GUIDE TO LONDON

FOR

MEMBERS OF THE

COLGATE LONDON STUDY GROUPS

“But, really, I think there ought to be a book, of the laws and customs à-la-mode, presented to all young people, upon their first introduction [to London]”

-from Fanny Burney’s Evelina

OFF-CAMPUS STUDY/INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

201 MCGREGORY HALL

COLGATE UNIVERSITY

1987

REVISED 2006
First written by students in 1987, this guide has been updated a number of times since then with the input of students and faculty. The 1994 revision was made possible through the contributions of Cindy Fartlett, Atif Chauhdry, Tia Kolbaba, Michael Pickholz, Bryan Piskorowski, Mala Popli and Jennifer Proto. The 1995 revision benefited from the contributions of Megan McElroy, Lindsay Rovick and Jordan Vana. The 1999 edition owes a warm thank you to the Fall 1998 London-History Study Group. In 2000, the guide benefited from the contribution of Ray Douglas, and the 2003 edition owes itself to the efforts of Tracy Glass, Stacy Groll, Bret Hopman, Andy McCarthy, Matt Olson and Hayley Ostrager. Kay Traester and Casey Geloneck kindly provided their insights to update the guide in 2004, as did Ray Douglas once again. Mary Acoymo, Chantell Bowman, Emily Colahan, Jon Lopez and Darcy Richardson lent their expertise for the 2005 edition. Though bereft entirely of any expertise (according to themselves), Mike Lynch and Patrick Kabat weighed in on the 2006 Spring edition, and Sarah Poulette, Marina Gibbons, Andrea Harrison and Ruthia Yi were kind enough to do so for the Fall edition.

We welcome your suggestions and any new information you may have to bring this guide up to date. The easiest way for us to make revisions is to receive a marked-up copy of the guide. So, if you feel so inclined, make notes and corrections to the guide during your semester in London and return it to the Office of Off-Campus Study/International Programs in 201 McGregor Hall upon your return.

Thanks, in advance, for your help and best wishes for a great semester in London.
DO SOME RESEARCH

The earlier you start thinking about your semester abroad, the more prepared you will be. Begin by looking through as many books, pamphlets, web sites and other sources of literature as you can find. Talk to Colgate students who went on London study groups in the past and take their suggestions too. The 2006 Fall group suggests that students check Facebook groups to see who has gone in recent semesters, because “they’ll probably be willing to share some London love”.

Buy the book – *Let’s Go Britain & Ireland*. A must – all of the *Let’s Go* series are extremely helpful! *Let’s Go London* is especially good. Check out *Let’s Go Europe* as well if you plan on traveling around Europe. The series is put together by Harvard Student Agencies and includes almost anything a student traveler would need to know. Some students prefer the *Lonely Planet* series because it is more likely to include “off-the-beaten-path” places to stay, eat and visit. Amazon.com is a wonderful resource for cheap, high-quality tour books. You can even buy them used at reduced prices. It’s a very good idea to get a city map of London, too. (There’s more information on one such guide, *A to Z*, under the “Arrival” section that comes later in this guide.)

Surf the Web – You can start by heading to the Off-Campus Study home page on the Colgate website (http://offices.colgate.edu/oestudy) for links to information about your London study group and general travel information. Below are some other websites worth checking out.

- [www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com) – official website of the British Tourist Authority
- [www.sta-travel.com](http://www.sta-travel.com) – student travel website. On this site you will not only find helpful information, but you will also be able to make flight reservations at student prices if you so desire. STA is known as one of the least expensive travel agencies for students. From this site, or in one of their local offices, you will be able to buy an International Student ID card, also known as an ISIC, and, if you’d like, the International Youth Hostel card and supplemental travel insurance. The ISIC is quite useful to have, as you can often use it to get discounts on lodging, transportation and entrance fees throughout Europe.
- [www.londonmaps.co.uk](http://www.londonmaps.co.uk) – site where you can buy all kinds of maps and travel/tour books of London. While it’s a good site to check out to have a look at the variety of maps and travel books out there, you should not order from this site, since the prices are in English pounds and you will get a bad exchange rate. The site does, however, include an exceptional reproduction of London historical maps.
- [www.londontown.com](http://www.londontown.com) – all kinds of information on tourism, going out, events, etc.
- [http://visitlondon.com](http://visitlondon.com) – all kinds of information on tourism, going out, events, etc.
- [www.thisislondon.co.uk](http://www.thisislondon.co.uk) – online version of the London *Evening Standard* daily newspaper.
- [www.timesonline.co.uk](http://www.timesonline.co.uk) – online version of the London newspaper
- [www.tube.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tube.tfl.gov.uk) – everything you need to know about the London Underground. This is much more helpful once you are in the city; it will not make much sense to you before you arrive unless you have prior experience with London.
- [www.timeout.com/london](http://www.timeout.com/london) – website for the Time Out Guide to London. This is an excellent introduction to the best entertainment/event weekly guide of London. It does not hurt to buy the publication once a week while in the city, too.
- [www.sirc.org/publik/pub.html](http://www.sirc.org/publik/pub.html) – a guide to British pub etiquette. This site gives meaning and depth to the rich tradition of British pub life (and can help prevent you from making a fool of yourself in the London pub scene).
MAKE A CHECKLIST

There are many things you must do to prepare for your semester before you even step on the airplane. Begin by making a checklist of all the things you need to have before you leave the U.S.:

1. Passport and photocopies of your passport details page.

2. Any visas you may need – see the visa section under “Passport and Visas” below for more information on this.

3. Health insurance, medical and dental care, glasses and contact lenses – Make sure that your medical insurance extends overseas, that you are properly and sufficiently covered, and that you know the procedures for payment/reimbursement. If you have any pre-existing medical conditions, confer with your health-care provider about continuing treatment, prescription drugs, etc., and talk with your study group director as well. Be sure to keep any prescriptions in their original containers so they won’t raise any questions at Customs. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, you should consider taking an extra pair of them with you, as well as a copy of your eyeglass prescription because it is very difficult to get them repaired in the city!

