem. If the incompatibilities are irreconcilable, we will of course find a new host family for the student.

It is your responsibility to make a good-faith effort to adapt to the lifestyle of your host family. Such adaptation is an important educational component of the study abroad experience. Flexibility, grace, and a sense of humor go a long way to make cohabitation work. No matter what your living situation, you must make an effort to be considerate of others. Your hosts will have their own rules and expectations, and you must discover and attempt to understand them from the outset. Communication is key; when you have questions, ask!

Housing assignments are made by the Associate Director, Mme Charlier, who knows our Parisian families and is familiar with their apartments. She will make every effort to accommodate your particular needs and preferences when placing you with a family. Occasionally, more than one student will be housed by the same family, but all students have their own, individual room.

During the summer you will receive the name and address of your host family via e-mail. We urge you to send an e-mail to your host family to introduce yourself, and, on arrival, to offer, as an ice-breaker, a small gift: a small bottle of maple syrup from a student from New England would be appreciated, or something such as a jar of your mother’s best blueberry jam. Use your imagination: one recent student, for example, offered her host family a CD recorded by her mother’s jazz band.

During the Program’s official winter and spring vacations, you must vacate your room and leave your host family. (You may of course leave your possessions behind.) You will need a break at those times, and so will your host family, who, like you, may well use the time for vacation and travel. If you plan not to travel but to stay in Paris during vacations, you must make alternative lodging arrangements. Mme Charlier will be happy to help you to do this. When you have completed your courses and exams at the end of the academic year, and in any case no later than May 28, 2016, except in extraordinary circumstances, you must take leave of your room and your host family.
Meals

From your arrival, your host family will provide breakfast daily, five or six dinners per week, and one lunch per weekend (normally Sunday lunch), when classes are in session. Smith College will provide you with a stipend to cover all remaining meals (six lunches and one or two dinners per week). There are many places near Reid Hall where you can get a quick lunch—a sandwich, a bowl of pasta, or a crêpe—at a reasonable price. In addition, the CROUS (Centre régional des œuvres universitaires et scolaires) operates fourteen restaurants (RU—restaurants universitaires) and some twenty cafeterias throughout Paris. Here, for only 3 €, you can get a complete meal. For those on a budget, that is a bargain. You can have a look at this web site: http://www.crous-paris.fr/article.asp?idcat=AAAA

Vegetarians are readily accommodated, but vegans are all but unknown in France. If you are a vegan, you may have to make certain important compromises in order to accommodate your dietary needs.

Telephones

At our opening meeting, you will hear information about cell phones (téléphones portables), for the purchase of which Smith College will deposit 40 € into your account at the BNP. Phones are widely available in Paris: at the opening meeting, we will offer advice on where and how to purchase a cell phone.

When you purchase your cell phone, we ask that you immediately give your number to the Director and Associate Director. We also ask that you input a set of emergency numbers as well as the numbers of the entire student cohort. A calling tree will be organized shortly after your arrival in France. Make sure you know which number you have to call if the tree is activated.

Telephone charges are entirely your responsibility. Keep in mind that calling the US from your cell phone, unless you have a specific calling plan that provides for it, is extremely expensive. But you can communicate easily and for free with your family and your friends via Skype, iChat, or Viber (just make sure you download the app on your American cell phone before you leave for France).

Your host family may have a land-line that includes international calls in the regular monthly service charge. However, you must not use your host family’s land-line unless you are specifically invited to do so.

Mail

You will have a mail cubby of your own at the Smith Center in Reid Hall and, before leaving home, you should give friends and family your Reid Hall address:

[your name]
c/o Smith College
4, rue de Chevreuse
75006 PARIS
France
The Smith Center
The Smith Center in Reid Hall opens at 8:00 a.m. on weekdays and at 10 a.m. on Saturdays; it closes at 10:30 p.m. every day. Reid Hall is closed on Sundays and holidays.

Libraries
The Smith Center in Reid Hall has a small lending library of about 2,500 volumes, including an array of dictionaries and grammar books. Columbia University at Reid Hall also has a modest library with many of the reference books you might need for courses in literature, Paris urbanism, art history, and linguistics. Both libraries offer calm and pleasant spaces in which to work.

Computers
Most students bring their laptop computers with them to Paris. If your laptop was issued with start-up disks, please bring them! Most laptops include a built-in voltage converter, but you will need an adapter to fit French electrical outlets.

