Emergency Contact Information

John Jay Public Safety (open 24/7):

+1-212-237-8524

Cultural Insurance Services International (open 24/7):

Please refer to the front of your CISI Medical ID Card in order to contact the appropriate Emergency Assistance Provider.

To contact ACE Team Assist in a medical emergency, or for 24/7 pre-departure, medical, travel and legal assistance:

Toll-free in the U.S.: (855) 327-1411
Outside of the U.S. (Call Collect): (312) 935-1703
Email: medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us

To contact Arch Team Assist in a medical emergency, or for 24/7 pre-departure, medical, travel, and legal assistance:
Reference ID#: 01-AA-CIS-01133

Toll-free in the U.S.: (800) 872-1414
Outside the U.S. (Call Collect): (609) 986-1234
Email: medservices@assistamerica.com

To contact Chartis Assist in a medical emergency, or for 24/7 pre-departure, medical, travel, and legal assistance:

Toll-free in the U.S.: (800) 472-0906
Outside the U.S. (Call Collect): (817) 826-7143
Email: teamassist@culturalinsurance.com
WELCOME!

And congratulations on your acceptance. Choosing to study abroad is often described as the best decision a student can make. From buying a newspaper on the street to sampling the cuisine of your host city to attending class with local students, the world will truly be your classroom. A successful study abroad experience takes courage, a sense of adventure, and planning. This handbook covers a wide range of information necessary for the next important steps you must take as you prepare for your program. Please read all of the enclosed carefully.

Please feel free to call us at 212.484.1390, or if you are on campus to stop by our office in North Hall, 1101-1105 for any questions or concerns.

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

☐ Apply for passport. If you already have a passport, make sure that it is signed and valid for at least six months past the date of your anticipated return.
☐ Collect documents required for your visa and any other required entry documents (e.g. financial statements, program acceptance letter, immunization records, etc.). Apply for and obtain the visa.
☐ Make a travel planning appointment with John Jay’s Student Health Center or your doctor.
☐ Make flight arrangements once you have a final itinerary. Obtain airline tickets, rail passes, etc.
☐ Plan a budget.
☐ Learn about your host country and city, including health, safety, and cultural issues.
☐ Make sure you understand what your health insurance plan covers and how it works. Purchase travel health insurance if necessary.
☐ Consider purchasing insurance for property loss, trip cancellation, etc.
☐ Find out the 911 equivalent for your destination.
☐ Make two photocopies of important documents such as your passport and itinerary and provide a copy to family members, and keep one copy with you, separate from your original documents.
☐ Bring a list of international contact numbers for your bank(s) and your credit card and ATM card numbers.
☐ Arrange with your bank to have $100.00 in local currency to bring with you. Make sure you have the credit cards, ATM cards, phone cards, etc. that you are planning to use.
☐ Make a communication plan with your family for when you arrive and during your stay.
☐ Take this handbook with you.
CONTACT INFORMATION

Non-Medical Emergency
Contact the International Studies and Programs office at (212)-484-1390. The office staff will contact appropriate personnel.

Health Services: Student Health Center, L.67.00NB
http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/student-health-center
Phone: 212.237.8052, Fax: 212.237.8026, Email: healthoffice@jjay.cuny.edu

Counseling Services Center: L.68.00NB
http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/counseling-services-center
Phone: 212.237.8111

Registrar: Satellite Office at the Jay Express Service Center
http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/registrar
Phone: 212.663.7867, Email: registrar@jjay.cuny.edu
Sara Scaldafferry, Email: sscaldafferry@jjay.cuny.edu

Bursar: L.70.00NB, http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/bursar
Phone: 212.237.8555, Fax: 212.484.1163, Email:bursar@jjay.cuny.edu

Tuition & Financial Aid: http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/tuition-financial-aid
Luis Cortes, Phone: 212.237.8151, Email: financialaid@jjay.cuny.edu
CONTENTS

Introduction ...................................................................................................................................6

John Jay College Policies ...............................................................................................................6
Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, Immunizations and Health Review, International Medical Insurance, Conduct, Travel to Countries on U.S. State Department Warning List, Driving Abroad, Photographs and Videos Abroad

International Travel ....................................................................................................................8
U.S. State Department Travel Information, Passports, Visas, Entry Requirements, Required Immunizations, HIV Antibody Test Requirement, U.S. Permanent Residents, Students in F-1 or J-1 Visa Status, Power of Attorney, Personal Insurance, International Student Identity Card, Booking Air Travel, Rail Passes, Hostels, Luggage, Laptop Computers, Duties and Tariffs, Immigration and Customs Inspections, Returning to the U.S.

Emergency Support and Procedures .....................................................................................12
Preparing for Emergencies, What to Do in Emergencies, Office of Overseas Citizens Service

Staying Safe and Obeying the Law .........................................................................................13
Taking Personal Responsibility, Local and National Laws

Maintaining Health Abroad .......................................................................................................15
Prescriptions; Mental Health; Routine and Emergency Medical Care; Jet Lag; Food and Water Safety; Travelers’ Diarrhea; Sexually Transmitted Diseases; Overseas Blood Transfusions, Blood Products, and Injections

Communication .........................................................................................................................18
E-mail; International Calls; Cell Phones; Smart Phone Apps; Text, Voice, & Video Chat; Time Zones; Mail

Money Matters .......................................................................................................................... 19
General Financial Information, Currency Exchange, Travelers’ Checks, Credit/Debit Cards, Opening a Bank Account, Budgeting

Adjusting to a New Culture .......................................................................................................21
Cultural Adjustment, Fitting In, Discrimination Abroad, LGBT Students Abroad, Gender Roles and Norms, Sexual Harassment, Readjusting to John Jay

Packing Suggestions .................................................................................................................. 26
Clothing, Toiletries and Medical Kit, Documents, Gift Suggestions, Miscellaneous
INTRODUCTION

Whether you are going abroad for the first time or already consider yourself a seasoned traveler, we want to make sure that you are well prepared for the experience. This handbook is designed to address issues that may arise before, during, and after your time abroad. If you have questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact the Office of International Studies and Programs or other John Jay College offices listed in this handbook.

Your experiences overseas will almost certainly challenge and stimulate you, and we anticipate that you will look back on your time abroad as one of the highlights of your undergraduate career. If you are like many John Jay students who have spent time abroad, you will return to campus with a greater understanding of yourself, a different perspective on world affairs, a host of new friends, and an eagerness to explore newly discovered interests. Best wishes for a productive and memorable experience!

JOHN JAY COLLEGE POLICIES

Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)
All students traveling abroad must register with the embassy or consulate of their home countries. (Non-U.S. citizens should check with their home country’s embassy or consulate to find out what services will be available to them while abroad.)

By enrolling in STEP, you put yourself in the position to be assisted by the U.S. State Department in the case of an emergency. When you enroll in STEP, you will automatically receive the most current information compiled about the country where you will be traveling or living. You will also receive updates, including Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts (where appropriate). You only need to sign up once, and then you can add and delete trips from your account based on your current travel plans.

The data you provide is accessible only by cleared personnel in embassies, consulates, and the Department of State, and releasable only with your permission under the provisions of the Privacy Act.