4. International Student Identification Card (ISIC) – This card is internationally accepted and offers students special discounts in most countries in Europe. It is usually accepted as a valid form of identification within Britain and will be useful in proving your student status (a Colgate ID does not always work). Reductions in price will be available at many theaters, cinemas, museums, trains, buses, and more. The ISIC can be purchased from any STA Travel office or from their website. In London you can purchase the ID card at (among other places):

   **Campus Travel**
   77, Grosvenor Gardens, London
   SW1W 0AG
   Tel: (020) 7730 3402

   **STA Travel**
   11, Goodge Street, London
   W1P 1FE
   www.statravel.co.uk

   **STA Travel**
   85, Shaftesbury Ave., London
   W1P 5DX
   www.statravel.co.uk

   (See website for more locations)

   The card currently costs £7.00 and is well worth the money. You will need the official certification letter stating you are studying abroad (the one with the raised seal) to purchase this in London at STA Travel. Late each fall the IDs for the following year are distributed. So, if you plan on spending an academic year in Europe you will need to purchase two cards at the appropriate times. Your program director might be able to help you apply for it before you leave.

5. Passport Photographs – Bring extra passport-size photographs. When you buy your London Underground Travelcard, student railcard, hostel card and ISIC, you will be required to bring a photograph or two. It is often easier to have a couple made before you leave and to keep them handy. (In case you forget to bring extra passport-size photographs, most airports, the larger train stations and many tube stations have photo machines where you can have pictures made while you wait. The cost is about £3 for four photos.) Local AAA offices in the U.S. offer 2 passport photos for $6.46 if you are a member and $9.50 if a non-member. There is a place in Hamilton that does passport photos as well: Bob Kuiper, 31 Eaton Street (near Curtis Lumber) tel: 824.2430. Cost: $10 for two photos; $15 for four.

6. Certification Letter from the Colgate Dean of the Faculty’s Office – **It is very important not to forget this letter! Make extra photocopies of it as well!** As mentioned above, it is necessary to show this letter to be able to purchase the ISIC card in London. (Also see note under “Visas” below.)
7. If you use a debit card, call your bank to make sure you will be able to draw on your account from abroad (most checking accounts are accessible; savings accounts are NOT). Also, **be sure to notify your bank and your credit card companies that you will be abroad for the semester** and that foreign transactions will be appearing on your account(s). If you don’t, the bank/credit card company may think that your account number has been stolen once they start seeing “abnormal” spending patterns and consequently lock down access to your account.

**PASSPORT AND VISAS**

**Passport**

In Europe, your passport will function as your most valuable form of identification, especially when cashing Travelers Cheques and making travel reservations.

Your passport must be valid for the duration of your study group and the time you may plan to remain overseas at the end of the program – **at least**. Some countries require your passport to be valid anywhere from three to six months beyond your intended stay in the country. You should check the requirements of any country you intend to visit.

If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately. Passport agencies are located in most major U.S. cities (expect to wait in line for a while, though). It is also possible to obtain a passport from a federal or state court of record, probate court, or designated U.S. Passport Office (which include some Post Offices. The Hamilton Post Office accepts passport applications from 2-4 p.m. on weekdays.

You can go to [http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html) for information about applying for a passport and the documentation you will need to provide.

The typical processing time for a passport application is six to eight weeks, so make sure that you leave yourself more than enough time to obtain your passport before your scheduled departure. Expedited service is available for an additional fee. If you elect for this service, your application will be processed in three working days from the time it is received at the Passport Agency. Passports are valid for ten years.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Make **at least two photocopies of the first two pages of your passport and keep the copies separate from the passport itself. Leave one copy home and take the other(s) with you, but carried separately from your passport, when you travel. If you should lose your passport, your nearest embassy can process a lost passport application much faster if you can provide a photocopy of the first two pages.**

It is similarly helpful to have photocopies of credit cards and other forms of ID in the event that your wallet is lost or stolen. (This HAS HAPPENED to members of the London study groups in the past, so do take these precautions!) Be sure to keep all photocopies in a safe place though so that they don’t become lost or stolen themselves. Another good idea is to leave anything that you will not need in your travels at home.

**Visas**

U.S. passport holders will **not** need to obtain a visa to study in London for the semester. Citizens of other countries should check the British Embassy’s website in their home country to determine whether or not they will need to get a visa to participate in the study group.

Almost all European countries do not currently require visas of U.S. passport holders for tourist visits of less than 30 days (Russia and Ukraine both do; visitors to Turkey may obtain a visa on arrival at the
If you are planning to travel outside Europe, be aware that some countries do require visas if you’re going to visit, or sometimes even if you’re just planning to transit the country en route to somewhere else. In order to find out if you will need a visa to enter a specific country, go to that country’s embassy website to research their visa requirements. If you do not hold a U.S. passport, take particular care to investigate visa requirements, especially for those countries you will visit on study group field trips.

