

Accepting the Crocodile Fat:

The Many Gifts of Overseas Study

by Sunshine Ray Clark

"Spending time overseas broadened my view of the world and made me more sensitive to the people and places around me."

Identity is shaped by various experiences, and naturally my experiences abroad have had an enormous effect on who I am today.

Perhaps the greatest influence from my trip to South Africa came from one touching incident: It was my first day at the site, when I heard a voice coming from over the hills. I looked up, just in time to see a small boy, no older than six, standing on the top of an adjacent hill, smiling and waving his arms frantically. It

took only a moment to hear his broken English: "Welcome to my country." Almost instantly, tears came to my eyes, as the young boy, followed by a large group of other children, ran up to us with a unique gift in their arms: crocodile fat. It was at that moment that I realized that poverty meant nothing in relation to happiness.

These people were living in dung houses, with barely enough food from their small sugarcane fields to get by, but they were presenting us with one of the most highly prized gifts in all of Zulu culture. (Crocodiles are said to hold magical powers, and eating the fat makes one resistant to poisons and diseases.) This experience made me see life in a different way, and made me an entirely different person. I now realize what it means to share one's way of life with another person, whether it be material or not, and what a profound influence that can have on an individual.

Being removed from a home and people that I have known all my life also made me more appreciative of the people around me. I spent much of my time

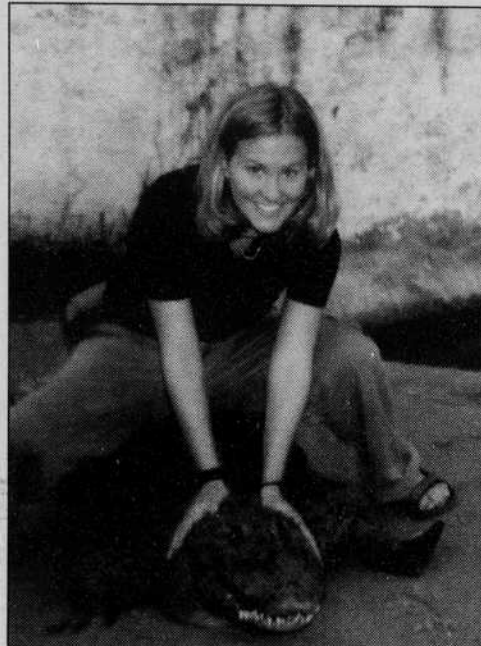
overseas thinking how lucky I was to be there, and how I would never have had the chance to have such an experience without the financial and emotional support of those close to me. Everyday I make sure that those around me know how grateful I am to have them, and how important they are to me.

Spending time abroad has also helped me on an academic level. I have become devoted to my major (archaeology) and more driven than ever to complete school and follow my ambitions. My grades and attendance have improved drastically. Through my experiences in South Africa, I have now seen how I want my life to be, and I have begun to work towards that goal.

Essentially, spending time overseas broadened my view of the world and made me more sensitive to the people and places around me. The experience improved my sense of identity, and I look forward to adding to those changes in the future.

Sunshine is a senior majoring in archaeology. She participated in an overseas internship in South Africa in the summer of 2001.

Sunshine poses with an alligator.



Sunshine gets hands-on experience digging at an archaeological site in South Africa.

It Just Keeps Getting Better! **NEW** Study-Abroad Opportunities for UO Students

• New hands-on programs.

Students can now select from four new semester-length programs in **Belize, Cuba, Jamaica, and Mongolia**. Classroom learning is concentrated in the first part of the semester, with intensive culture and language courses, and a hands-on field placement fills the remainder of your time. Placements in development, human services, ecology, the arts, and a variety of other fields are possible. For Cuba, two years of Spanish language is required; for the other programs, no previous language training is needed. Contact: Surendra Subramani, surendra@oregon.uoregon.edu.

• The cooperative model.

Like UC Santa Cruz or Evergreen State, **Aalborg University** is Denmark's alternative school, where the cooperative learning styles of the 1960s are still the norm. Spend two months in discussion-based seminars and then work with a small group of students on practical, problem-solving projects. All courses are offered in English, and Aalborg programs are tuition-free for UO students. Choose from: development studies, Danish welfare state studies, and international cultural studies, European

integration studies, or transnational studies. Contact: Roger Adkins, radkins@oregon.uoregon.edu.

• Eastern exposures 'near' and 'far'.

The UO now offers semester, year, or summer study programs in **Jordan, Taiwan, and Turkey**, as well as three new programs in mainland **China**. In Jordan and Turkey, select from courses on the local culture, language, history, literature, politics, and religion—all taught in English. In China and Taiwan, courses are offered in both English and Chinese (some programs require prior study of Chinese). Subjects include Chinese language, culture, and literature; economics; international relations; history; sociology; art; and art history. Contact: Cari Vanderkar, cvanderk@darkwing.uoregon.edu.

• The Argentine way.

Another new program for UO students is at the National University in **Rosario, Argentina**. Courses in business and Argentine culture and history are taught in English, and courses in Spanish language are available. Fall, spring, and summer programs are available. Contact: Surendra Subramani at

346-3207 or surendra@oregon.uoregon.edu.