At the Smith Center we have two desktop PCs, two desktop Macs, and a printer that you may use. These computers were updated in the summer of 2014. At these computers, academic work always takes precedence over web surfing, Facebook updating, Tweeting, e-mail, and fun.

Internet
The computers at the Smith Center are connected to the Internet. Reid Hall is also equipped with WiFi, so you will be able to connect to the internet from your laptop. Some cafés and libraries also provide wireless Internet access. And there are many cybercafés in Paris where you can use computer facilities at a nominal charge; many city parks are also equipped with free WiFi. We also require our host families to provide you with Internet access in your room, wireless or via cable.
PREPARING YOURSELF

If you want to have a fabulous year in France, if you want to make this one of the most meaningful years of your life, then you should expose yourself, now, and throughout the summer, to as much French as possible. Speak French with your friends; read French novels and French newspapers and magazines; see French movies; study the map of France; listen to French music; rent French videos; and visit websites in French. Your ability to enjoy the full scope of life in Paris—indeed, your overall well-being during your time abroad—will depend in large part on your ability to express your ideas and your personality in French. And, of course, do the on-line prep session required of all Smith Program Abroad participants before they arrive in France (more details soon).

Do not be afraid to make mistakes! If you have an ounce of confidence in French when you arrive, it will soon be a pound, or more, as you begin to feel at home and benefit from your new surroundings. Experience suggests that students who make French friends and study with French students make the most progress, and have the richest experience.

As a visiting student in France, you will become something of an American “ambassador.” If you can say a word about Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, or John Boehner, as well as a word about François Hollande [the President of France], Manuel Valls [the Prime Minister] or Anne Hidalgo [the mayor of Paris], you will be better able to play your ambassadorial role.

Websites

- The website of the Mairie de Paris: www.paris.fr
- The three most important French daily papers:
  www.lemonde.fr
  www.liberation.fr
  www.lefigaro.fr
  www.leparisien.fr
- A choice of several radio stations equivalent to NPR: www.radiofrance.fr
- Some radio stations that French young people like to listen to:
  www.novaplanet.com/radio-nova
  www.radiofrance.fr/chaine/fip/accueil/
- A website about current movies: www.allocine.fr
  For more such resources, see the Smith in Paris Moodle site: http://moodle.smith.edu/
REAL TIPS FROM REAL STUDENTS

Improving your French:

- Listen to how French people speak so you can learn to speak with the same rhythms. Find native speakers to talk to. Children can be delightfully useful because they like to point to your funny pronunciation and correct your grammatical mistakes.
- Get involved. Find a babysitting job or an activity with French students. Don’t spend too much time with other Smithies or other visiting students! You don’t want to pick up the other person’s mistakes and start making them yourself.
- Speak French in your French classes, now, at Smith. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes! This is the best way to learn! Read French books and newspapers, listen to French music, watch French films. Seek any exposure to French that you can get!
- Obey the language pledge! This is one of the features that sets us apart from the other colleges at Reid Hall, and it pays off. Listening to the radio and watching TV/movies helps because it accustoms you to hearing people speak rapidly, and thus trains your ear. Take a book you already know in English and read it in French! Since you already know the story, you will be able to ignore the plot and focus on vocabulary and grammar.
- Try actively to think in French. Go out of your way to make French friends. When invited, by all means go out with your host family!

Living with a Family:

- Living with a host family is both enriching and challenging. It’s a great way to experience French culture—via dinner parties and regular meals and conversations with friends and family members. But it is also like a temporary “marriage” in which compromise and good communication are essential.
- The more you are aware of your own habits and preferences, the more easily you will adjust to those of others. Your needs and your host family’s needs are equally important. Do not hesitate to speak up. If you feel that all you want to do one day is retire to your bedroom and be by yourself, of course you may do so but make sure you have kindly explained to your host family that you are tired and in need of personal time.
- All host families see dinnertime as “prime time” with their American students. Do not disappoint them! Take part in the conversation as much as you can and resist feeling inadequate because you do not know some of the names mentioned or what is being discussed. A simple question coming from you (“Qui est Manuel Valls?”) will go a long way in making your hostess feel as though you are interested and want to know more about France and French culture.
- Your family may invite you to all or some of their family events or activities. You do not have to accept every invitation but you must always decline in an appropriate and considerate manner.
- Always keep an open mind and feel things out to see how best to interact with the family. “I had to feel everything out with my host family in order to understand how to deal with situations such as using the kitchen and going out at night. I tried to give the family time to themselves and to stay out of their hair except when invited to do things. I tended to talk
openly with my eleven-year-old host sister, who shared with me her musical and movie interests, and with whom I played board games. Eating together provided a great opportunity to talk with the family. I sometimes felt inadequate when my host parents brought up historical and current events that I was unaware of. However, we all made an effort to keep the conversation going.”