IMPORTANT: Even if you don’t need a visa to enter Britain, you will need to present the Certification Letter that you receive from the Office of the Dean of the Faculty to immigration officials upon your arrival. (This is the one that says you’re a full-time enrolled student at Colgate and that you’re participating in a Colgate Study Group for the semester.) Therefore, keep this letter on your person when you travel to Great Britain – do not pack it in your checked luggage! Also, always take your Certification Letter with you if you travel outside Great Britain during the semester. You will need to present it to immigration officials each time you re-enter the country. As with your passport, make a copy of your Certification Letter and keep it in a safe place, separate from the original.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Before you leave home, check your insurance policy to make certain that it covers medical care abroad. If you do not have an insurance policy that extends overseas, you can purchase a short-term policy for your trip. STA (address above, under “Do Some Research”) offers this type of policy, as do the firms below. In addition, your current insurer will probably be able to provide you with information about short-term overseas insurance, as can Colgate’s Student Health Center.

**Hinchcliff International**
11 Ascot Place,
Ithaca, NY 14850.
Tel: (607) 257 0100

**Intermedic**
777 3rd Avenue
New York, NY 10017.
Tel: (800) 231 2330

**IAMAT**
736 Center Street
Lewiston, NY 14092.
Tel: (716) 754 4883

In the event of your needing medical care overseas, keep all medical and prescription bills for your insurance company. Be certain that they are dated and that your name and the treatment received are specified. It is also helpful to note the applicable exchange rate on the day of service. You may want to ask your health-care provider before you leave if s/he can recommend any doctors in London. A few study group members have gone to Dr. Stephen Count on Harley Street (off Oxford Circus) and would recommend him to others.

Before going abroad you might want to stock a few items that you are likely to need. Most American prescription medicines and over-the-counter products are available at “dispensing chemists” (pharmacies) but many product names are different. (Tylenol, for example, is called Panadol in England.) To prevent the hassle of trying to locate your favorite aspirin, cold medicine or whatever, you may want to bring some of these items along. For prescriptions, it is recommended that you consult with your health-care provider before you leave. Most U.S. prescriptions will not be honored in the U.K. However, a local doctor may write a British prescription either on his or her own diagnosis or on the basis of such proof as an empty bottle or a note from your doctor. Again, it is best that you consult with your health-care provider and your study group director before going abroad if you have a medical condition that will require continued treatment while you are in London.

Unless it is an emergency, it is almost always necessary in Britain to see a general practitioner before seeing a specialist. Most Brits see their chemist (such as at Boots) for minor ailments before they see a
physician. Most physician fees are at least £50 for an initial consultation. *If you save your receipts, most American insurance companies will reimburse for British medical fees.*

**WHAT TO PACK**

On international flights there is a limit of two pieces of luggage and one small carry-on that must be able to fit under the seat in front of you. These must all conform to the size and weight regulations set by the airlines, so make sure you check the regulations of your airline before departing. Remember there are domestic weight limits as well, which are lighter than international limits. When you arrive in the U.S. to make a connecting flight home, you might have to pay for extra weight and/or extra bags, or it is also possible that the airline will not let you board with the extra luggage. These fees generally range from $80-$100, but can be a lot more if your bags are really heavy or if you have several pieces of luggage. Take bags that are lightweight and have wheels.

Most importantly, **pack light.** Most students who have gone on a study group will agree that they packed too much stuff and really only needed a portion of what they brought. Your best bet is to favor clothes that are comfortable, versatile and easy to maintain.

Some suggestions:

- Pack for maximum efficiency. Short- and long-sleeve t-shirts, turtlenecks, and light sweaters are all good because they can be layered and are easy to pack. Do NOT forget a light winter coat, preferably one that is waterproof!

- A weekend bag that is small and lightweight (yet durable) will be useful if you plan to take advantage of the long weekends. Many students find a hiker’s backpack to be useful for traveling on the weekends and during the break. We suggest that you definitely go with the oversized backpack. It is much easier to carry your clothing and other personal items to and from airports, hostels, etc. with everything on your back. Suitcases, even medium-sized ones that roll, often end up being cumbersome and can get damaged or destroyed when traveling.

- Bring a lot of dress clothes (or a fewer number that you don’t mind wearing often). Students in London tend to dress casually, but overall Londoners dress up more than Colgaters, so you can use dress clothes just as often as everyday clothes. Do not forget that you will frequent the theater and other formal group gatherings, and will need to be dressed accordingly for those. Occasionally, you may even find it necessary to dress very formally – shirt, jacket and tie for men. **Economics students in particular need to have more dress clothes for their internships.**

- Bring **comfortable** shoes (dress and everyday). You will do a lot of walking – to class, to the theater, to the Tube, and around the city generally.

- An umbrella, waterproof shoes, and a water-repellent coat are a **must!**

- Many people regret packing that heavy winter jacket; a good sturdy raincoat is more versatile. Local fashion would seem to dictate having a functional, light- or even medium-weight wool overcoat.

- If you plan to bring a laptop computer or a portable printer, be sure that it is capable of running on either 110v or 220/240v. Most laptops and some portable printers can run on either voltage but it is best to check with the manufacturer before lugging heavy items that you will not be able to use. Having a laptop can make life much easier when you’re writing a paper – especially when the
computer labs are busy 24 hours a day near midterms and finals. If you do bring a laptop and/or printer, you’ll need plug adaptors for them, which can be purchased in the U.S. or in London (they’re much easier to find and cheaper to buy in the U.S., though).

Whether or not you choose to bring a laptop really depends on the environment in which you prefer to work. For students who do not mind working in the midst of much social activity and flurry in the flats or carrying their laptops to the FSU Centre, and want the versatility of being able to work at any hour of the day or night, laptops are a must-have. Wireless is available through Acorn in the flats for a reasonable fee. You can print at FSU for free as long as you don’t go over your paper allotment (which is 500 pages – more than enough). There are definitely peak times in the FSU computer labs where computers are often scarce, so you have to be willing to be there either really early or late to guarantee yourself a computer. Ultimately, we suggest that if you have a laptop you should bring it; if not, don’t buy one specifically for this trip. **For History students:** recent groups highly recommend that you bring a laptop so that you can take it with you to work in the various research archives you will be using throughout the semester.

