CULTURE SHOCK

From “Cultural Adjustment Strategies,” Learning Abroad Center, University of Minnesota
See also “What's Up with Culture?” at http://www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/pub/CULTURE_ISSUES_2.htm; an interactive web site that explores culture learning, culture shock, intercultural communication, and reentry.

• Culture shock is a real and normal reaction to immersion in another country and culture.
• It usually occurs 1-2 months into a semester-long program.
• There are proven ways to ease yourself through culture shock and into the culture.

It's real and it's normal. You may become really tired 4-8 weeks into a semester-long program. You're tired physically from trying to understand language, customs, and a myriad of unfamiliar daily tasks. You're tired emotionally because hard as you try to reach out and connect, you realize that you will never really be one of the locals. Disappointment can set in. You are sure that because you're willing to adapt, and in fact have been doing it for a month or more, the discomforts and irritations must be due to someone else. Suddenly the food is inadequate, the facilities aren't clean enough, people are abrupt, and the bureaucracy is relentless.

These symptoms are good signs. You know enough about the culture to recognize the differences. Now is the time to use some proven techniques to help yourself through culture shock and into the next state of full participation and enjoyment:
• acknowledge that culture shock is normal and that “this too shall pass”
• write about your concerns in your journal and sleep on them before you call home or act on your grievances
• keep busy and set some concrete goals; resist withdrawing into yourself or surrounding yourself with other U.S. citizens
• avoid being judgmental; look on the positive side of diversity and difference
• take care of yourself with enough sleep, etc. and revive your sense of humor

The New Culture

When entering a new culture, you may fight it, try to avoid it, or try to adapt it. Everyone uses all three responses to some extent, but adaptation is the most effective. It is helpful to reflect up on your own behavior and overall adjustment experience in these terms.

If you are aware of the normal cycle of cultural adjustment that everyone goes through, it will help you understand yourself and not feel you are "different". Many people are very excited and happy at first ("honeymoon" stage), but after a while, they may experience stress, confusion, anger, fear, or physical illness (fevers, headaches, stomach problems, skin rashes). About 90% of people experience some difficulty adjusting, but most are able to cope quite well.

Don't expect that you should always be able to function smoothly and get things accomplished easily in a new culture. The higher your self-expectations, the greater the possibility of frustration and disappointment when adjustment struggles do occur. Expect to encounter some difficulties, and know and accept that you will make mistakes. Knowledge of your host culture, customs, and history can help you to understand and get along better in your new environment. Read whatever you can, always be observant, and ask questions whenever you can.
Think about how you have managed changes in your life in the past (e.g., coming to Carleton). The things you did then to help you through a difficult adjustment period can also help you now. Have a sense of humor about yourself and adapting to this new culture. And be ready to be perceived as a "representative" of your country. Host nationals may seem ignorant about the U. S. and insensitive to your struggles in adjusting. Remember, a stupid question may be a clumsy way of expressing real interest in you. Also, be prepared to question and change your ideas and stereotypes about your host country and the U. S.

**Coping With the New Culture**

Your goal is to adapt to life in your host country in a way that is most appropriate for you. Relax and enjoy yourself. Even in the midst of trying times, see this as a time for learning about your host country and yourself. You may get tired of coping with things that are different and want to withdraw on occasion from human contact. Once in a while, that's okay. Dealing with a new language and culture can be very tiring. It helps to get plenty of sleep, eat on a regular schedule, and take time to be alone in your room or in a natural setting to read and relax.

It can be helpful to keep some kind of contact with your home and culture (letters, reading about home, reading in English, contact with fellow Americans, practicing your religion, etc.). Don't be too quick judging the new culture. There are three ways to deal with the observations you make about your hosts and their culture.

- **Describe** the facts that you see and experience.
- **Interpret** what you think your experience means.
- **Evaluate** how you feel about your experience.

It is natural for most of us to judge (interpret or evaluate) what we see based on our past experiences. However, when faced with experiences in a new culture, it can be more helpful and effective to wait before assigning meaning to behaviors and events. Ask host nationals for their points of view and talk with friends before making judgments.

**Helpful Skills In the New Culture**

**Observe.** Watch very carefully how people behave in specific situations.

**Self-reflection.** Paying attention to your own behaviors in cross-cultural interactions can be very instructive. How do your cultural customs and values affect who, why, and how you interact with others?