Immunizations and Health Review
All students must discuss their travel plans with medical professionals and obtain required vaccinations and, if necessary, medicine for the duration of their stay abroad. In case of an emergency while abroad, all students should carry a medical profile and an up-to-date copy of their immunization records. At least four to six weeks before departure to Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics, or the South Pacific (except Australia and New Zealand) all travelers should schedule an appointment with Health Services, or a personal physician. Those who have a chronic medical condition, are pregnant, or are traveling in numerous countries should schedule their appointment at least ten weeks before departure. For more information, or to schedule an appointment, please call Health Services at 212.237.8052 or go online at http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/student-health-center.

International Medical Insurance
All students must carry health insurance that is valid overseas for hospitalization and physician care. Private insurance must meet or exceed the coverage provided by John Jay College. The health plan, obtained through the College, covers you year-round and worldwide. The health plan does not make direct payments to health care providers outside the U.S. It will be your responsibility to arrange for payment until the claim is handled.
Most U.S. plans provide coverage for medical services received outside the U.S., but U.S. health insurance is typically not accepted outside the U.S. In many places around the world, hospitals and physicians require payment in cash or by credit card at the time care is provided. While students are able to seek reimbursement from their insurance carrier when they return to the U.S., they need to pay for services out of pocket while they are abroad. Therefore, students must carry a credit card or other form of emergency funds for this purpose.

For this reason, John Jay has a contract with CISI insurance (http://www.culturalinsurance.com/), a trusted provider for international education programs. CISI provides short-term plans for health insurance that will pay the overseas provider directly. Purchasing this kind of international health care coverage will enable you to obtain medical care without the requirement of a possibly large financial outlay prior to treatment.

You should keep your health insurance card with you at all times. Make sure that you understand your insurance coverage and how the system works. You should know how bills are paid in the case of a medical emergency and for routine treatments. If you need to pay for services at the time of treatment, be sure to obtain a receipt and save all bills to submit with your insurance claim for reimbursement upon return to the U.S. It might be helpful to carry a few blank claim forms with you.

More information regarding coverage, can be found at http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/studyabroad/upload/CISI-2013-CUNY-Policy-Brochure.pdf

**Conduct**
Students must understand and agree to observe the laws of the country in which they are residing and all applicable academic and disciplinary regulations in effect on the program or at the host institution abroad. Violations of policy, no matter where they occur, may result in disciplinary action and/or premature termination of participation. If students violate policies while abroad, they must return to the U.S. at their own expense.

**Travel to Countries on U.S. State Department Warning List**
John Jay College does not sponsor undergraduate student travel to countries on the U.S. State Department Travel Warning List or to countries where the U.S. has issued travel restrictions. Students who have a compelling educational reason to travel to such countries may submit a request for an individual travel exemption. The travel exemption process is a time-intensive process. Travelers should allow at least four weeks for the review process.

**Driving Abroad**
Undergraduate students receiving John Jay sponsorship may not rent or drive cars or motorbikes in foreign countries or be driven by graduate students unless the graduate students are staff of the program (exception: Canada).

**Photographs and Videos Abroad**
The College encourages its students to participate fully in international programs by taking personal photos, videos, etc. Remember that the people you are capturing on film are not objects of curiosity. Be tactful and discreet; it is always courteous to ask permission before taking someone’s picture.

If you think that you might want to use such images more publicly, such as on websites or blogs, there are some important guidelines to follow—particularly related to images of minors. Most
countries have laws that protect the use of images of minors unless you have explicit permission from parents or guardians.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

U.S. State Department Travel Information
The U.S. State Department maintains two websites that provide travelers with a wealth of information about traveling and living overseas: travel.state.gov and studentsabroad.state.gov. Both websites provide information on preparing to travel abroad and dealing with medical, financial, and legal problems while abroad. The “Before You Go” section of the U.S. State Department website, available at travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go.html may be of particular interest.

Passports
Your passport is your most important legal document while traveling overseas. You must have a valid passport to show border and customs authorities when you enter or leave the U.S., when you cross other national borders, and on all occasions that require official verification of your citizenship. Apply for a passport as soon as you decide to go abroad. Processing usually takes 4-6 weeks but can take as long as ten weeks during peak travel seasons (expedited options for an additional fee are available). U.S. passports are issued by the Department of State and are good for a period of 10 years if issued at age 16 or older. Information about obtaining a U.S. passport (including the application) can be found at travel.state.gov/content/passports/english.html. Some countries require that your passport be valid six months or longer beyond the dates of your trip. Please check with the embassy or nearest consulate of the country that you plan to visit for requirements. If you already have a passport, but it will expire before you complete your time abroad, you must apply for a new passport before you leave the U.S.

Always keep your passport in a safe but accessible place. Loss or theft of a U.S. passport while in the U.S. should be reported immediately to Passport Services. Information about “Lost or Stolen Passport” can be found on the State Department’s website at travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/emergencies/lost-or-stolen-passports-abroad.html. If the loss occurs abroad, immediately notify the nearest U.S. consulate or embassy (see www.usembassy.gov). Theft of a passport should also be reported to local police authorities.

Visas
A visa is a stamp or document from a foreign government that grants official permission to enter that country on or after a certain date for a defined length of time and purpose, such as study, tourism, or work. Check well in advance for the visa requirements of your destination (for some countries, obtaining a visa can take more than two months).

Visa procedures and customs requirements vary depending on citizenship. Make sure you check all requirements for your country of citizenship and for all the countries you plan to visit.

If you are a U.S. passport holder, you can find visa requirements for a specific country in the Entry/Exit Requirements section in the Country Specific Information on the State Department’s website; travel.state.gov/content/passports/English/country.html.
**Entry Requirements**
Always check the entry requirements for your destination country, which can be found on the country’s embassy website. To enter a country (with or without a visa) or obtain a visa, you may be required to show any of the following:

- Proof of sufficient funds for the duration of your stay, such as a bank statement or a statement or letter from the Financial Aid office
- Acceptance letter from overseas program, university, or host organization
- Proof of medical insurance and required vaccinations
- Letter of good conduct from local police department and/or FBI
- background check
- HIV/AIDS test results

**Required Immunizations**
Because of specific health concerns and conditions in various countries, proof that you have received certain immunizations may be required. In such a case, you must carry an official “International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis” form, issued by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and approved by the World Health Organization. This form is available from John Jay’s Student Health Center or from many physicians and travel agencies, and it must be filled out and dated by the physician or clinic administering the immunizations. In some countries, you may be asked to present the form upon entry to the country at the same time that you show your passport and any required visa.

**HIV Antibody Test Requirement**
Some countries require all incoming foreigners to take the HIV antibody test. Check to see if your host country requires a doctor’s certificate showing the results of an HIV antibody test. If you need to be tested, do so only at a center that offers pre- and post-test counseling. Allow at least two weeks for the testing process.

**U.S. Permanent Residents**
U.S. permanent residents must check with the U.S. Immigration Service concerning regulations for travel and re-entry into the U.S. It is particularly important to verify procedures for those who contemplate being outside the U.S. for more than six months.