- “The homestay experience is really what you make of it. Families understand that students come with different personalities: some want to get close and some prefer to keep their distances. As long as your manners remain respectful and considerate, and you make sure you keep the communication channel open, families will understand and adapt.
- In some cases, your host family’s political and social views might be very different from your own. “I had trouble adjusting to the fact that my host mother is prejudiced against gay people, and is an extremely conservative Catholic. She never forced her opinions on me, but you need to be aware that by moving in with another family, you are leaving the Smith bubble and must be prepared to deal with those with whom you may not agree.”

Making Friends:

- “You must understand that it is difficult to make friends with French people and should not be easily discouraged. You should be open-minded and use good judgment when meeting new people. Pursuing an activity such as a sport or a club, where the regulars are French, is a great way to make friends. I highly encourage you to make the effort to make friends with French people.”
- “Do volunteer work! That’s how I made friends outside of the Smith group and began really to feel a ‘part of something’ in Paris. Volunteering not only gave my life some structure, it also integrated me into a group and an organization. It made me feel as though there were a reason for my being in France.”
- “If you participate in an extra-curricular activity at Smith, do the same in Paris! There are groups for almost everything. I joined the ultimate frisbee club team, Ah Ouh Puc, and had experiences with them that I will never forget. I regularly attended practice, participated in tournaments, hung out with teammates outside of game time. If you let yourself worry about making French friends, it might not happen. But if you put yourself out there and pursue actively the activities you like, friends will come along naturally. Let’s face it: meeting French people on the metro is not the best way to go.”
- “I would recommend going to as many as possible of the international students’ events and evenings hosted by the Sorbonne and the other Paris universities. There, all students are trying to meet other people!”
Cultural Adjustment

by Bill Hoffa [printed with permission]

Many travelers go through an initial period of euphoria and excitement, overwhelmed by the thrill of being in a totally new and unusual environment. As this initial sense of "adventure" wears off, they gradually become aware of the fact that old habits and routine ways of doing things no longer suffice. They gradually (or suddenly) no longer feel comfortably themselves. If this happens to you, as it is likely to, you will feel like the outsider you in fact are. Minor problems may quickly assume the proportions of major crises, and you may find yourself growing somewhat depressed. You may feel an anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse, a kind of psychological disorientation. You will indeed be experiencing what has come to be referred to as "Culture Shock." Such feelings are perfectly normal, so, knowing this and with a bit of conscious effort, you will soon find yourself making adjustments (some quite subtle and perhaps not even noticeable at the conscious level) that will enable you to adapt to your new cultural environment.

There is no clear-cut way of dealing with culture shock. Simply recognizing its existence and your accepting vulnerability to it is an important first step. As long as you know in advance that you will probably fall victim to culture shock at a certain level, you can prepare yourself psychologically to accept the temporary discomfort and turn it into an advantage by learning from it. Remember that you are not the only one experiencing occasional frustration, irritability, and depression, etc. Falling victim to culture shock, in other words, does not imply the existence of any psychological or emotional shortcomings on your part. As Robert Kohls says, "Culture shock is in some degree inevitable... and is the occupational hazard of overseas living through which one has to be willing to go through in order to enjoy the pleasures of experiencing other countries and cultures in depth."

Undergoing culture shock is in itself a learning experience that you should take advantage of. It is a way of sensitizing you to another culture at a level that goes beyond the intellectual and the rational. Just as an athlete cannot get in shape without going through the uncomfortable conditioning stage, so you cannot fully appreciate the cultural differences that exist without first going through the uncomfortable stages of psychological adjustment.
PROGRAM FEES AND BILLING

The program fee for all Smith programs is the same as the Smith comprehensive fee. Expenses not included in the fee are your own responsibility (see Part A: Fees and Expenses). Such expenses include US-based primary health insurance (see Health Insurance section below), international airfare, books and supplies, passport and visa fees, and personal expenses such as medical expenses, toiletries, phone calls, entertainment, personal travel, and dining out.