One final note if you do bring a laptop: laptops are still a popular target for theft, so you need to be careful not only when you’re traveling, but when you leave it in your flat as well. Between other residents and visitors, all sorts of people have access to the buildings you will be living in, so make sure to keep your flat locked when no one is going to be there, and if you’re expecting to have many people coming and going in your flat on particular occasions, best to keep valuables in general put away/out of sight.

**Caution:** The FSU computers, being much-used by a large number of people, are often heavily virus-ridden. To protect your own machine, avoid downloading files onto your own computer from a CD or disk that has been in one of these appliances. If doing so cannot be avoided, make sure you scan the CD/disk for viruses before saving or opening anything on your own machine. (And of course make sure that your virus protection software is up to date.)

- If you plan on using a blow dryer, iron, shaver or any other small electrical appliance during the semester, you are better off just buying an inexpensive one in London rather than bringing your own and buying a converter for it because small appliances tend to blow out with converters/adapters. Boots, a local drug store, has decent hairdryers for £10 or thereabouts. The same goes with shavers.

- The general consensus is that a Walkman, Discman, MP3 player and/or iPod (and of course the music to go along with it) is a must.

- Bring towels or plan to buy some once you arrive in London. The flats come with some shower towels, but they might not be enough or the size that you are used to. If you opt for bringing rather than buying, we recommend you bring only 1 or 2 large towels, 2-3 hand towels, and any wash cloths you plan on using.

- You do not need to bring bedding; it will be supplied by Acorn Management.

- Portable alarm clock (a battery-powered one that is small enough for weekend travel is best). The smaller, the better. Leave the large, big-numbered ones at home; it will just end up eating away unnecessary space in your luggage. Be efficient!
Clothing/Accessories thought to be Essential

- Book bag
- Clothes that can be easily layered
- Jeans
- Pocket calendar
- Raincoat
- Sweatshirts, hoodies, and light sweaters are indispensable
- Three-prong (U.K.) plug adaptor
- Travel alarm clock
- Umbrella
- Waterproof shoes, such as walking boots
- Walking shoes—nice, comfortable shoes are a MUST. London is definitely a walking city!
- Wool sweater(s)
- A few pictures or things to make your room feel homey

Keep in mind that neither Acorn nor the FSU London Centre have facilities to hold any luggage or parcels for you before the beginning of the semester. If you think you might need to ship some of your personal belongings to London ahead of time so that it’s there when you arrive, or you want to arrive early and travel before the semester begins, check around on the web for both student storage services and the “left luggage” facilities at airports and rail stations. Here’s one site to get you started: [www.excessbaggage.co.uk](http://www.excessbaggage.co.uk).

**TIME AND WEATHER**

**Time Difference**

There is a five-hour difference between the U.K. and the eastern U.S., with the U.S. being behind the U.K. (i.e. when it is 12 noon in London it is 7:00 am in Hamilton). Daylight Savings Time starts the first Sunday in April and ends the last Sunday in October. These dates are sometimes different than in the U.S., so there may be brief periods when the eastern U.S. is six hours behind the U.K. To find out the current time in London, or anywhere else in the world, go to the site [www.timeanddate.com](http://www.timeanddate.com). By clicking under the World Clock link, you can receive more details about individual cities, including when they changes to and from Daylight Savings Time.

**Climate**

If you are studying in London during the fall, the average highs will be in the 50s in the daytime, and the evening lows will be in the 40s. It will rain regularly, and you will encounter a lot of fog. In all likelihood, you will never see snow. In December, the average temperature is 45 degrees in the day and 38 degrees at night.

If you are studying in London during the spring, you can expect to encounter highs of 45 degrees and lows in the 30s at night early in the semester. In April, though, the temperature can get as high as 58 degrees and as low as 45 degrees. As in the fall, do expect regular rain showers and fog.

**THE MONEY QUESTION**

**Money for Arrival**

There is no question that you will need money the minute you step off the plane. You can obtain spare cash in English pounds from banks in the U.S. before leaving, but you must request the amount (typically) three weeks in advance. The **People's Foreign Exchange** in NYC (highly recommended), on the other hand, gives you pounds on the spot for a flat $2.00 fee. They have two locations: 575 5th Avenue and 204 Broadway. Tel: (212) 883-0550 (for both locations).
You can exchange money in any of the London airports; however, the problem with this is that there can sometimes be long lines where you will have to wait while simultaneously trying to guard all your luggage (although the hassle can be diminished if you use the buddy system and make sure your luggage is always attended to). In addition, airport concessionaire exchanges charge an inordinately large commission compared to AmEx or most High Street banks. If you have to exchange money at the airport, the Travelex offices will usually have the slightly better rates, and if you show your ISIC card they will exchange it for free. Avoid Thomas Cook like the plague.

If you do opt to convert cash, the best way to go is to exchange money together with friends. That way you will only have to pay one service charge, instead of everyone paying individually. Most places that exchange money will also take credit cards. You may want to consider going that route if you feel uncomfortable carrying around a large amount of cash when you’re traveling, but keep in mind that it will show up as a cash advance on your credit card, and those are charged at a much higher interest rate than regular purchases.

When exchanging money in the city centre, the exchange booth on the second floor of Marks & Spencer’s supermarket in Oxford Street, ten minutes’ walk from FSU, has typically had better rates and lower commissions than those offered by the banks.