**Students in F-1 or J-1 Visa Status**
Travel Signatures: If you will be traveling outside the U.S. and the signature on page 3 of your Form I-20 or in the lower right corner of your Form DS-2019 will expire before you return (signatures are valid for 12 months), be sure to have your I-20 or DS-2019 signed by a Designated School Official (DSO) or Alternative Responsible Officer (ARO) before you leave. Note: Obtaining a travel signature takes longer if there is no additional room on the I-20 or DS-2019 to endorse for travel.

**Applying for a New F-1 or J-1**
Visa: To re-enter the U.S., you must have a valid F-1 or -1 visa in your passport. If your visa has expired, you will need to renew it while you are abroad. A visa can only be obtained abroad at a U.S. embassy/consulate. Specific procedures at embassies/consulates may vary. Information about individual U.S. consulates can be found by accessing the U.S. Department of State website: travel.state.gov/content/visas/english.html. For your visa application, at the minimum, you will need a valid passport, valid I-20 or DS-2019 with a current travel signature, evidence of adequate financial support, and any other documents that might be required by the consulate.
Important Note: Students in F-1 or J-1 visa status who require a visa to travel should be aware that some countries require a student’s visa to be valid during their entire stay in that country, even if the student intends to renew the F-1 or J-1 visa before returning to the U.S. You should verify directly with the country’s consulate before traveling. A list of consulates can be found at www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls.

Power of Attorney
If your signature will be needed for any official or legal document during your absence, you should arrange for your legal Power of Attorney to be held by an appropriate person to act on your behalf. Obtain a Power of Attorney form and have it notarized by a notary public.

Personal Insurance
All travelers should consider purchasing personal insurance to cover, at least partially, any financial loss incurred by trip interruption or cancellation, as well as loss of baggage and personal effects while either traveling or living abroad. Many, but not all, homeowner’s insurance policies contain a clause extending this coverage worldwide. Check to see if your family’s policy contains such a clause. Normally, a copy of the police report filed at the time of loss or theft is required by the insurer before any claim will be considered.

Booking Air Travel
Book your travel as soon as you know arrival and departure information. Make sure you check exam schedules, if relevant, before booking your flights. It is strongly recommended that you book a round-trip ticket. Although changing your return flight date can incur a heavy surcharge, one-way flights are usually even more expensive. Additionally, some countries may require that you have a return ticket as part of their entry requirements.

Cancellation policies vary by airline. If you think you might need to cancel a reservation for any reason, ask about their policies before you purchase a ticket. You can also purchase trip cancellation insurance, but be sure to read the fine print to find out when it is applicable.

Rail Passes
In many countries, trains go almost everywhere one might wish to visit and are a widely used form of transportation. Unlike in the U.S., one must often reserve a seat in advance in addition to having a ticket. You can reduce the expense of train travel in most countries by buying a rail pass—which, for a certain price, offers you almost unlimited travel for a specified period of time. With a rail pass, you will not have to line up to buy a ticket, though you still may need to make reservations.

Information about rail passes (Railcard, Eurail Pass, etc.) can be obtained online or from a travel agent. Please note that many of these passes can only be purchased in the U.S., so you must obtain the one you want before departure. If you expect to limit your travel to a single country, you may wish to explore rail pass availability for travel within the borders of that country. Information on such national rail passes can be obtained from the respective national railroads.

Hostels
You can save money when traveling by staying at low-cost hostels. Many youth hostels require that you have an International Youth Hostel Pass. Information about membership can be obtained from Hostelling International at www.hihostels.com. The Hostelling International website allows you to search for hostels by location and book rooms. In addition, you can book rooms by calling a booking center or visiting a booking center in person.
**Luggage**
Excess luggage can be expensive to transport, but if you have crucial items that do not fit into your airline’s luggage limit, you can 1) pay for excess luggage on your flight (do not forget that you will still have to transport your luggage from the airport to your destination!) or 2) have packages sent to you at your destination (depending on your host country). Do not bring more pieces of luggage than you can carry yourself. You and you alone, are responsible for your belongings. Traveling light is safer and easier.

Check luggage and carry-on regulations for all airlines on which you will be traveling. Airlines are strict about weight and size requirements. Visit the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) website for information about prohibited items in carry-on and checked baggage: www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/prohibited-items.

Mark all luggage, inside and out, with your name and address. You may want to mark your bags in a distinctive way, so you can easily find them. Count your pieces of luggage each time you travel from place to place.

**Laptop Computers**
If you will need easy access to a computer for research or academic work, you may want to bring a laptop. Keep in mind, however, that there are risks in transporting and storing the computer. When traveling, keep your laptop with you at all times; never put it on the seat in front of you or underneath your seat. Make sure the computer is insured.

**Duties and Tariffs**
In advance of your departure, you should consult the U.S. Customs and Border Service website (www.cbp.gov/travel) for information about duties and tariffs that may apply upon your return. You should save receipts for any major purchases you make overseas and intend to take home.

**Immigration and Customs Inspections**
Upon entry to any country, you must show your passport and any required visas and/or proof of immunizations. At an airport, this usually occurs just after you deplane, but before you recover your luggage. Remember that admission to the country is entirely at the discretion of the immigration officer. It is wise to be polite and to dress neatly. The immigration officer will normally ask you about the nature of your visit and how long you plan to remain in the country.

After your passport has been stamped and you have collected your luggage, you must pass through a customs inspection. You will probably receive a customs declaration form to complete prior to arrival, and customs officials will examine it when they look at your luggage. Your bags may be carefully examined, and you may be detained or asked to pay duties if there are any irregularities or violations of customs regulations. You may also be waved through with no special attention.

**Returning to the U.S.**
U.S. residents are usually permitted to bring $800 worth of goods purchased abroad into the U.S. duty free. All articles acquired abroad and in your possession at the time of your return to the U.S. must be declared to Customs officials, either orally or in writing. This includes gifts you received or that you purchased for someone else, personal purchases, goods you intend to sell, and purchases made in duty-free shops. Declaration forms will be distributed during your flight back to the U.S. Before you return, you might want to confirm if the items you plan to bring back are not prohibited or restricted (see “Know Before You Go”: www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/know-before-you-go).
Personal belongings of U.S. origin taken abroad may be sent back by mail duty-free if, on the outside wrapper, it is stated that the articles were taken out of the U.S. as personal effects and are being returned without having been repaired or altered while abroad (“American Goods Returned”). Should you need assistance on matters relating to U.S. Customs while abroad, customs representatives are available in American embassies.

**EMERGENCY SUPPORT AND PROCEDURES**
All John Jay College travelers should become familiar with the resources available to them in an emergency or crisis. While most students experience a safe and healthy time abroad, some do encounter both minor emergencies (e.g. theft, illness, injury) and major crises (natural and environmental disasters, civil unrest, political uprising, terrorist attack, etc.).

**Preparing for Emergencies**
The first step in crisis management is being prepared before a crisis occurs. In most cases, you can respond to minor emergencies in the same way you would in a similar situation at home. However, what counts as a minor emergency at home can often be more difficult to handle abroad due to language and communication barriers and a lack of familiarity with your surroundings. Make sure you learn the name and location of the hospital nearest to your residence abroad and how to contact the local police and summon emergency medical care. A list of 911 equivalents is posted on the Students Abroad website: travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/to-go/911-list.html.