Smith uses a paperless E-bill system; paper bills are not sent by mail. You or the authorized user whom you designate will receive automated emails when new billing statements are available, approximately one month before payment is due (on August 10 for the fall semester, on January 10 for the spring semester). Please see the Student Financial Services webpage “Guide to Fees and Payments” for more information about billing and payments at http://www.smith.edu/finaid/guides/feesandpayments/.

Guest students whose home institutions pay part or all of their study abroad costs are responsible for understanding these arrangements, and for giving “authorized user” status to the appropriate person at the home institution.

FINANCIAL AID

With rare exception, financial aid is available to Smith College students who wish to participate in a Smith College study abroad program on the same basis as it is to students who wish to study in Northampton. Application for financial aid must be completed before May 1. For questions about Smith financial aid as it relates to study on a Smith Program Abroad, please visit Student Financial Services at http://www.smith.edu/finaid/jya.php.

Smith College does not provide financial aid to students from other institutions. If you do not attend Smith but wish to participate in a Smith program, please discuss the matter with the financial aid office at your own institution.

For your time you will be abroad, you ought to consider giving financial Power-of-Attorney (POA) to a parent or trusted friend, so that she or he can take care of financial transactions at home, such as signing financial aid applications, on your behalf.
Insurance

You are covered by a number of different insurance policies that will provide coverage while on your program abroad, while traveling, and upon your return.

Primary insurance: As a student on a Smith program abroad, you are required to carry US-based primary health insurance, and will be automatically enrolled in the Smith College student health insurance plan through Gallagher Koster. If you have another primary health insurance policy that provides comparable coverage, you may waive coverage from Gallagher Koster at https://www.gallagherkoster.com/. However, if you are an international student at Smith, you must purchase the Smith College student health insurance plan via Gallagher Koster.

Supplemental study abroad insurance: As a student on the Smith College program, you will also be covered by a supplemental international medical insurance policy from Gallagher Student Health and Special Risk. This cost of this supplemental “Study Abroad Accident & Sickness Insurance Program” is included in the program fee. The policy provides 100% coverage for office visits, and prescription drug coverage at 80% for the period of the program (with certain specified limits). This Gallagher Koster plan will serve as your primary health insurance policy during your time abroad. Expenses not covered by this plan should be submitted to your regular, US-based health insurance provider.

While abroad, you are responsible for paying your own medical bills, for requesting reimbursement by submitting your receipts to the appropriate parties, and more generally for coordinating your health insurance benefits with your US-based health insurance company.

You and your family should carefully review the Gallagher Koster plan and be familiar with the coverage it offers. The plan may be downloaded at www.gallagherkoster.com/studyabroad. Policy documents will also be sent to you, via e-mail, prior to your departure for the program.

Other Insurance and Services: All students are covered by a Travel Accident Policy as well as a Travel Assist policy which provides emergency medical evacuation and repatriation coverage. For details, see https://www.fivecolleges.edu/riskmgmt/intltravel/student_intl. Benefits are coordinated through the Five-College Director of Risk Management via the Director of your program.

- Smith College is not responsible for personal injury or for damage to or loss of personal property. If you want liability, luggage, or other personal insurance, please arrange coverage with your agent before leaving the US.
- Additional health insurance coverage is provided in some program locations according to local law or university regulations. See your program specific section for details.

Prescription Drugs: It is your responsibility to thoroughly investigate, well in advance of departure, the availability abroad of the medications you need to maintain good health. In some cases, medications routinely prescribed in the US are illegal in other countries and you may not be able to bring those medications through customs.
Ask your doctor if your medication can be disbursed in quantity, and if so, obtain a supply well before departure. If possible, bring a supply of your medications sufficient to cover your entire time abroad and pack this in your carry-on baggage. If you do take a prescription medication, please also bring a copy of the prescription written legibly in generic terms. As noted above, check the host country’s laws regarding that particular medication, as drug laws vary greatly. If your medication is not available abroad, discuss with your doctor the options regarding other medications.

If you need help with these questions, please call AIG/Travel Guard
Toll-free number: 877-244-6871
Overseas collect: +1 715-346-085
Email: travelassist@aigbenefits.com
Policy Number: GTP 9144090

Medical Care

Health care providers in Europe generally do not directly bill US health insurance companies. You must therefore count on paying your bill at the time of service and on seeking reimbursement from Gallagher Koster’s claims company. (The process is explained in the plan brochure.) Reimbursement checks in US dollars are sent only to US addresses. As stated above, you are responsible for managing your own health insurance claims. The Director and Associate Director will be happy to assist you, but cannot file claims in your behalf.

