Need to Know: South Africa

Objective of the “Need to Know” Document
The Need to Know document is an advising tool written by a Berkeley Study Abroad adviser to review program specific details that may impact a student’s decision to apply for an EAP program. The document is not a summary of eligibility requirements, academic, housing, application and other logistical details freely available to students on the UCEAP and BSA website, and reviewed by a student in the Program Self-Assessment. The best source of detailed program information is always the UCEAP Program Guide from the prior academic cycle. If any concerns you have are not addressed on the UCEAP website, in the Program Guide or Need to Know document, please contact the BSA adviser for this program.

Advisor Contact Information
For BSA Adviser name, email and drop-in advising hours, visit http://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/contact/advising

Competitiveness of the Program
The University of Cape Town (UCT) program has been competitive or “impacted,” with spring semester being traditionally more impacted than fall semester. If there are more qualified applicants for the program than available spaces, “alternates” will be selected.

Students who are majoring in fields outside of African Studies, especially biology, environmental sciences, public health, and other hard sciences, are highly encouraged to apply, due to the impacted status of African Studies and other humanities courses for international students.

Required Course for Selection to Program
All students must have successfully completed a coursework prerequisite in African studies (history, politics, or sociology preferred) prior to departure. The course must be at least 3 units and may be taken on a letter grade or P/NP basis. Courses that have been approved previously include:

- African American Studies (AFRICAM) 4A “Africa: History and Culture”
- African American Studies (AFRICAM) 4B “Africa: History and Culture”
- African American Studies (AFRICAM) 115 “Language and Social Issues in Africa”
- Anthropology (ANTHRO) 123B “Archaeology of Africa”
- Anthropology (ANTHRO) 183 “Topics in the Anthropological Study of Africa”
- Geography (GEOG) 165 “Africa: Ecology and Development”
- History (HISTORY) 10 “African History”
- History (HISTORY) 103H “Africa”
- History (HISTORY) 112B “Modern South Africa, 1652-Present”
- History (HISTORY) 112C “Colonialism and Nationalism in Africa”
- Letters and Science (L&S) 150A “Global Transformation and Cultural Change: AIDS and Sub-Saharan Africa”
- Political Science (POL SCI) 146A “African Politics”
- Political Science (POL SCI) 146B “African Politics”

Please prepare for the fact that only a fraction of these courses may be offered in a given term. Other courses may be eligible to meet the coursework prerequisite. Students should consult the UC Berkeley online schedule of classes and the Center for African Studies for potential courses. Language or Music courses and previous work or volunteer experience may NOT be used to satisfy this prerequisite.

If the course of interest is not on the previously approved list (above), students are required to email a copy of the course syllabus to the BSA adviser directly to determine whether the proposed course will satisfy the prerequisite.

Curriculum
Universities in South Africa are based on British higher education in structure and method. For some courses, this may be more lecture-based instruction requiring effective note taking of lectures and the ability to demonstrate understanding of material based solely on lectures. Students must be prepared to assume more responsibility and independence in completing readings, be assessed for a course through a single paper or exam, and be able to seek out assistance from instructors and South African students. For more information about courses and academics, see the Program Guide.
South Africa is on the calendar year system; hence, their academic year begins spring (first) semester and continues through fall (second) semester. When reviewing courses, applicants should carefully note University of Cape Town course levels (100, 200, 300, 400, 500), required prerequisites, duration (year vs. semester), and term (first vs. second semester).

Information on courses is described further in the UCEAP Application Instructions for UCT. Refer to these documents for course information only and disregard any sections pertaining to Application for Admission and Applicant Admission Process at this time. Additional information on courses is available in the UCT Faculty Handbooks.

Students are required to take at least two courses in the school of their major at UCT. Students interested in African Studies courses should be aware that such courses are highly popular with international students and UCT limits the numbers of international students in any class on campus to no more than 50% of class enrollment; therefore, African Studies courses cannot be the main objective of all UC student study. Students are recommended to consider general major coursework with community service opportunities in order to learn and experience issues impacting South Africa.