When traveling on weekends or over holiday periods, be sure to keep your local contacts and/or roommates or host family informed of your intended itinerary. Make sure the resident director, host family, or work supervisor who is assigned responsibility for your welfare always knows where and how to contact you in an emergency. If you are part of an organized program abroad, make sure you are aware of the emergency plan for your program or university. If you are studying or interning abroad independent from an organized program, consider creating a personal emergency action plan that outlines what actions you would take in the event of an emergency.

After you arrive in your host country, remember to share your local contact information with your family and update your study abroad advisor if information changes. In the case of a crisis, the College will need to be able to reach you to ensure your safety.

Your emergency action plan should include a list of important phone numbers (emergency numbers in your host country, numbers for local supervisors/contacts and home embassy/consulate, numbers for John Jay College Public Safety) along with copies of your insurance papers, passport, and names of any medications to which you are allergic. You should input these numbers into your cell phone, if you carry one, but should also keep this information in at least one other location.

**What to Do in Emergencies**
Dealing well with a crisis situation includes understanding your emotions, keeping yourself as safe as possible, and communicating with your emergency contacts. It is important to remain calm and exercise good judgment. If you encounter less serious problems while abroad, it is best to check in with your on-site coordinator or local contacts before calling John Jay College, or your family.
Should you encounter difficulties or problems that you cannot easily solve on your own, you should follow these steps:

1. Take the necessary steps to secure your immediate physical safety (e.g. call the 911 equivalent, go to the hospital, seek shelter, etc.).
2. Contact the emergency number provided. We will work to meet your needs and will contact the appropriate resources, while coordinating your services.
3. Keep your phone line open and check e-mail if you can. In the case of a serious international incident, John Jay College will try to reach you by using the contact information that you provided.
4. Once the immediate situation has been addressed, you should contact your sponsoring department/program at John Jay College to inform them of the situation. John Jay College Public Safety can coordinate this contact. The Public Safety office is on-call 24/7 at 212-237-8524.

**Office of Overseas Citizens Services**
For U.S. citizens, emergency assistance is also available through the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, operated by the State Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs. If you need to contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services from overseas call 202.501.4444. They can help you:

- Replace a stolen passport
- Contact family and/or friends
- Obtain medical care
- Address emergency needs that arise as a result of a crime
- Obtain general information about the local criminal justice process and information about your case
- Obtain information about local resources to assist victims, including crime victim assistance and victim compensation program.
- Obtain a list of local English-speaking attorneys

The Office of Overseas Citizens Services cannot act as a travel agent, lend money, cash personal checks, arrange free medical service or legal advice, provide bail or get you out of jail, act as a courier or interpreter, search for missing luggage, or settle disputes with local authorities.

**STAYING SAFE AND OBEYING THE LAW**
Depending on where you are traveling, you may be in a place with less, more, or the same level of street crime as in the U.S. In any case, being a foreigner and not knowing the customs and patterns of local behavior may increase the odds of your becoming the victim of crimes such as fraud, robbery, or theft.

**Taking Personal Responsibility**
Safety and security depend to a large degree upon being well prepared, listening and heeding the counsel you are given, being careful, and remaining vigilant. Here are some essential rules:

- Try to blend in with the people around you. Don’t dress in conspicuous ways, speak loudly, behave inappropriately, or display expensive personal accessories (cameras, iPods, laptops, etc.).
- Avoid crowds, protests, rallies, or any potentially volatile situations, as well as restaurants and places where foreigners are known to congregate.
• Avoid crowds, protests, rallies, or any potentially volatile situations, as well as restaurants and places where foreigners are known to congregate.
• Keep abreast of local news. Read local newspapers and magazines and speak with locals to learn about any potential civil unrest. **Do not get involved in protests, rallies, or demonstrations.**
• Report to the responsible authority any suspicious persons loitering around residence or instructional facilities or following you; keep your residence area locked; use common sense in divulging information to strangers.
• Whenever possible, make reservations at a hotel or hostel before you arrive in a city. Check a map before you leave so you know where you are going. Looking lost or confused or holding a map can make you an easy target.
• Be careful when using ATMs and avoid using them in isolated places or at times when you are likely to be the only person around.
• Do not impair your judgment through excessive consumption of alcohol or by taking illegal drugs.
• Remember that safety in numbers is a good idea wherever you are.
• Do not accept help from people waiting around at the airport exit gate. Arrange for airport pick-up ahead of time or inform yourself about the public transportation options. If you plan to take a taxi, find the official airport taxi stand.
• If you are traveling (even if only overnight), leave an itinerary with your resident director, host family, or employer.

**Local and National Laws**

You are subject to the laws of any country you are visiting. You should make sure you know the laws and obey them scrupulously. Many of the legal protections you may take for granted are left behind when you leave the U.S., and penalties in some countries are much tougher than in the U.S. Embassies and consulates are limited in the assistance they can provide should you get caught up in the legal system of your host country. They cannot intervene on your behalf if you are arrested or prosecuted for violation of local laws, including laws on drug use, currency exchange, and disturbance of the peace. Do not count on the consulate or embassy assisting you in anything other than providing advice. If you do become involved in any legal problems, contact John Jay immediately.

Avoid all involvement with drugs and other illegal substances. Do not purchase, use, or have drugs in your possession. Buying or carrying even small amounts of drugs can result in your arrest. Drug charges can carry severe consequences, including imprisonment without bail for up to a year before a case is tried, and sentences ranging from fines and jail time to years of hard labor. Some crimes even carry the penalty of death. Contraband or paraphernalia associated with illegal drug use can also get you in trouble.

Bail provisions such as those in the U.S. are rare in many countries, and pre-trial detention without bail is not uncommon. The principle of “innocent until proven guilty” is not necessarily a tenet of legal systems abroad. Many countries do not provide a jury trial, and in some cases you may not be present at your trial. You could be in a country where prison and law

**Quick Tip**

Thieves often strike when people are distracted. When making a phone call, texting, eating at a restaurant, checking a train schedule, or reading a map, stay aware of where you are and always keep your bags in your line of vision or in

►
enforcement officials do not speak English, the significance of which you may not fully appreciate until you are confined and feeling helpless.

MAINTAINING HEALTH ABROAD

Staying healthy while traveling abroad may depend on three important factors: making adequate preparations, knowing destination-specific health risks, and following sound U.S. and local medical counsel. Living away from your usual cultural environment may also cause a degree of emotional stress—which, in turn, could trigger physiological consequences. The impact on personal relationships, counseling sessions (if you are in therapy), and your general health (especially if you are on medication of any kind) is something to consider as you prepare for your term abroad.

Traveling in developed countries usually incurs no greater health risks than traveling in the U.S. However, in some regions of Africa, Asia, South and Central America, and the Middle East, sanitation and hygiene may be below U.S. standards. Cities often have better health environments than rural areas, but not always. For more information consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel.

All special health needs or medical conditions should be noted on the Health Form that you carry with you. If you have diabetes, are allergic to penicillin, or have a physical condition that may require emergency care, carry identification—a tag, bracelet, or card—on your person at all times. The ID should indicate the nature of the problem and spell out clearly what must or must not be done should you be unable to communicate this information.