**Everyday behavior.** Through practice and observation you can refine and adapt your behavior to be appropriate to your new environment (using the bus; banking; buying groceries; keeping appointments, etc.).

**Slang and common expressions.** Pay attention to common expressions and seek their real meanings and implications (don't take things too literally).

**Ask, ask, ask.** This may be the most important skill of all. If you contact with the people and culture makes you feel angry, confused or you simply don't understand something, ask natives or others who know the culture to explain what is going on.

**Discuss and compare.** Even when things seem to go well, it is helpful to discuss your daily interactions with someone who knows the culture to see if your actions and perceptions are accurate and appropriate.

**Deal with difference.** You may find yourself in situations where your host culture expects you to behave in a way that is different or contrary to your American values. There can be difficult moments. You need to make a choice about which value and behavior is personally appropriate and effective for you.
Initiate conversations. Practicing your communications skills will improve them. You may often have to make the first step in starting a conversation or getting to know someone.

Take risks and experiment. When you overcome your fear of trying new behaviors and experiences, you often discover something exciting. Go places and participate in activities so that you can observe and try out new cultural behaviors.
RECIPROCITY AND OFF-CAMPUS STUDIES

Students often think about what they will “get” out of off-campus studies, but there are numerous ways in which they can “give back,” most importantly while on the program and also when they return to campus.

During off-campus studies:
Students staying with host families can reciprocate in as many ways as families may interact with one another – helping with household chores, conversing during meals, taking their family members out for a treat or bringing them flowers, sharing photos of the student’s own home and the Carleton campus, etc. There may be opportunities through the program or individually for students to volunteer locally, interview community people, or take part in local sports or musical groups. Giving of themselves will help the “balance of trade” during their off-campus studies, and improve their intercultural experience.

Upon return to Carleton:
Correspondence with host families and friends: Students should be aware that they may have made a lasting impression on their host families or friends they made while off-campus. To maintain a positive impression, students should be encouraged to write a thank you note or email to those who contributed to their OCS experience. Ideally, they will keep in touch on important occasions (host family birthdays, etc.) as a way of fostering the connection and acknowledging that the host nationals played a significant role in the student’s term.

Evaluations: Students’ program evaluations are important to the faculty director and to the Off-Campus Studies Office. Their comments about the courses, excursions, food allowances, and group dynamics are very useful in refining the program for future use. Evaluations should be handed out near the end of the seminar with the assurance that the director will not read them until after final grades have been awarded and sent to the Registrar. To achieve that end, students should complete their evaluation forms and put them in a large manila envelope for safekeeping. Once the faculty director has read the evaluations, s/he should send them to the OCS office for review and filing.

OCS Photo Contest and other OCS events: OCS sponsors an annual contest for students’ (and directors’) photographs from off-campus studies. The contest takes place spring term. Deadline for photo entries is in the first week in April. The top three winners receive monetary prizes and the chosen photographs are displayed on campus and used in College publications.

Winning criteria include (photos or slides):

- high quality photograph; focus, light, composition, balance
- story-telling photo, not ‘just a pretty postcard’
- photo that reflects the educational program, the cultural experience and participation in the program or setting (we want to see YOU too!)

Publications: Student-to-student handbooks are valuable resources, and their success depends upon one generation passing along their wisdom and advice to the next generation of program participants.

Some programs budget funds to publish students’ writing (or artwork) at the conclusion of the seminar. Speak with the OCS staff if you are interested in this option. Students are also
encouraged to publish their writings in the Center for Modern Languages' *Polyglot* magazine, department newsletters, the *Carletonian*, the *Voice*, or various online publications about intercultural experiences and education abroad.

**International students and Cross Cultural Studies:** Students returning from off-campus studies have much to offer resident international students on campus. They may also be interested in integrating their off-campus studies with the on-campus concentration in Cross-Cultural Studies. Petra Crosby at pcrosby@acs.carleton.edu is the contact person for both the international students and Cross-Cultural Studies.