Science students may apply to participate in a select number of pre-semester fieldwork courses in the Faculty of Science. Selection is competitive and is made by the course instructor. Students who are accepted into these courses should be prepared to arrive earlier than the established UCEAP arrival date.

Students take courses with local and international students. Students interested in taking courses alongside South Africans should note that courses with topics on Africa and South Africa have generally been more popular with international students than South African students. Although not required, students may wish to consider a language course in one of the official languages of South Africa (e.g. Xhosa, Afrikaans).

Internships and Research
The opportunity to offer service to the disadvantaged communities of Cape Town is a highlight of many students' study abroad experience in South Africa. Internships are arranged by UCT’s Students’ Health and Welfare Centres Organization (SHAWCO) and will be secured once you are on-site. Students must complete a substantial paper or series of papers in addition to the internship in order to receive academic credit (Pass/No pass basis only). If interested in research for academic credit, students must enroll in a UCT class which has a required research or fieldwork component. Students may also pursue community service and volunteer activities independently on a non-credit basis through local organizations.

Housing
Limited campus housing may be available. Otherwise, all students will live with other U.S. and international students in a shared apartment or house in a safe neighborhood arranged by Ida Cooper Associates. Ida Cooper Associates and the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO) will arrange housing before your departure based on the housing preference questionnaire you will complete in the UCEAP Pre-Departure Checklist. The lodging and amenities will vary by each housing option, but you can easily buy things that meet your needs in Cape Town. Houses are not centrally heated, and you may want to purchase a heater for the winter months or a fan for the warmer months.

Unless otherwise instructed, you will make your housing payments directly to the landlord in local currency, even if you are on financial aid. In some cases, credit card payments may be accepted. Before leaving South Africa, you must pay the balance of any outstanding rent, library, gym, and other charges in full. If you leave unpaid fees behind, your grades will not be released to UC and you will be responsible for paying these fees directly to the host university even after returning to the U.S.

Visa and Entry Clearance
Travel after the UC term ends and before the official UCEAP program start date is not possible due to the visa application processing times. UCEAP is not able to accelerate the process for issuing acceptance letters and visas.

NOTE: Approximately 3-4 weeks before your program begins, all students must travel to the South African Embassy (Consulate) in Los Angeles to obtain their visa in-person. There are no exceptions to this requirement. You are also required to provide an FBI Clearance report and this takes up to 12 weeks to process before the study visa application documents can be submitted to the South African Embassy.

For NorCal students: The BSA Adviser for this program can connect you via email with the other UC Berkeley students going to South Africa during your study abroad term. You’ll all be able meet each other in-person at the campus Pre-Departure Orientation, which will take place in November for the Spring/Year programs, and April for Fall program. You may want to plan the trip to the South African Consulate in Los Angeles together - to make it more fun and to save on money (gas and possible overnight stay).

You can only to go the South African Consulate in Los Angeles only after having received your official UCT acceptance letter. The letter is typically issued close to departure. You will need to have all of your other visa documents ready, so
that as soon as your official acceptance letter arrives, you can head to Los Angeles. You can come home to NorCal after dropping off your visa application. You then need to wait for your passport to be mailed back to you with your student visa stamp inside, which will be returned to you probably immediately before departure.

The BSA Adviser for the program can also help connect with the UCLA students going to South Africa (and other UC students too!). They will all be heading to the LA Consulate around the same time as you. Please note that consulates are closed over the weekend.

**Special Demands of the Program**

Health and safety remain primary issues of concern for study in South Africa, particularly crime/security, motor traffic, and HIV. Students should review the [Program Guide](#) and [Risk Assessment](#) to familiarize themselves with risks associated with participation on the program.

Students should familiarize themselves with the role of race, gender, sexuality, and religion while studying in South Africa, and develop appropriate expectations according to personal backgrounds and self-identification. LGBTIQ students are invited to reference the [UCEAP LGBTIQ Community Resource Page](#) to learn about host country laws and norms.

Given the special demands of the program, it is highly recommended that applicants meet with the BSA adviser prior to submitting an application.