Prescriptions
Should you currently be under the care of a physician or require regular medication or injections (e.g., insulin or allergy shots), be sure to check with your personal physician for advice concerning your welfare while abroad.

If you need medications regularly, take an adequate supply with you. It is advisable to keep all medicines (prescription or over-the-counter) in their original and labeled containers. A letter from your physician should accompany prescription medicines. This letter should include a description of your condition, the dosage of prescribed medications, and the generic name(s) of the medicine listed. If you are required to take medication containing habit-forming or narcotic drugs, you should consult the embassies of the countries you will visit before departing the U.S. to avoid potential problems.

The Centers for Disease Control recommend that people who require routine injections carry a supply of syringes and needles sufficient to last their stay abroad. Be aware that carrying needles and syringes without a prescription may be illegal in some countries, so check ahead of time and take along a letter from your doctor.

Mental Health
If you are in counseling, you should discuss plans for support while abroad with your therapist. If you have had psychological difficulties in the past, you may also find it helpful to discuss your plans for spending time abroad with a counselor before you go. Mental health issues may arise from an existing or previous condition or result from the stress of travel and life in another country. The added pressures of communicating in a new language, meeting new people, and adjusting to a new routine and new customs causes stress for most people. If you find yourself being irritable over small things, feeling overtired, and/or excessively homesick, try to change...
your routine. Go outside and explore your new environment; talk to a new friend. If these things
do not help, we encourage you to talk to an adult who you trust and ask for help. If you find
yourself in a crisis, or urgent matter, call CISI, the emergency number, or Counseling Services
right away.

**Routine and Emergency Medical Care**
Upon arrival (if not before), you should find out what arrangements exist locally for routine
health care and the location of the nearest pharmacy. Make sure you also learn the name and
location of the hospital nearest to your residence abroad and how to summon emergency
medical care. A list of 911 equivalents is posted on the U.S. State Department’s Students Abroad
website: travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/to-go/911-list.html

**Jet Lag**
Jet lag refers to the physical and mental effects the body suffers when traveling rapidly across
time zones and the resulting disruption of the traveler’s normal sleep-wake cycle. As a result, the
traveler may experience indigestion, daytime sleepiness, headaches, and changes in blood
pressure, fatigue, and poor concentration. Symptoms typically increase with the number of time
zones crossed.

**Food and Water Safety**
In areas where chlorinated tap water is not available, or where hygiene and sanitation are poor,
only hot beverages made with boiled water or canned or bottled beverages may be safe to drink.
Where water may be contaminated, ice or containers for drinking should also be considered
contaminated. Iced drinks and non-carbonated fluids made from water of uncertain quality
should be avoided. It is generally safer to drink directly from the original beverage can or bottle.
If no source of safe drinking water is available, tap water that has been boiled for one minute
may be safe. Once it has cooled, it can be used for brushing teeth and drinking. Travelers who
are consistently in areas with unsafe drinking water have also found it useful to purchase
SteriPENs (ultraviolet, handheld water purification systems).

Be careful when choosing foods to eat. In areas of the world where
hygiene and sanitation are poor, fresh fruit and vegetables should
always be selected with care. Avoid unpasteurized milk and milk
products, such as cheese, and eat only fruit that you have peeled
yourself. Following these precautions will help you avoid intestinal
infections, such as travelers’ diarrhea, which are caused by
organisms in contaminated food or water. But be warned:
following the guidelines is no guarantee, and you may still develop
diarrhea.

Many countries offer an abundance of food sold from roadside stands, and, in many countries, it
is advisable to avoid such food. Locals may have no trouble with such food or drink because they
have developed immunities against indigenous microorganisms.

**Travelers’ Diarrhea**
Travelers’ diarrhea is a common affliction that usually strikes a couple of days
after arrival in a new environment and seldom lasts longer than about five days. Diarrhea
is nature’s way of ridding the body of noxious agents; intestinal motility serves as the normal
cleansing mechanism of the intestine. The most important way to cope with this disorder is to
maintain adequate fluid intake to prevent dehydration. Most cases of diarrhea are self-limited

 ► Quick Tip
 Always dry wet cans, bottles,
glasses, plates, bowls, or utensils
before using. All surfaces that
come into direct contact with the
mouth should also first be wiped
clean.
and require only replacement of fluids and salts lost in diarrhea stools. Drink fluids such as canned fruit juices, hot tea, or carbonated drinks. Your physician may be able to prescribe medication to take along for relief of the symptoms.

It is strongly recommended that you consult a local physician rather than attempt self-medication if your diarrhea is severe or does not resolve itself within several days, if there is blood and/or mucus in the stool, if fever occurs with shaking chills, or if there is persistent diarrhea with dehydration.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Many diseases (e.g., gonorrhea, herpes, etc.) are primarily contracted though unsafe sexual activity. AIDS is the best known and the deadliest, but the same precautions apply to all sexually transmitted diseases.

Everything you already know about sexually transmitted diseases and how they are contracted is as true overseas as it is at home. Whatever the situation in your host country, you are not more likely to contract AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases there than in the U.S.—if you act sensibly and refrain from unprotected sex and other behavior that carries the risk of infection. Since you will not know your overseas environment as well as you know your home environment, or might not be able to control it to the same degree, you should prepare yourself in advance, before leaving the U.S.

If you are sexually active, always use a latex condom. Take a supply with you, as conditions of manufacturing and storage of condoms in other countries may be questionable, and availability may be limited.

Overseas Blood Transfusions, Blood Products, and Injections
Many countries, including the U.S., Australia, Canada, Japan, and countries in Western Europe, screen donated blood for endemic diseases, including HIV, hepatitis, and syphilis; others do not. In some locations, ascertaining the availability of screened blood and blood products may be difficult.

If you are injured or ill while abroad, avoid a blood transfusion unless it is absolutely necessary. If you do need blood, try to ensure that blood from a reliable source is used (check with your local embassy/consulate). Before you leave the U.S., you should know your blood type and find out from your local Red Cross or embassy about safe sources of blood.

In the U.S., we take for granted that equipment such as needles and syringes are never reused. In some countries even disposable equipment may be used with multiple patients. Oftentimes, if you require an injection, you can buy needles and syringes and bring them to the hospital for your own use. The best rule is to avoid injections unless absolutely necessary. If injections are required, make sure the needles and syringes come straight from a package. When in doubt, ask to see how the equipment has been sterilized. Caution regarding instrument sterilization applies to all instruments that pierce the skin, including tattooing, acupuncture, ear piercing, and dental work.
COMMUNICATION

E-mail
You will probably have Internet access abroad, but it is worth asking before you go. It is important not to overdo e-mail and other online communication with friends and family at home. Online communication can become a crutch, interfering with immersion in the host culture.

International Calls
To make a direct international phone call, you need:

1. The international direct dialing number/code for the country from which you are calling. For example, the international direct dialing number/code to call from the U.S. to another country is 011. In the U.K. and many other countries, it is 00. Some countries may offer more than one number depending on the carrier and type of service.
2. The country code of the country you are calling. For example, the country code for the U.S. is 1. The country code is dialed after the international direct dialing number/code and before the city/area code. Country and city codes can be obtained from operator assistance or at www.countrycallingcodes.com.
3. The city/area code (if any) for the number you are dialing.
4. The local number.