• Creativity in the Italian Alps.

The Department of Art now offers a workshop from mid-August to early September each year in scenic **Oira, Italy**. Topics and media vary each year. Contact: the Art Department at 346-2163, or stop by 198 Lawrence Hall.

• The business of learning in bustling Copenhagen.

For several years the Oregon University System has run a popular study program at the prestigious **Copenhagen Business School** in Denmark, but the program was limited to MBA students. Starting in the fall of 2002, juniors and seniors studying business and related areas are also eligible for the program, which offers undergraduate courses taught in English. Contact: Roger Adkins, radkins@oregon.uoregon.edu.

• General information on UO Overseas Programs:

<http://studyabroad.uoregon.edu> or stop by 330 Oregon Hall.

Happy travels!

OUT get there [Ten Reasons Why You Simply Have to Study Abroad]

1. Globalize your education.

Some people think only students majoring in foreign languages study abroad and, sure, that was the model in, like, the 1800s. But these days, the world is getting "smaller" and better connected, and jobs in every field are more international. People planning careers in just about any area can significantly benefit from overseas study. Just think about your interview at Global Company X, when you are asked about the range of your experience and training and whether you can interact with people from diverse backgrounds, and you get to say, "Well, I studied in India for a semester in college." Dude, you are so employed.

2. It's so much cheaper than you think.

Consider these simple facts: You get to use your regular financial aid (most scholarships, grants, or loans you usually get) for the costs of any UO-sponsored study abroad program. There are also special scholarships and loans just for people who study abroad. Plus, some programs (at foreign universities that have direct exchange with the UO) actually charge no tuition beyond the study abroad fee. For many of the UO overseas programs, people end up spending around the same amount that they would for on-campus study (and it can be an even better deal for nonresidents). With these super options and the lifelong benefits of overseas study, you can't afford not to do it.

3. Just fit it.

There are so many options these days, just about anyone can fit overseas study in their academic plans. With 85 regular programs in more than 50 countries, the UO offers something for students in any major, and you can choose from any region in the world. With a little advance preparation, your term, semester, or year of overseas study can be tucked neatly into your overall plan, getting you to your degree just as quickly—and with the added benefit of an international experience.

4. Sprechen Sie Deutsch? It may not matter.

Many courses in UO overseas programs are taught in English. In addition, some programs include an intensive period of language training upon arrival in the host country. Some programs do require language training, however, so consult the individual program description or an overseas studies adviser.

5. When you wish upon a star, it makes no difference who you are.

Students of all identities and backgrounds study overseas these days, and specialized information is available to address the specific concerns of people of color, disabled people, women, and lesbians and gay men who want to study abroad. Ask the overseas studies advisers in OIP for more information about making your dreams of overseas study come true.

6. Shiny, happy resumes.

If you think studying abroad is a boost to your resume, try working in a foreign country! Every employer wants to hire people who know how to interact with foreign colleagues or business partners, and what better way to prove that you have this skill, than to do it? Through Oregon's unique IE₃ program (International Education, Experience, and Employment), you can choose from about 120 established internship positions, in dozens of employment fields, in more than 30 countries. Plus, you get internship credits for your IE₃ experience, and you can use financial aid toward your overseas travel and living expenses. Getting that unique experience for your resume just got a lot easier!

7. Get a clue.

As Americans, we tend to be a little, well, sheltered. Studying or interning abroad while you're in college is one of the best ways you can broaden your perspective of the world. In fact, many overseas returnees talk about how much more they understand American culture and their own sense of self-identity after being removed from those familiar contexts for an overseas study experience. You can gain more self-confidence and a wider sense of the many possibilities of human life. It's a kind of learning you just can't get in a classroom.

8. Be the change you want to see in the world.

Are you an idealist who dreams of a more socially just society? Of course, you must know that any lasting social change must happen both locally and globally. And what better way to understand how folks in other countries are working to better their own societies than to go and witness for yourself their efforts for promoting peace, ending hunger and poverty, and improving their social and cultural infrastructure? Several of the UO's cooperative programs with the School for International Training offer field-placement opportunities. You can get hands-on experience in Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, or South or Central Asia. Now that's thinking globally.

9. It pays to do the time.

Not only will you be, like, an ideal future employee after you study abroad; you'll also be far more likely to have gazillions more rewarding international experiences. The stats don't lie: the UO, which has one of the highest levels of student participation in overseas study and internship programs, also has high numbers of Fulbright Scholars, graduates in the Peace Corps, and alumni who end up working in overseas jobs or starting their own international projects. The fact is, laying an international foundation now opens up additional opportunities for jet-setting in your future.

10. Airfare: 866 Euros Apartment in Siena: 296 Euros per month Overseas experience: Priceless

You know what we hear over and over again from folks who've just returned from studying abroad? "Wow, that was really a life-altering experience." It's true: you'll never have had such an incredible sense of going beyond your own boundaries—and we're not just talking about the U.S. border. There simply is no substitute for studying abroad. You gotta go!