**INTERCULTURAL LEARNING**

There are some recently published resources that may prove useful for helping your students become intercultural learners:


*Project-oriented books and workbooks for students, faculty, and study abroad advisors to maximize culture and language learning during off-campus studies.*

Note: Students offered places in Carleton off-campus seminars must confirm their intention to participate by their signature below. One copy is to be retained by the student; ONE COPY IS TO BE RETURNED TO OFF-CAMPUS STUDY, LEIGHTON 119 by the date set in the letter of admission.

INSURANCE COVERAGE
I understand that Carleton College does not undertake to provide health, accident, disability, hospitalization, personal property, or other insurance to participants in this seminar; I further understand that it is my responsibility to procure health/hospitalization insurance for the duration of the seminar and such other insurance as I require, and that I am responsible for the costs of such insurance and for any expenses not covered by this insurance.

PERSONAL CONDUCT
I understand the rights and responsibilities in the Carleton Student Handbook apply to off-campus study, except that local laws replace Minnesota/U.S. law where applicable. I understand that the living circumstances on off-campus study may require a standard of decorum, which differs from that of Carleton residential life, and I indicate my willingness to understand and conform to the standards of my host culture. I further understand that it is important to the success of the present program and the continuance of future programs that participants observe standards of conduct that do not compromise Carleton in the eyes of individuals and organizations with which it has relationships. I understand that the Program Director has the authority to: 1) establish rules of conduct necessary for the operation of the program during the entire period of the program, including free time, 2) establish rules of conduct that are stricter than local laws. I agree that, should the Director, in consultation with the Dean of Students, decide that I must be dismissed because of conduct that might bring the program into disrepute or its participants into jeopardy, that decision will be final and may result in the loss of academic credit and the loss of program fees. I understand that within the period of this program and after the period of the program, I may elect to travel independently at my own risk and expense. I agree to inform an official representative of Carleton College of my travel plans and understand that neither Carleton College nor its official representatives are responsible for me while I am traveling independently.

WITHDRAWAL OR DISMISSAL
I recognize that, although the credits on the seminar are distributed among courses, the seminar itself is offered as a complete package and there is no provision for crediting any part of the academic work if I do not complete the entire program of required courses. If I withdraw or am dismissed from the seminar, my status at Carleton for that and the succeeding term(s) will be determined by the Dean of Students in accordance with existing policy, as outlined in the Academic Regulations and Procedures Handbook. I have read and understand the statement on the refund policy for Carleton Off-Campus Seminars as stated on the back side of this form.

GENERAL RELEASE
I understand that Carleton College reserves the right to make cancellations, changes or substitutions in cases of emergency or changed conditions or in the general interest of the program. It is further expressly agreed that all programs and use of any and all off-campus programs, services, or facilities shall be undertaken by me at my own sole risk and that Carleton College shall not be liable for any and all claims, demands, injuries, damages, actions, or causes of actions, whatsoever to me or property arising out of or connected with the use of any
and all off-campus programs, services, or facilities, whether or not sponsored by Carleton College, or the premises where same are located, whether or not owned or leased by Carleton College, resulting from or related to any and all acts of active or passive negligence on the part of Carleton College and/or its officers, employees, or agents; and I do hereby expressly forever release and discharge Carleton College from any and all claims, demands, injuries, damages, actions, or causes of action, arising from or related to any and all acts of active or passive negligence on the part of Carleton College and/or its officers, employees, or agents.

PARTICIPATION
By my signature below, I indicate my intention to participate in the __________________ seminar during ________________ term, 200___. This commitment to the program both reserves the place offered to me in the seminar and authorizes the College to admit another student for my place on campus during the term I am away. This decision becomes effective on the date of my signature, not later than the date cited in the Letter of Acceptance.

SEVERABILITY CLAUSE
All provisions of the agreement shall be deemed severable. The unenforceability, illegality, or invalidity of any provision or portion thereof shall not affect the enforceability, legality, or validity of any other provisions, all of which will remain valid, binding, and enforceable in accordance with their terms.

Student Name _____________________________ Date of Birth ______
Student Signature __________________________ Age __

WITHDRAWAL POLICY
Students who withdraw from the Carleton Seminar after the signing of the OFF-CAMPUS STUDY AGREEMENT FORM and before the beginning of the seminar will be required to pay a $500 withdrawal fee plus any costs incurred on their behalf (including, but not limited to, monies advanced on their behalf for non-refundable deposits, tickets, airfare or other travel document, legal documents and fees, housing deposits, etc.). All withdrawals before the start of the seminar should be made in writing to the Director of Off-Campus Studies at Carleton. Withdrawals after the off-campus seminar has begun should be made in writing to the Faculty Director on site.