Because the insurance plan operates on the basis of payment first, reimbursement later, you must discuss with your family, before leaving for the program, how to handle reimbursement checks. (Please be reassured that reimbursement is assured and is usually prompt.) In case of an emergency shortage of cash, you may request a temporary loan from the Smith program office. You may arrange for the partial payment of the loan by indicating that the claim be reimbursed directly to Smith College. This is indicated as an option on the Claim Form in the policy documents you will receive.

If your loan is not paid by the beginning of the following academic year, a financial hold will be placed on your Smith account.

Health and Wellness Abroad

You should visit your doctors and dentist for routine appointments before departure. If you have a chronic condition, have mental health needs, or take prescription medication, please discuss with your doctor managing your health abroad—in particular how to obtain your medication, what to do if it does not work properly, or if new conditions arise, or old problems resurface. If you have medical issues, you should bring with you a copy of your medical history, and you should sign a release with your doctor or with Health Services at Smith College in order to facilitate transfer of your records to a care provider abroad.
If you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring a second pair of glasses or extra lenses, and a copy of your vision prescription as well.

Each program center maintains a list of doctors (general practitioners and specialists, dentists, and English-speaking psychotherapists and psychiatrists) from whom students have received good care in the past. Ask your Associate Director for the list of medical providers.

**RELATIONSHIPS**

The idea of a once-in-a-lifetime foreign romance is charming. But you should be cautious about entering into a relationship while abroad. Each country’s cultural values and rules regarding dating and relationships are different from those you are accustomed to. Please take the time to figure them out before beginning a relationship. In Europe, for example, the things that constitute solicitation, dating, and a relationship are not what you are familiar with. Americans tend to smile at strangers as a sign of politeness. To others, a woman who looks one in the eyes or smiles is making an explicit invitation. You should of course attempt to gain sensitivity to the new culture in which you will be living. But if ever you feel that your personal safety is threatened, forget your cultural sensitivity and remove yourself from an uncomfortable situation. In a cross-cultural relationship, it is perfectly appropriate to share with your partner your own standards of discretion. In all relationships, you should always practice safe sex.

**STUDENT SAFETY AND CONDUCT ABROAD**

Be smart about personal safety. Use common sense. Do not walk alone at night, drink to excess, accept drinks from strangers, or leave with someone you have just met. Use the buddy system; pay attention to what is going on around you. Avoid demonstrations and large crowds. Take cues from people around you and listen to advice from locals about which areas to avoid.

Theft is the most common crime experienced by students abroad. Students have been pick-pocketed, mugged, and robbed of unattended items such as jackets and laptops. Safeguard your personal belongings. Leave your passport at home (and carry a photocopy with you); carry only the cash you need for the day. If you must carry a lot of cash, or your passport, use a money belt. Do not carry your passport or other valuables in a purse or backpack that can be easily stolen. Be very careful with the key to your residence: replacing the locks at either a host family’s home or a university residence is no small feat and is extremely expensive. If you are a victim of a crime, or theft, let the Director know. He or she will provide support and offer advice about reporting to local authorities.
Memorize at least one phone number, such as that of the program office, and learn to use the public telephones in case you lose your cell phone. Make copies of your passport and other important documents such as your residency permit, visa, credit card, debit card, etc.; leave one copy at home with your family, and one copy in your room in Europe. This will be essential if you need to replace your passport or cancel your credit card.

Smith College strongly urges students not to rent or operate motor vehicles while abroad.

Emergencies

- In the event of a medical emergency, seek medical treatment and contact your Director.
- In the event of a large-scale event such as a natural disaster or a terrorist attack, contact the Director to let him or her know where you are and that you are safe. Then, if possible, contact your parents: they will inevitably have heard a report of the incident and will be worried about you. The Director will be in contact with the Office for International Study at Smith, and will contact your family, if necessary.

Laws of the Host Country

As a student on the Smith College program, you are also bound by the laws of your host country, just as are local citizens. You are not protected by US law or the laws of your home country. This applies to everything from drug possession and alcohol restriction to currency exchanges, dress codes, and drunken driving. It is not unusual for violators (foreign or domestic) to receive prison sentences for crimes, or to be held in a prison for several years while awaiting trial. If you are an American, you are used to hearing politicians speak about “the most powerful nation on earth.” That does not always sit well with our foreign friends. If you violate their laws, America will be powerless to exonerate you.