You may find it useful to use an international telephone card, available through most long distance phone companies. Since charges are based on U.S. rates, calls are more economical. Phone cards are also useful since many pay phones do not accept cash (cards can be used at regular landlines as well).

Cell Phones
Cell phones are increasingly used in most countries to call overseas and communicate within the country. Keep in mind that most U.S. cell phones do not work abroad. We recommend that you learn about international cell phones generally and cell phone use in your destination country, before you leave. Be forewarned: Cell phone charges abroad can be more expensive than in the U.S. Use your phone wisely, or be prepared to pay!

Many travelers find that the best option is to buy an inexpensive phone upon arrival abroad. These typically operate on a pay-as-you-go system and can be a convenient and economical choice.

Inserting a SIM card from a local carrier into an unlocked handset will also provide inexpensive phoning and texting to cell phones in the same country. Check with your provider to see whether you have an internationally-compatible device and how to unlock it. Some carriers also offer “world phones” (however, world phones have their own drawbacks).

Another option is to check with your current cell phone provider to see if you can upgrade your service so it works abroad, allowing you to use your current phone number. This option is usually only cost-effective if you will be traveling to multiple countries and would have to purchase a new phone in each country. If you decide to pursue this option, be sure to discuss rates and fees for voice, data, and texting, as they are likely to be higher than what you pay for domestic service and have more restrictions. Remember to enable any new services before you leave the country. Your device may work abroad, but the rates may be much higher than you would expect.
**Smart Phone Apps**
We all live in an iWorld and are constantly connected through mobile gadgets and social media that can really make a difference in our lives, especially when traveling abroad. There are many smart phone apps that can help you get organized and ready before and during your travels, including apps for flight booking, airports, hotels, communication, budget management, health and safety, and more.

**Text, Voice, and Video Chat**
If you do not have a Skype account, you may find it useful to establish one for making free calls over the Internet to anyone else who also uses Skype. Gmail also offers free voice or video chat, and you can make and receive landline or wireless phone calls in Gmail. You can also pay for a Skype plan for calls to landlines and cell phones. If you plan to Skype or use Gmail chat/calling with your parents, you may want to confirm that they have set up an account before you leave and know how to use it. You should also download any necessary plug-ins before leaving. Apple offers FaceTime, another one-on-one video calling feature, and iMessage, a free text messaging feature between iOS devices. If you own an iPhone you can connect to FaceTime and iMessage via WiFi without having a data plan abroad.

**Time Zones**
When making phone calls to or from the U.S., keep the time difference in mind, and be sure to remind friends and relatives! Should your friends, for example, call you in France at 10 p.m. EST, they should be aware that you have probably long since gone to bed. The time zone of every country in the world can be found at www.worldtimezone.com.

**Mail**
Surface mail can be slow, but airmail is usually fast. You may need to send and/or receive packages, so make sure you know where the nearest post office is and how it operates. You may also want to find out the rates of services such as FedEx, DHL, and UPS. They are usually more expensive for small items, but often competitive for larger ones.

**MONEY MATTERS**
Note: Although banking has become more uniform, the advice below may not apply in every country. Well before you leave the U.S., you should get accurate information from your bank and from credit card agencies.

**General Financial Information**
The safest way to protect your finances while abroad is to use an ATM card and a credit card. Carrying large amounts of cash is not recommended.

**Currency Exchange**
You may want to exchange about $100.00 prior to departure to have cash on hand when you arrive at your destination. American currency can be exchanged for foreign currency at most international airports and major banks (and at most major railroad stations). In general, it is wise to exchange money at banks and not at hotels, restaurants, or retail shops, where the exchange rates are unfavorable. Banks abroad afford you the fairest exchange rate available, but you can expect to pay a commission every time you exchange currency. In some countries, the commission is based on a percentage of the amount you exchange, while in others
there is a flat fee regardless of the transaction amount. Often, you can use your ATM card to withdraw money and avoid a commission charge, although your bank may charge you a withdrawal fee.

Current currency exchange rates can be found at oanda.com/convert/classic or www.xe.com. Currency converter apps for your Blackberry, Android, iPhone, or Windows mobile device are available on the Oanda website or you can use the XE Mobile Currency Site.

Travelers’ Checks
With the widespread availability of ATMs, travelers’ checks are often inconvenient to use and, increasingly, are not used as a source of funds while traveling abroad. Still, you may wish to carry some travelers’ checks in case you cannot access funds through an ATM. If you do not use them abroad, you can use them as cash when you return to the U.S.

Credit/Debit Cards
Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and are invaluable in financial emergencies. Take a credit card along, but use it wisely; plastic can be dangerous because overspending is easy. Interest charges can be costly, and the loss or theft of a card abroad is a serious inconvenience. Not all merchants abroad accept credit cards, regardless of the brand. Visa and MasterCard tend to be more widely accepted than American Express. Some banks charge fees for overseas credit card use. Make sure you find out what your bank’s credit card and/or debit card policies are before you depart.

Most ATM machines accept foreign cards (check for the Cirrus or the Plus logo). If you have an account with Bank of America, you can avoid cash withdrawal charges by using ATMs at partner banks. **If you have a six-digit PIN for your debit and/or credit card, you may need to reset your PIN to four digits as ATMs in some countries do not accept more than four digits.**

Before you leave the U.S., make sure your bank and credit card companies know about your travel plans. Sudden changes in your account activity, such as frequent withdrawals in a foreign country, can trigger a fraud alert and cause your bank to freeze your account. You should also make a list of international contact numbers for your financial institutions, as well as your account, credit card, and ATM card numbers. Keep this information in a safe location.

The amount charged to your credit card bill is based on the exchange rate on the day that your bank or credit card company processes the transaction. Do not forget to pay your credit card bill on time! Request an electronic statement, pre-pay, or arrange for payments directly from your bank account.

Opening a Bank Account
If you are studying abroad for the academic year, you may want to open a bank account to avoid ATM withdrawal fees. After arrival, you can become acquainted with the various banks and find the branch office most convenient for your use. If you already have the exact address of a convenient location, you may want to open an account before you arrive.

Budgeting
The overall cost of living abroad can be higher than at home in part because you are in an unfamiliar environment making transactions with unfamiliar currency. Depending on your location, you may also be confronted with an almost endless array of entertainment possibilities
and attractions. A go-slow approach to spending makes sense. Little is more dismaying than running out of funds overseas with no easy or quick means of replenishment.

Keep in mind that costs can vary based on individual expectations, location, number of weeks abroad, and time of year. General principles include the following:

- Make both weekly and daily budgets and stick to them.
- Learn the value of the money in relation to the US$ (or another currency you know well) wherever you are and as quickly as possible.
- Be alert to special student rates and discounts and know what discounts are available if you have an International Student Identification Card.
- Cook for yourself (especially breakfasts) when possible.
- When you travel, stay in hostels or in modest bed-and-breakfast accommodations instead of hotels.
- Shop at street markets or major chain supermarkets and avoid specialty shops and convenience stores (which often add a 20-30% mark-up). Put off making major purchases until you have learned the range of available selections and prices—or learned that you do not need an expensive item.
- Sales taxes, as Americans know them, generally do not exist in other countries.
- But many now impose a Value-Added-Tax (VAT) on certain goods (not services), especially more expensive ones. As a visitor, you can reclaim the amount you have spent on the VAT at the international airport when you leave the country. You will need to show all your receipts and your purchases to claim this refund.