Students who withdraw from a seminar in session with the permission of the Director of Off-Campus Studies and/or for documented medical reasons may be eligible for a partial tuition refund according to the standard College policy outlined in the Academic Catalog. Eligibility will be computed from the first day of the seminar abroad, not according to the on-campus calendar.

♦ A refund of 25 percent of tuition will be made if the student withdraws during the first 25 percent of the term; financial aid will be reduced proportionately.
♦ Tuition will be reduced in the case of illness: one-half will be returned if the student withdraws because of illness before the end of the fifth week of the seminar term, after which no fee will be refunded.
♦ No refunds will be made to students suspended or dismissed from a seminar.

If the student withdraws from a seminar to participate in another off-campus study program, the student must apply and receive separate approval for the second program according to the procedures described in the Off-Campus Studies Program and Planning Guide.
If the student withdraws from a seminar and wishes to return to campus, the student may ask the Dean of Students to place his or her name on the space-available list.
REGISTRATION INFORMATION
See also http://www.carleton.edu/campus/registrar/.

THE S/CR/NC OPTION
Deadlines are the most important thing to remember when exercising this option. There are no exceptions if the deadlines are not met. During the first or second week of the term at Carleton, students may designate one course as a potential for this option. Before the last day of classes at Carleton, the student may exercise the option to S/CR/NC or not.

The Registrar is not concerned with how the option is exercised. The Director may do what is easiest for him/her or what is agreed upon by the students. Suggestions for handling the cards:

• You may provide students with individual envelopes where the card with the name of the designated course to be S/CR/Nced can be sealed for confidentiality. These may be held by the faculty until it is time to exercise the option.

• The Faculty may designate a student (R.A., teaching assistant, secretary) to keep the cards until the date by which the students want to exercise the option to S/CR/NC.

• A letter with the name of all students listed and the designated course to S/CR/NC may be sent (by mail or FAX) to the Registrar’s Office (eliminating the use for the cards) and another letter may be sent to exercise the option to S/CR/NC; be sure the letters are received by the Registrar’s Office by the designated deadlines above.

• The students may handle this option individually by sending the designated course to be S/CR/Nced to the Registrar using either the card or a letter, confirming the option by card or letter to the Registrar before the deadline.

REGISTRATION FOR STUDENTS RETURNING TO CARLETON
All registration materials and information are on the web. Students who are studying off-campus may register on-line as per the instructions found on the Registrar’s web page, www.carleton.edu/campus/registrar/adminweb/streghelp.html, or they may request that a proxy register for them on campus. Students on off-campus study who will not have internet access during registration must make arrangements to have a proxy register for them via the process described under Proxy Registration in the Academic Regulations and Procedures booklet.
COURSE EVALUATION FORM
This form is used by OCS to assess the program goals, structure, and logistics of Carleton programs. You may copy the following page, front and back, or OCS will mail you copies to be distributed near the end of your program. We ask that you have all your students complete the form, and place it in an envelope, unread until after you have submitted final grades. Once you have read the evaluations, please hand them into the OCS office for our review and files.

EVALUATION FORM
Carleton College Off-Campus Studies
http://webapps.acs.carleton.edu/curriculum/ocs/returning/coming-home/carleton-evaluation
The faculty director of your Carleton off-campus seminar may already have asked for course evaluations for your academic classes. This form concerns your off-campus experience as a program and relates to programming decisions made by this office or the Off-Campus Studies Committee. Your honest evaluation will help us to improve this program and/or other Carleton off-campus seminars. Please return to Off-Campus Studies, Laird 131.

Program ________________________ Faculty director _____________________________________
Student name ______________________________________ __________________ Year ___________
Major(s) ____________________________ Year and term of off-campus study ________________

ACADEMIC PROGRAM
Program Goals: What do you take to be the academic goals of the program and how successfully were they met?

Personal Goals: Did you have academic or personal goals in addition to, or different from, those of the program? If so, what were these goals and how did they fit into the program?

Program Structure: Comment on the courses as components of the total program, how they relate to each other and to the program goals. Do you have recommendations for improvement?