If you are arrested, it is therefore unlikely that the US Embassy, your family, or Smith College will be able to arrange for your release. Your embassy can notify your family and help arrange for legal representation in conformance with the laws of the host country. You might do well to read the US Department of State web page on assistance to US Citizens arrested abroad, at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1199.html

Alcohol and Drug Policy

If you are of legal age in your host country—the question of “legal age” is complex, but in Europe, if you are over 18, you are “legal”—you may consume (but not abuse) alcohol. If you chose to do so, please remember that you are at all times responsible for your actions. Smith College prohibits the illegal distribution of alcohol to students who are not of legal drinking age in the host country, and prohibits the unlawful use of alcohol in any of its facilities and at any of its activities abroad.
Possession, use, or distribution of any substances that are considered by host country law to be illicit or illegal drugs is prohibited. Please be aware that the possession of drugs is often dealt with very harshly by local and host country law enforcement.

Any alcohol or drug infraction will be considered a grave violation of program policy and may result in a serious sanction, up to and including dismissal from the program.

**Student Conduct**

As a student on a Smith College program, you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner compatible with the program and its reputation, with local laws and regulations, and with Smith College’s own regulations. The Smith College Code of Student Conduct is found at: [http://www.smith.edu/sao/handbook/socialconduct.php](http://www.smith.edu/sao/handbook/socialconduct.php)

In cases of academic or personal misconduct, you should know that the Director has the right and responsibility to implement a range of sanctions and in severe cases, in consultation with the Smith College administration, to require withdrawal from the program. In the case of involuntary withdrawal from the Smith College, no credit will be granted and no fees will be refunded.

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**MONEY AND BANKING ABROAD**

To obtain cash abroad, you may wish to use an ATM card linked to your US checking account. Most US banks charge transaction fees for this service, but ATMs do offer the most favorable rates of exchange. Be sure to budget for these fees. You should not carry large amounts of cash, but you might consider making one withdrawal of 60 €, for example, rather than two of 30 €.

You should ask your bank how much it charges for debit- and credit-card withdrawals overseas. You should also ask about the dollar-limit of individual withdrawals.

You should also sign up for online banking so that you can manage your US account from abroad. You should notify your bank and your credit card company that you will be abroad for the year, make sure that your PIN will work internationally (ATM machines often have only numbers, not letters), and write down your various access codes in a safe, private place. You will want to instruct your family how to make deposits to your US account, for health insurance reimbursements or in case of emergency.

You should be sure to have at least one debit- or credit-card with a chip: some establishments in Europe do not accept cards that in the US require only a signature.
Your credit card will serve as an alternative financial resource. While most Europeans use debit cards for everyday transactions, credit cards can be useful for major purchases such as airline and train tickets. (Visa and MasterCard are more commonly accepted in Europe than American Express.) Most credit card companies permit cash advances from a bank or an ATM machine (if you have a chip and a PIN), but interest rates for such advances are extremely high. Before leaving, after informing your credit card company that you will be in Europe for the year, you should arrange for online statements, as at your bank, in order to manage your account and make payments from abroad.

Please read the specific information regarding money that is provided in the material for your own program.

Exchange Rates and Budgeting

Fluctuating exchange rates make advanced financial planning difficult. To allow for fluctuation, you should slightly overestimate the expenses you are likely to incur while abroad. Bookmark an exchange-rate calculator such as www.oanda.com and become familiar with current rates, keeping in mind that what you see online are usually bank-to-bank rates, which are more advantageous than what you will experience. You will soon be able to think in euros, and will be able to forget about dollar equivalencies. If possible, try not to focus too much on the price of specific, small items; attempt, rather, to modify your spending habits in order to remain within your budget.

Life in Europe, generally speaking, is more expensive than it is in the US—but this does depend on personal spending habits. As a rule, you should understand that in Europe you will spend at least as much per week as you do in the US.

You should think, now, about making travel plans on some weekends and during vacations. Past students reported spending from 300 - 500 € per week on food and lodging while traveling in Europe—not including the cost of transportation.
You are responsible for booking and paying for your travel to the program site abroad. Most flights from the US to Europe leave in the evening and arrive early the next day; be sure to book your travel in order to arrive at the program site on the correct day! If you arrive before the official beginning of the program, you must make your own arrangements for accommodations.

If you are eligible for an airfare stipend, Smith College will notify you in May of the exact amount, which will be sent via check or direct deposit. Most airfare stipends cover approximately one-half the cost of the average ticket to the program location.