ADJUSTING TO A NEW CULTURE

It can be easy to believe one understands a foreign culture even without having directly experienced it. Images in the media and information gleaned from books or encounters with natives can provide the illusion of real knowledge. Living in a culture and having to come to terms with its conventions and customs is a different matter entirely. Some cultural differences are evident (e.g., language, religion, political organization, etc.). Others can be so subtle that becoming aware of them can be a complex process. A first-time visitor may remain uncomfortable and off balance for quite some time.

In adjusting to your new environment, you will have to deal not only with real differences, but also with perceived differences. Keep in mind that people of other cultures are just as adept at stereotyping foreigners as we may be at stereotyping them—and the results are not always complimentary.

The best way to learn about local social customs is to inquire politely. Expect things to be different overseas. One of the basic reasons for you to go abroad is to develop an appreciation for the people and customs of other cultures. Anyone who goes overseas demanding that everything be the same as what he or she is accustomed is probably better served by staying at home. Be flexible and receptive in dealing with differences, and you will find your own life experiences enriched. An open mind, sense of humor, and a full dose of patience will serve you well in making a successful adjustment.

Cultural Adjustment

Just as an athlete cannot get in shape without going through a sometimes uncomfortable conditioning stage, so you cannot fully appreciate cultural differences without first going through some stages of adjustment. It is possible that your initial reaction to life abroad will be euphoria, sparked by a sense of novelty and adventure. It is also possible that the euphoria will
give way to a less pleasant emotion, as you try to make your way through an unfamiliar culture. You may find that you are unable to follow your usual routines. Minor problems may seem like major crises. You may feel anxious or depressed.

These symptoms are often referred to as “culture shock,” although this is somewhat of a misnomer. It is important to realize that these are perfectly normal responses to a new environment and, in fact, can be seen as a sign that you are truly engaging with a new culture. There is no one-size-fits-all way of dealing with the challenges of this adjustment period, although the more you understand it, the more effectively you can move past it and use it as a way to deepen your immersion into the culture. People who are living, working, and or studying in an unfamiliar location face many of the same issues that people face making other life transitions.

Techniques for adjusting to a new culture include learning as much as possible about the host country prior to departure, looking for the reasons things are done or perceived differently, meeting local people and finding friends with whom you can discuss your reactions, reading and speaking the local language, and familiarizing yourself with local viewpoints and customs. You should emerge from the experience with the ability to function in two or more cultures with confidence.

Some of the issues you may want to familiarize yourself with about your host country are traditions or practices related to appropriate dress, food, table manners, greeting, gift giving, hygiene, punctuality, religion, tipping, transportation, physical contact, and dating.

**Fitting In**

Expect to make mistakes. There is no way to learn everything about a host culture ahead of time. Because social customs differ greatly from one country to another, it is impossible to give guidelines that are universally applicable.

**Speaking the language:** Most people will appreciate your efforts to communicate in their native language. Do not be intimidated even if your command of the language is limited.

**Politeness:** In many countries, social encounters are governed by a code of conduct that requires a greater degree of formality than in the U.S. Be aware of the differences between the “familiar” and the “polite” forms of address (and use them properly). Become familiar with the appropriate expressions of gratitude in response to your hosts’ hospitality and be prepared to offer a formal greeting to whomever you meet in your day-to-day activities.

**Personal questions:** Let your hosts take the lead when engaging in “small talk.” While Americans often find it easy to talk about themselves, in some countries your hosts may view such discussion as impolite.

**Physical contact:** When establishing social relationships, be aware of the level of familiarity that you should adopt. Physical contact, for example, may not be appreciated or understood by someone unfamiliar with the American idea of camaraderie; cheerful pat on the back or a warm hug may be uncomfortable. All cultures have social space norms: how far away to stand when...
conversing, how to shake hands or wave farewell. You should learn the local customs as quickly as you can. Learning customs related to boundaries and personal space in an unfamiliar culture also plays an important role in personal safety.

**Relationships:** What may be considered normal relations between people of the opposite sex in the U.S., may be interpreted very differently by your host culture. Both men and women should talk to locals to understand customs as they pertain to acceptable dress and other prevailing social mores.

**Drinking and drunkenness:** Be extremely sensitive to cultural attitudes regarding alcohol. You may find that drinking alcohol at most meals is the norm in your host country or that drinking alcohol is a rare occurrence. Whatever the prevailing cultural norms, binge drinking and drunkenness are not acceptable.

**Humor:** While each country has its own brand of wit and humor, few cultures appreciate the kind of “kidding” to which Americans are accustomed. Kidding comments, even when well intentioned, can be interpreted as unfriendly.

**Price bargaining:** Bargaining over prices is sometimes not only appropriate but expected. At other times, it is inappropriate. If you misread the situation, you may find that you have insulted the merchant. You can test the waters by politely indicating that you like the product, but that the price is more than you had anticipated spending. If the merchant wishes to bargain, he or she now has an opening to lower his/her offer. If bargaining is not part of standard business practice, you can simply (and politely) terminate the conversation.

**Discrimination Abroad**
People you encounter abroad may judge you based on your race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, age, religion, gender, or physical ability—both in ways you might expect based on previous experiences and in completely unexpected ways. You may be part of a minority or majority for the first time in your life and have to think about your identity in a new way. You can also expect to encounter anti-Americanism in some parts of the world. Try not to let the possibility of discrimination prevent you from experiencing the many benefits of travel abroad.

No two people traveling abroad ever have the same experience, even in the same program and country. Some students have reported feeling exhilarated by being outside the American context; others have experienced varying degrees of innocent curiosity and sometimes familiar as well as new types of ostracism or discrimination. The nature of the discrimination you may experience often has to do with the ethnic/racial make-up of the host country as well as cultural norms and attitudes related to gender, religion, and sexual orientation.

You may discover that what first seems like discrimination is actually curiosity. People may stare at you or ask questions that you find insensitive. In many parts of the world, a person’s only connection with Americans and certain cultural groups comes from what they see on TV or in movies, which can lead to misimpressions (often strongly held).

While you may encounter situations that are difficult to deal with, educating yourself about the host culture and thinking through scenarios you might encounter ahead of time will better prepare you to deal with life abroad. Talking with students on campus who have spent time abroad can be helpful in terms of establishing what the context will be like abroad and how to prepare for it.
LGBT Students Abroad
You may already identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or queer, or you may still be exploring your identity. In any case, you will find that the social climate, laws, and norms for personal interactions in other cultures are often different from those in the U.S. Some countries are more liberal on these matters than the U.S. and some less. Whatever the general rule, there will always be pockets of difference and personal idiosyncrasies. You should certainly talk with other students who have been where you will be.