Credits: Many Carleton seminars have deliberately scaled-down credits, less than a normal 18-credit load and/or some credits completed outside of term by reading before the start of the program. If applicable, comment on the value or problems for you of the credit structure. If seminar was full 18 credits, did it present too many demands for the balance you expected between academic work and non-credit experiences?
OUT-OF-CLASS ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM

Program Excursions: Comment on the number and type of organized program events (excursions, social activities, etc.) and their usefulness to the program. Which did you think least successful? Most successful? What changes, if any, would you recommend?

Housing: Were the circumstances of you housing a help or hindrance to the goals of the program? Do you have suggestions for improvement?

Meals: Compared with on campus meals, comment on the quality and quantity of your meals. If applicable, also comment on the adequacy of the food allowance.

Group Dynamics: How would you characterize the relationships within the group? If you were pleased, to what do you credit the group's success? If you see a need for improvement, what would you suggest for the future?

Program Affiliates: If your program was served by people outside of the college (travel agencies, educational organizations, individuals hired for program duties), please give your evaluation of their work.

Other Topics: Do you have advice on orientation? On program schedules? On dealing with any form of discrimination that you experienced? On any other areas that could be improved?

(Optional) Reflections (please add another page): What is the most important thing that you learned? What is, or will be, the value of this program to you? What else should we know about this program or your experiences with it?
## 2006-2007 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

### FALL TERM 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 11</td>
<td>Classes Begin 8:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>1st Five Week Course Drop/Add &amp; S/CR/NC Course Designation Deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 22</td>
<td>Ten Week Course Drop/Add &amp; S/CR/NC Course Designation Deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 12</td>
<td>Last Day 1st Five Week Late Drop &amp; S/CR/NC Option Exercise Deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 14-16</td>
<td>Mid-Term Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 17</td>
<td>Classes Resume 8:15 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 20</td>
<td>2nd Five Week Course Drop/Add &amp; S/CR/NC Course Designation Deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 23-Oct 31</td>
<td>Advising Days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 30- Nov 15</td>
<td>Registration for Winter Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 15</td>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Five Week &amp; Ten Week Course Late Drop 4:30 p.m. S/CR/NC Exercise Deadline 4:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 16-17</td>
<td>Reading Days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 18-20</td>
<td>Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>Winter Recess Begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 29</td>
<td>Grades due 8:30 a.m.</td>
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### WINTER TERM 2007

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 3</td>
<td>Classes Begin 8:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 10</td>
<td>1st Five Week Course Drop/Add &amp; S/CR/NC Course Designation Deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>Ten Week Course Drop/Add &amp; S/CR/NC Course Designation Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>Last Day 1st Five Week Late Drop &amp; S/CR/NC Option Exercise Deadline</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
February 3-5  Mid-term Break
February 6  Classes Resume 8:15 a.m.
February 12  2nd Five Week course Drop/Add & S/CR/NC Course Designation Deadline
February 12-20  Advising Days
Feb 19-March 9  Registration for Spring Term
March 9  Last Day of Classes
            2nd Five Week & Ten Week Course Late Drop 4:30 p.m.
            S/CR/NC Option Exercise Deadline 4:30 p.m.
March 10-11  Reading Days
March 12-14  Exams
March 15  Spring Recess Begins
March 19  Grades Due 8:30 a.m.

**SPRING TERM 2007**
March 26  Classes Begin 8:30 a.m.
March 30  1st Five Week Course Drop/Add & S/CR/NC Course Designation Deadline
April 6  Ten Week Course Drop/Add & S/CR/NC Course Designation Deadline
April 26  Last Day 1st Five Week Late Drop & S/CR/NC Option Exercise Deadline
April 28-30  Mid-term Break
May 1  Classes Resume 8:15 a.m.
May 4  2nd Five Week Course Drop/Add & S/CR/NC Course Designation Deadline
May 11-21  Advising Days
May 21-30  Registration for Fall Term
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2nd Five Week &amp; Ten Week Course Late Drop 4:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S/CR/NC Option Exercise Deadline 4:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 31- June 1</td>
<td>Reading Days</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2-4</td>
<td>Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 6</td>
<td>Senior Grades Due 8:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 9</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 13</td>
<td>Grades Due 8:30 a.m.</td>
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