Purchasing a round-trip ticket with a return date more than eleven months after the date of purchase is usually not possible. There are various ways to handle this problem.

- purchase a round-trip ticket with the latest return date possible, then change the return date well in advance of the original departure date, and pay the fee for the change. STA Travel (www.statravel.com) offers a low change fee and good student rates.
- purchase two separate one-way tickets. Some airlines – Icelandair is one – offer one-way tickets that cost no more than one-half of the round-trip price.


You must not plan to travel until the dates of your academic commitments are firm. In many cases, examination dates vary by course and are not posted until mid-semester. As a student on a Smith College program, you are required to take all scheduled exams, unless you have specific permission not to do so, and you may not leave the program until your academic commitments have been satisfied.

Packing for Study Abroad

Pack light. You need to take less clothing and fewer personal items than you think. You can buy almost anything you need in Europe, though prices will be somewhat higher than those you’re used to.

Take no more than two moderately sized pieces of luggage and a carry-on bag for weekend trips. You must be able to carry all your luggage by yourself, possibly up and down stairs, and on cobbled streets where wheeled suitcases become unwieldy. Before leaving, check your airline’s restrictions concerning the size and weight of luggage, and their fees for excess baggage. Label your luggage inside and out with your name and the address of your program’s office.

If you simply cannot fit your belongings into two pieces of luggage, you will probably find it most reasonable to pay excess baggage charges than to ship items via the post office or Fedex. Shipping personal belongings is not recommended because it may require you to pay taxes and customs’ fees and to retrieve your things at a far away airport. If you must ship items, please be
sure to list the contents of the shipment as “used personal effects.” Never ship laptops or electronic devices, or medications.

Europe is becoming more Americanized, but you should know that Europeans still tend to dress up more than Americans. For instance, no European wears pajamas to class! Rather than multiple pairs of jeans, you might want to bring only one pair, and to diversifying your wardrobe with trousers and skirts (especially if you plan to pursue an internship or volunteer work). Pack items that work together and can be layered. You are also likely to do more walking in Europe than you do at Smith: be sure to bring comfortable shoes.

**Personal Travel While Abroad**

When planning to travel outside of your host city (on breaks, on weekends), please inform your Director and send him or her your itinerary so that, in the event of an emergency, your whereabouts are known.

Thanks to a number of low-cost airlines in Europe (RyanAir, EasyJet, AirBerlin, etc.), the cost of air travel is now competitive with rail travel, although rail passes can still be a great bargain. Eurail passes must be purchased outside of Europe. If desired, you could have a friend purchase one and send it to you.

The French National Railway (SNCF) also offers competitive passes (Carte 12-25), something that is especially attractive if you’re planning to travel in France during weekends and vacations. University-organized trips are also cost-effective, and a great way to develop friendships with other students.

Above and beyond the cost of transportation, students report spending from 300 - 500 € per week on food and lodging when traveling in Europe during breaks and holidays. If you plan to travel, you should build these costs into your budget.

**Visits from Family and Friends**

If your friends and family plan to visit you, please encourage them to come only after you have settled into your new life, at least two months after arrival. Past students have enjoyed visits from their family during the winter holiday break; families often plan spring-time visits, when their student has really settled into life abroad, the weather is nice, and travel is less expensive.

Please ask your visitors to arrange their own accommodations. Host families cannot and should not be asked to accommodate overnight visitors.
Additional Pre-Departure Resources

You should register with the US Embassy in your host country and get more advice for student travelers: [http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov](http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov)

For more safety tips, and a “Know Before You Go” video: [http://www.saraswish.org/](http://www.saraswish.org/)

For a cultural training resource for study abroad: [http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/](http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/)

For more on adjustment and culture shock: [http://www.studentsabroad.com/cultureshock.html](http://www.studentsabroad.com/cultureshock.html)

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GRANTS AND INTERNSHIPS

As a student on the Smith College program, you are eligible to apply for an International Experience Grant. You may also apply for a Blumberg Traveling Fellowship, specifically designed for Smith students to conduct four-week summer research projects in their host country or region. For more information, see [http://www.smith.edu/studyabroad/grant_blumberg.php](http://www.smith.edu/studyabroad/grant_blumberg.php).