Caution: Because of the high number of counterfeit notes in circulation, many British and European bureaux de change are leery of accepting $100 bills. Fifties and twenties normally have no problems.

The consensus among past study group members is that the easiest thing to do is to get money out of an ATM once you arrive in the London airport. The one possible hitch with this is that if for some reason your ATM card does not work properly, you need to have a back-up option.

Banking/Obtaining Cash during the Semester

You can choose to handle your money one of four ways in London: using ATMs, using Travelers Cheques, using an American Express card, or opening a bank account.

ATMs were the best way we found for most financial situations. There is at least one on almost every block of the city. Be sure your ATM card is on a checking, not a savings account, since ATM cards with just savings were rejected by nearly all ATM machines. Any card on the Plus or Cirrus networks that draws on a checking account can usually be used throughout Western Europe. The great advantage of obtaining local currency via an ATM, apart from the convenience (there are banks all over London with ATMs), is that you will obtain the “interbank” exchange rate – what the banks charge each other – rather than the “tourist” rate, which is significantly worse. Most banks charge a fee of around £1 per transaction. Transactions at Barclay machines are usually free. DO be careful when entering your PIN that others do not see it, as with it they can access your account, sometimes without even getting a hold of your card. Most European ATMs only take 4-digit PINs, so you might have to change your PIN if yours has more. Do not, however, rely solely on an ATM card. Occasionally, cards will not work in certain countries or in certain machines because the system and/or the card are outdated or incompatible with each other. The network has also been known to crash from time to time, sometimes for days. Furthermore, if you lose your card, or the magnetic strip becomes damaged or degraded, it can be almost impossible for you to obtain a replacement without returning to the U.S. Especially when traveling, using Travelers Cheques is the most reliable option.

Some short-term visitors to London (i.e. friends, parents, significant others who visit) may be better off carrying Travelers Cheques, and spending them as needed. Get Travelers Cheques in varied amounts (hundreds and fifties are best), since sometimes you will only want to exchange a little bit of money into a foreign currency. If you exchange too much and then have to change it again either back into dollars or into another currency, you will lose a lot of money in service fees. It is usually fruitless trying to
speculate against the exchange rate; the gains and losses are likely to be small and exchange rates are notoriously difficult to predict. Travelers Cheques, though, are the best option along with ATM machines. If you do buy Travelers Cheques, photocopy them or write down each cheque number and denomination in case they get lost or stolen. Keep those records in a safe place, and make sure your family has a record of them being purchased back in the United States in case anything should happen. AAA offices will typically provide you with the best exchange rate; they now issue Visa Travelers Cheques instead of American Express.

If you want to withdraw cash, we suggest you only use an American Express card as a last resort. Its advantage is that you can usually withdraw money as needed in amounts that depend on whether the card is green or gold and whether it is your own or your family’s; however, it’s a pretty costly way of getting money. There is an administration fee of around 2.5%, and interest at the usual outrageous rate is charged from the moment of your withdrawal rather than from the end of the billing period (as is usually the case with purchases). Using other cards, such as Visa or MasterCard, for cash withdrawals can be expensive as well. Our suggestion is to use credit cards for major purchases because you usually get quite a good exchange rate (like with an ATM card), but not for getting cash. Make sure that somebody at home is making the payments on time, though – late fees add up quickly, and the higher your unpaid balance, the more you are paying in interest fees.

Most students have difficulty starting an account in London because banks believe that six months is too short a period to do all the paperwork, etc. and make a profit. It is especially hard to do – and therefore not recommended because we are students. Before opening an account, you must have a permanent address in London. Most banks require a copy of a phone or utility bill with your name on it as proof of that address (neither of which will be readily available to you.) You will also need a reference. It is easiest to use as a reference someone who has an account in the particular bank in which you wish to open an account. For students who have been able to clear these hurdles, Barclays and Lloyd’s have been the most popular banks to work with.

In an Emergency

Money can be wired from the U.S. to a U.K. Post Office (Money Bank). Up to £500 can be sent at a cost of about $25. The money order will then arrive in pounds and can be cashed right in the Post Office.

Western Union also has offices in Britain: see the Golden Pages (local version of the Yellow Pages) for the nearest branch.

There is also something relatively new offered by AAA called a Cash Passport. It is a Visa card that can be purchased at an AAA office or on the Internet and mailed safely overseas because it requires a PIN and password to activate (which your parents can tell you if they are the ones that buy it). It operates like a gift card; that is, you start with a fixed amount of money on the card and the remaining balance declines as you make purchases. The card can be set up so that it is attached to a bank account and more money can be added to the card from that account via the Internet or a toll-free phone call. Go to www.aaa.com and look up AAA Travel Money for more information.

Planning a Budget: Typical Costs

It is almost impossible to judge in advance what your costs in London will be. Although each student receives a cost estimate of expenses for his/her study group based on the reported expenditures of participants in last year’s group, fluctuations in exchange rates and changes in the British cost-of-living can drive those estimates off the mark. The best advice, then, is to be careful in your spending. The current exchange rate is hovering around $1.75 per pound (as of early April ’06). The cost of living in London is higher than in most American cities, and certainly a good deal higher than in Hamilton, so you are going to need more money for the semester than you would on campus.
Books
Check with the study group director to see what books will be required for the semester and where s/he
suggests that you buy them. Books are rather more expensive in London than in the U.S. Whether it is
better to buy and carry books to and from London or to just buy them there is a matter for each person to
decide. Sending books by first-class mail is very expensive. Sending them surface mail can take six or
more weeks, and is only a little less exorbitantly-priced. If buying in London, don’t overlook the used
book stores on Charing Cross Road – they have lots of good, resourceful books! Some popular book
stores you might want to check out:

- Foyle’s – Charing Cross Road
- Book Warehouse—Charing Cross Road (smaller selection but very cheap)
- Borders – Charing Cross Road and Oxford Street
- Waterstones – Oxford Street & Gower Street

It may be the case that your director provides you with the titles of the required books over the summer
(for fall programs) or winter break (for spring programs) so that you may purchase them new or used
online in advance. While carrying the books over to London will weigh down your luggage, it may be
worth the extra weight to save yourself the money. Some directors also make use of Blackboard or
Internet sites for some of the course materials, which makes life a lot easier and prevents your luggage
from being overloaded with textbooks.