LGBT resources include:

- University of South Florida LGBT Student Guide: educationabroad.global.usf.edu/_customtags/ct_FileRetrieve.cfm?File_ID=51978
- Michigan State Study Abroad for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgendered (GLBT) Students: studyabroad.isp.msu.edu/forms/glbt.html
- U.S. State Department LGBT Travel Information: travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/lgbt.html
- International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex Association (ILGA): ilga.org
- NAFSA Association of International Educators Rainbow Special Interest Group: http://www.rainbowsig.org/
- National Center for Transgender Equality: transequality.org/Issues/travel.html

The John Jay College Office of International Studies and Programs is a safe and inclusive space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students and their allies. Never hesitate to contact a study abroad adviser for more information or to share your input, questions, or concerns.

Gender Roles and Norms
When you travel abroad, you may encounter gender roles and norms that are different from what you are accustomed to, and you may be treated differently or be expected to treat others differently based on these roles and norms. Before traveling, you should inform yourself about societal perceptions of gender, behavioral expectations, dating, and relationships in your host culture and take time to consider issues that you may face while abroad.

You will have to make an effort to learn the unwritten rules about what you can and cannot do in the country that you are visiting. Talking with peers who have spent time in your host country can be useful to get a sense of norms related to behavioral expectations and relationships. You may find that you are made uncomfortable or offended by behavior that is acceptable in your host country. Considering how societal expectations align with your personal values can be a useful exercise for contextualizing both others’ behavior and your own reactions.

For example, many female college students have a hard time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad in both public and private interactions between men and women. Perhaps the greatest challenge to U.S. women abroad stems from their tendency to be independent and to hold the belief that women may go where men go, do what men do, and speak as men do.

You may not agree with some local practices you find abroad, but you should try to understand and respect them while in your host country. Try to maintain the perspective that these challenging experiences are part of understanding another culture, which is one of the reasons you have traveled abroad.
**Sexual Harassment**
Students may find that what is considered sexual harassment in the U.S. is socially acceptable behavior in other countries. In some countries, it is not uncommon for women to be verbally and loudly appraised, honked at, and aggressively addressed in other ways. Local women, who often get the same treatment, have usually learned to ignore it.

Although being culturally sensitive and respectful is an important element of your experience abroad, you should not accept behavior that invades your personal boundaries or makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. Trust your instincts. Although it may seem rude to be unfriendly to a stranger, creating boundaries to protect yourself is important. Use body language, facial expressions, and a firm voice to fend off unwanted attention. Make sure your body language is congruent with your words—if you say no with a smile; your words lose their force. Avoid eye contact, which can be seen as an invitation in some cultures.

The issue of sexual harassment can become a major stress factor for women and can greatly affect their experience abroad. Harassing behavior is almost always annoying but only occasionally develops into a dangerous situation. Responding aggressively out of exasperation is understandable, but can put you at risk. Engaging in conversation with locals about gender roles and techniques for deflecting unwanted attention can be helpful. If harassment toward you causes increased anxiety or anger, you should seek assistance.

Uncomfortable situations can usually be avoided by taking precautions. Dress conservatively (information about appropriate clothing for women travelers in various countries can be found at www.journeywoman.com). Do not go out alone late at night or in questionable neighborhoods.

**Readjusting to John Jay**
You may face a period of adjustment after returning to campus. Returning to your home environment can often be more difficult than traveling to a different country because you don’t expect to have any issues returning “home.” If you integrated yourself successfully into your host culture you may feel torn about leaving. You may be eager to return home but also reluctant to leave behind important relationships you established while abroad.

As you resume your routines, you may recognize that you have changed as a result of your overseas experience. This change is a healthy and expected result, but your intellectual and/or personal growth may mean that you have some difficulty fitting into your old patterns of behavior. For example, you may be disappointed with friends who seem uninterested in accounts of your overseas experiences. You may find that life at home is restrictive compared with what you enjoyed abroad. While you may be eager to be home again, you may also hesitate over resuming all the rhythms of your former life.

After an initial period of dislocation, most students who have spent time abroad readjust to American academic and social life without difficulty. The experience of learning and living in a different cultural environment often has a confidence-building effect.
PACKING SUGGESTIONS

Most students who have traveled abroad report that they packed too much, especially clothes. What you take depends largely on where you are going and how long you will be there. Remember that you will often be able to buy what you need abroad.

Don’t pack your bags to their limit. It is likely that you will buy items while abroad that you will want to carry home. Comfort and practicality are key for both clothing and shoes, but remember that people in other countries often dress more formally than people in the U.S. The local style is likely to differ from what you see on campus or in your hometown. Descriptions of appropriate casual and business dress for men and women in many countries can be found at www.executiveplanet.com in the country-specific business culture guides.

**Clothing:**

- The basics: socks, underwear, shorts (if appropriate), skirts/pants, shirts, pajamas, sweater/sweatshirt
- Waterproof walking shoes, flip-flops/shower shoes
- Rain jacket, light jacket or winter coat, gloves, scarf, hat, as appropriate
- Bathing suit
- Sun hat (and sunglasses)
- One or two nice outfits

**Toiletries and Medical Kit:**

- The basics: toothbrush and toothpaste, comb and/or brush, deodorant, razor(s), razor blades, moisturizer
- Sunscreen, lip balm
- Prescription medicines (carry copy of prescriptions and letter from physician)
- Non-prescription drugs: laxative, antacid, pain reliever, anti-diarrheal medication (Immodium or Lotomil), motion sickness pills, decongestant, antihistamine, anti-fungal cream, cough suppressant, yeast infection medication
- Insect repellent (25-30% DEET) and, depending on destination, mosquito bed net; calamine lotion or topical antihistamine
- Band-Aids, gauze, tape, antibiotic cream
- Oral thermometer
- Contraceptives and condoms
- Tampons/sanitary napkins (enough for your whole stay)
- Extra eyeglasses and contact lenses with cleaning solution
- Tweezers, fingernail clippers, nail files, etc. and/or Swiss Army knife
- Pre-moistened towelettes
- Water disinfectant (iodine or chlorine solution)
- Gatorade/electrolyte replacing powder

**Documents:**

- Passport and visa(s) and photocopies
- International Health Insurance
- Airline tickets and rail passes
- Medical insurance card and coverage plan
- Driver’s license
- Emergency contact information
- Credit cards, ATM cards, etc. and copies for reporting lost/stolen cards
Acceptance letter from program or host organization and approval letter from John Jay (if applicable)
Extra passport sized photographs (useful for ID cards, rail cards)

Gift Suggestions:
- Clothing and items with John Jay logo
- Baseball caps
- Non-perishable traditional American foods

Miscellaneous:
- Money belt or neck wallet
- Umbrella
- Watch (cheap, reliable)
- Camera and film/batteries/extra disks
- Flash drive/memory stick
- Flashlight
- Day pack/small compressible knapsack
- Battery-operated alarm clock (and extra batteries)
- Adapter and voltage converter. For information about electrical outlets, plugs, and sockets found throughout the world, see www.electricaloutlet.info. Small locks for backpacks or locking luggage to overhead train racks
- Pictures of your life at John Jay or at home to share