Many students remain in Europe after the academic year to pursue an internship. Some of the Smith Program Abroad centers have contacts, but you should be prepared yourself to do the legwork necessary to find an internship. You may use your Praxis funds to support an internship abroad. In addition, for cultural expenses (plays, concerts, museums) and for cultural activities and travel associated with your studies, both during the year after the close of the program, you may benefit from several funds put at the disposal of the Director by generous alumnae and friends of the college and the Smith Program Abroad in Paris.

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RETURNING HOME

**Smith students:**

- **Housing:** You must carefully watch your Smith e-mail account in February for information about next year’s housing. With regard to housing, students abroad follow *the same timeline* as students on campus. You will have to submit your House Decision Form online, and your House Choice Form (if you choose to leave your current house); you will have to communicate with your housing proxy in advance of the housing lottery. See [http://www.smith.edu/sao/reslife/lottery_getstarted.php](http://www.smith.edu/sao/reslife/lottery_getstarted.php), and, if you have any questions, please contact the Housing Coordinator.
• **Registration:** You will receive a registration code and instructions via your Smith e-mail account.

• **Evaluations:** As a student on the Smith College program, you are required to complete an online evaluation of your experience. Some programs require additional evaluations *in loco*. Smith students who fail to complete their evaluations will have registration holds placed on their accounts.

• **Grades and Transcripts:** Once the Director of the Smith College program has obtained all your grades, he or she will send your transcript and an accompanying grade report to the Office for International Study at Smith in Northampton. Both Smith Center and local university courses and grades will appear on your Smith College transcript and be available via BannerWeb. For Smith students, Smith program study abroad grades are included in the calculation of the GPA.

**Guest Students:**

• **Registration and Housing:** Guest students must remain in touch with the appropriate offices on their own campuses for instructions regarding housing and registration for the return to campus.

• **Evaluations:** Guest students must complete online evaluations of their program experiences. The Office of International Study at Smith will work study abroad offices at guest students’ home institutions to ensure completion of evaluations by those guest students.

• **Grades and Transcripts:** As a guest student, you will receive an official Smith College transcript at your home address; a transcript will also be sent to the college office you specified in your application. To request another official transcripts in the future, you may contact Smith College’s Office of the Registrar, at [http://www.smith.edu/registrar/transcript.php](http://www.smith.edu/registrar/transcript.php).
Reverse Culture Shock,

by Bill Hoffa [printed with permission]

Just as you will have had to brace yourself for a period of psychological disorientation when you leave the USA, you should know that after your time abroad, you may also have to prepare yourself for a parallel period of readjustment when you return "home." Why? Simply because, if you have had a full experience living and learning overseas, you are likely to have changed some, while you have been away, so the place you return to may itself appear to have changed, as indeed it might have. Even though these changes are seldom huge, and may not be apparent to others, you are likely to be very aware of them, and this can be confusing, all the more so because it is unexpected.

Immediately after your return, you can probably expect to go through an initial stage of euphoria and excitement. Most people are overwhelmed by the sheer joy of being back on their native turf. But as you try to settle back into your former routine, you may recognize that your overseas experience has changed some or many of your perceptions and assumptions, your ways of doing things, even what it means to "be yourself." You might have become, in a sense, a somewhat new person. After all, that is what education is all about! But this intellectual and personal growth means that you can expect a period of disorientation as you adjust to the "new" environment at home.

The re-adjustment period is usually rather short-lived, since "home" will never be as "foreign" to you as the foreign environment you adjusted to overseas. Also, your experience of dealing successfully with culture shock abroad will have provided you with the psychological tools for dealing with the challenges of readjustment. Obviously, the more you have changed—often a by-product of the time you were away and how deeply you immersed yourself—the more difficult it will be to have things go back to a previous notion of normality. However, if you are aware of the changes (and seek to learn from them), smooth adaptation is more likely.

As a means of readjusting and staying in touch with the international scene, you may want to consider contacting students who have been abroad, who are currently abroad, or who are thinking about going abroad. There are many ways of maintaining contact with friends you made overseas, foreign and domestic, and also of remaining in touch with the culture you entered and now have left—via letters, e-mail, phoning, magazines, books, etc. and other means. Discussing things and sharing experiences with others is almost always worthwhile. Remembering what it was like for you to have been, for a time, a "foreigner" should inspire you to try to get to know the international students on your campus or others from "minority" backgrounds, who may themselves be feeling some of the same social dislocation and alienation you once felt when you were overseas. The key is to build on the cross-cultural coping skills you now possess and to find conscious ways of integrating your new "self" into your evolving personal and academic life, not seeing it as a "dream" or something irrelevant to your future.