E-mail
You have two options for communicating via e-mail: establish an ISP account with your own computer,
or use public computers.

Most students on recent groups have felt that setting up an ISP account was more trouble than it was
worth. It was too inconvenient, pricey, and unnecessary with the computers (with Internet access) at the
FSU Centre only 10-15 min. away. We recommend that you save yourself the money and keep your
Internet/email usage to the FSU computers. Use your laptop for writing papers and working in your flat.
It is, however, easy to hook your laptop up to the FSU network in adjacent study rooms to the computer
labs. The only downside to this is having to carry the laptop to and from the Centre, especially during full
days of classes, sightseeing, and library research.

For those who wish to endure the hassle of setting up an ISP, one option is to purchase dial-up from AOL
UK for about £20 per month (that everyone in the flat can share if you choose). It is slower but allows
Internet access without going to FSU. Most people just prefer to rely on desktops at the FSU centre for
the email and Internet access.

If you do not bring a laptop with you, there are two options: The FSU computer lab and Internet cafés.
The availability of internet-accessible computers in London, and across Europe, once a nightmare, has
become infinitely easier (and cheaper) with the opening of a chain of massive Internet cafés called
easyInternetcafé (http://www.easyeverything.com/map/lon.html). Each of these establishments contains
400-500 machines; charges vary according to the time of day, the most expensive period being early
afternoons. Typically, £1 will buy you an hour’s use, but rates can vary depending on how busy the place
is. All are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or darn well close to it. Some of their locations in
London are:

- 9-16, Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 1BQ (Tottenham Court Road tube, exit 2)
- 358, Oxford St., London W1N 9AG (Bond Street tube)
- 456/459 Strand, London WC2R 0RG (Trafalgar Square end) (Charing Cross tube)
- 160-166, Kensington High St., London W8 7RG (High Street Kensington tube)
- 9-13, Wilton St., London SW1V 1LW (opposite BR Main Line station) (Victoria tube)
easyInternet no longer hold the monopoly on cheap Internet access though. Internet Lounge on
Tottenham Court Road, W1 (opposite the Astoria) was last seen to be offering a price of £1 for two hours.
Entertainment
Expenditures in these categories need to be budgeted in advance. Theater tickets, for example, once cheap by U.S. standards, are now comparable to those in New York. Often, however, one can find student “concessions” and there is a half price kiosk at the south end of Leicester Square from 2 p.m. for the evening of the performance. The kiosk opens at 10 a.m. for matinées. Many theaters offer special last-minute deals for students. If you have a student card and show up half an hour before curtain, they will sell you whatever tickets they have left at half price. It might be worth looking into any particular shows you are interested in early in the semester because you might not be able to get tickets for a month or more. For movies, most cinemas offer student discounts for Monday screenings on presentation of an ISIC.

To estimate your budget for other types of entertainment, refer to Time Out London (http://www.timeout.com/london/) or a travel guide such as Let’s Go London for information on various things to do in London and their associated costs. Those publications will provide much more information than can be listed here.

Food
Most supermarkets offer more moderate prices than small, private shops. The largest are Sainsbury and Tesco (A few others that you might see on occasion are Safeway, Waitrose, Somerfield, Budgen’s, and Asda). It is most convenient to purchase groceries from Sainsbury’s. The prices are very reasonable and the selection is excellent. One distinction to make, however, is that the city centre Sainsbury’s Local and Tesco Metro chains have much less of a variety or selection of foods than the bigger superstores. Most food brands found in the U.S. are available in London. Sometimes foods have different names (e.g. zucchini = courgettes, turnips = swedes, eggplants = aubergines, rocket = arrugula). Check out the street markets for fresh fruits and vegetables. Street markets such as Leather Lane (located on Leather Lane, EC1N, open M–F 10 am – 3 pm, closest Tube station: Chancery Lane/Farringdon) offer snacks, fruits, smoothies, and other practical foods at VERY low prices (but it is still nice quality).

For those preferring a large supermarket, the nearest one to the city centre is the big Sainsbury’s on Nine Elms Road (five minutes’ walk from Vauxhall tube). If you need a 24-hour supermarket, there’s an enormous Tesco at the corner of West Cromwell Road and Warwick Road (West Kensington or Earl’s Court tubes).

London, like any major city, has a wide array of organic food stores (Planet Organic, Alara Whole Foods), ethnic food stores (ie, Indian, Caribbean, Korean, Chinese, etc), and other specialty shops. Have fun looking for them online or on your own as you explore London.

Everyone should be aware of how expensive dining out can be. Even fish and chips can cost the equivalent of more than $10 or so per person. Students may want to do everything possible to cook their own meals, which, while certainly less expensive than eating out, will nonetheless cost a bit more than doing the same thing in the U.S. Pasta, Sainsbury’s low-fat T.V. dinners, and fresh veggies and fruits were the major staples of recent groups. Most people cook on their own or with the rest of their flat—it’s cheaper and can be fun! Potlucks with other flats are a great idea too.

Mail
In case your semester abroad spurs you to revive the lost art of “snail-mail” letter writing, an air-mail postcard costs 43p; an air-mail letter stamp (10g/⅓ oz.) 47p; an air-mail letter stamp (20g/⅔ oz. ) 68p; a first-class stamp (10g) within Britain 28p and to the continent 40p. Air-mail to and from the U.S. takes a minimum of four days, more typically a week. (And sometimes it can take a lot more if there is a post office strike going on). Packages can take quite a while to arrive to you in the city. Make sure that whoever is sending you a package from the U.S. declares everything enclosed as “personal items needed” and not other bizarre and/or unnecessary classifications. If other descriptions are used or something is poorly or unclearly worded, the package will get sent through Customs, and you will have to take the
Tube to the far outskirts of the city to retrieve it and end up paying for its delivery – sometimes in excess of £30. You will also end up waiting another 3-5 weeks to actually receive the package in the first place. During the semester have all packages sent to FSU and not your flat, because the delivery person will not leave a package in the front hall or at the door of your flat if you are not there. Do not have packages sent to you at the FSU London Centre before you arrive for the semester though. The Office of Off-Campus Study will give you your address in London before you leave.

**Phone**
The direct-dial access code to call the U.S. from the U.K. is 001, followed by the area code and number.

To call the U.K. from the U.S., dial 011 44 and then the number, ignoring the first “0” in the area code of the number (011 is to get an international line and 44 is the country code for the U.K.)

Thanks to deregulation, telephone calls to the U.S. can now be made ridiculously cheaply – as low as 8p per minute, without time restrictions. The best rates are obtained using prepaid telephone cards, a bewildering array of which can be found on sale at any newsagent, and there are some that you can purchase in the U.S. to use abroad. These may be used at any touch-tone phone by dialing a free (0800) number and entering the identification number printed on the card. Some of them, however, have nasty catches such as additional access charges concealed in the small print, so read the details before you buy the card. The best cards to get for calls to the U.S. are First National, America First, Eurocity Cards and Pay for Peanuts, which do not incur access charges. They may also be used for making domestic or local calls. The greater the denomination of the card you buy, the more bonus minutes you get.

Caution: pre-paid telephone cards from no-name companies offering unbelievably cheap rates are usually a rip-off. If you buy them, you’ll find that the 0800 access number is always busy or unobtainable.

If you choose to buy a cell phone (mobile) for the semester, check out a store called The Link on the corner of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street. Students have also had luck with Orange and O2 services. If you go in a large enough group, they will give you a better discount! Opt for “Top-Up” or another pay-as-you-go plan rather than contract. You are better off buying a phone once you are in London, since most American cell phones do not operate on the same frequency that is used in the UK and Europe.

Most students do buy mobiles. They are not only convenient for meeting up with friends, but are also a good safety precaution in case you are traveling around the city and were to need help or end up lost. You can purchase a decent, but simple one for $60-$75 typically, depending on where you go and what type of discount you can get. “Top-Up” is definitely still the way to go for all cell phone services (Link, O2, Orange, etc.). We have not encountered any other plans that are better or more convenient. Check with people who have gone on recent trips to see if they’ll give or sell their phones to you.

**Transportation**
Walk whenever you can! It saves money, allows you to see more of the city, and is great exercise.

The Underground (Tube) and buses are very convenient and will prove to be most useful during your stay in London. Depending on the zones you need, the price will vary. See the Tube website for prices ([www.tube.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tube.tfl.gov.uk)). It is very advantageous to buy an Oystercard, a travel pass for public transportation. For a small one-time fee, it gives discounted fares for Tube and Bus. You can buy it in weekly, monthly, or pay-as-you-go (recommended). Oystercards save fumble-time for change in buses and you need not wait in line to purchase tickets on the Underground. A Zone 1 pass should meet most of your transportation needs. (Members of the History Study Group, though, should remember that the Public Record Office is in zone 3, and the Newspaper Library in zone 4.) With this pass you can use the underground, buses and suburban trains in Zone 1 as often as you like. If you go out of your zone, you
will simply need to pay an add-on fare at the ticket counter. Be sure to get an extension before going out of your zone, as a £10 on-the-spot fine will be imposed if you are found traveling without a valid ticket for the whole of your journey.

Buses are a cheaper, more scenic way of getting around the city. The system is intimidating at first, but maps are available online and bus stops themselves give detailed information as to where the lines go. While the Tube stops running a little after midnight, there are buses that operate all night.

Travel
Travel to and on the continent is reasonable by both air and train (also see the section titled “Travel” below for additional information). Shop around a bit for deals online before you settle on anything. More and more students have concluded that getting Eurail Passes simply are not worth the expense. Depending on your itinerary, you might be able to save money by just getting a train pass for whichever country or countries you’re going to. If you do decide to get a Eurail Pass, some things to keep in mind are:

1. It is not valid in the U.K.; only in Ireland and the Continent.

2. Make sure you allot enough time before your first journey with the Eurail Pass to get your pass validated. It must be validated (stamped with approval/validation) the first day you plan to use it. Do not get it stamped beforehand because you will start the clock running on your pass the day it is validated.

3. There are many different passes you can buy that are valid for various lengths of time and that cover different countries, so decide your travel itinerary beforehand and buy your pass accordingly. Remember, if your plans change partway through your trip and you decide to go to another country, your Eurail Pass may not be valid for your new itinerary, and you may have to buy a supplemental pass.

4. It is generally much less expensive to buy your pass before you leave for the U.K. as opposed to buying it once you’re in London.

ONCE YOU’RE IN LONDON

ARRIVAL

For a newcomer, London can be a bewildering place. Assume you have just arrived in Heathrow* around 8 a.m. You have gone through the entry halls, through passport control, and bypassed baggage inspection because you have followed the sign for those with “Nothing to Declare.” Now you may need to change some money. You stop at an ATM or change a Travelers Cheque (maybe £100) in the airport on your way out. Here are some of your options for getting to the Acorn office to pick up your keys and on to your flat:

Airbus A2: Operates between Heathrow terminals to Kings Cross and Euston rail stations. Cheap (£7 o/w, £10 r/t), but with a lot of baggage it’s not very practical, and you still have to get from the rail station to the Acorn office and your flat. Can take 40 mins to 1 hr.

Heathrow Express: (£15 o/w, £23 r/t) There are trains every 15 mins and the journey takes about 15–20 mins. Fastest way into London, but it brings you to Paddington station on the west side of the city, so you still have to get to where you’re going from there. The Express is impractical and unrealistic for anyone arriving in the city for the first time, but you may want to use it for weekend or
holiday travel during the semester. For online ticket purchases, saver fares and timetables:

Taxis: Really convenient but costly (£60). This is the best option for those concerned with carrying and keeping track of luggage. If you travel with 1 or 2 other people, the price is more reasonable. The taxi driver will be able to take you directly to get your keys at the Acorn office and then to your flat, which makes life a LOT easier on your first day in the city. **Note: Use licensed black taxis only! Don’t take gypsy cabs!** They account for a lot of thefts and sexual assault – you don’t know who you’re riding with.

**HotelLink: (strongly recommended)** is a van service in the airport. If you’re traveling with a group, this might be the easiest option. For a reasonable fee (about the cost of the Heathrow Express), these vans will take a group from airport to flat.

Tube: Hard to get around with luggage – lots of stairs, it can be crowded, and being jet-lagged will not help your ability to decipher the at-first complex tube map – but it is the cheapest of the lot (£3.80 o/w) and, at 55 minutes’ journey-time, probably the fastest to get you all the way into the city. If you feel adventurous and can carry everything you brought, this option can save you money. Take the Picadilly Line to Russell Square, then walk a short distance to the Acorn Office to pick up your keys.

*Most students agree that it is easiest to fly into Heathrow when you arrive.*

You must be able to locate yourself in the city. The best resources for getting around London and familiarizing yourself with the streets are the London classified maps published in book form and generically known as *A to Z* (pronounced “A to Zed”). The book of maps is much easier to consult than a big, fold-out accordion map. The spiral-bound book holds up well, too; it does not lose pages or start to fall apart at the folds. Even London cab drivers will be carrying some form of *A to Z*, so do not think that having one will automatically classify you as a tourist. Carrying large, bulky maps with you on the street, however, will make you conspicuous and more vulnerable immediately. The light, small size of the *A to Z* makes a whole lot more sensible to carry around with you on a daily basis.

You will also immediately need a Tube map. Get used to using the Tube and locating which line is best to take early on; do not depend on other students or flatmates to know where they are going and just blindly follow them. This will only make life difficult for you later on. Save yourself the aggravation, and master this very easy-to-understand transportation system as soon as possible. You can ask for the map at most ticket counters in Tube stations; these are small and can easily be folded to fit into your Travelcard holder for quick access. You can also get Tube and bus maps and schedule information online from London Transport (see website above).

**APARTMENTS**

In recent semesters, the flats have typically accommodated five to seven students. They have been located in the district called Farringdon, to the east of Bloomsbury. Each apartment has a kitchen, a living room with color TV and one or two full bathrooms. The kitchens come equipped with basic cook- and dinnerware, but not a lot of each one. The flats are cleaned weekly, and linens are provided. Heat, electricity, appliances and other normal conveniences are also included. The flats have wireless internet access for a reasonable fee (through Acorn).

Apartments will be available three or four days before classes begin, and must be vacated three or four days after classes end. The Office of Off-Campus Study will notify you of your address over the summer if you’re on a fall study group and usually before the end of final exams in the fall if you are on a spring study group. It would be helpful if you could coordinate your arrival plans with your study group director and the people you will be living with.
Once you arrive in London, take the tube, a cab, or any other appropriate means of transportation to the address below, you can pick up your flat key:

Acorn Office  
19 Bedford Place  
London WC1B 5JA

If you take a cab, you might want to ask the driver to wait, as you should have your key in a matter of moments – the office is within walking distance of the flats. The office is staffed 24 hours a day. If you need to call, the number is (020) 7693 5368.

A mandatory housing orientation meeting will be held a day or so before classes begin. In this meeting, you will learn the “house rules” and how to contact Acorn Management for repairs.

NB: On your departure, Acorn Management will inspect the apartments. Any damages will initially be billed to, and paid by, Colgate. Colgate will then bill the damage costs out to the residents of the apartment. Any damages to common areas, unless claimed by the individual(s) causing the damage, will be split evenly among all study group participants.

CLASSROOMS

Classes will be held in the Florida State University London Study Centre. The address is:

Florida State University  
London Study Centre  
100-103 Great Russell Street  
Bloomsbury, London WC1B 3LA

There are four levels to the FSU Centre, with regular-sized windowed classrooms on each floor, each equipped with appropriate desks, blackboards, and technological capabilities. The rooms tend to get hot during classes, so dress in layers whenever possible. There are two main computer labs in the basement available to use 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You will need to swipe your student ID card (either your photo will be taken at the start of the semester by the FSU staff and made into an ID necklace or you will have to submit a photo to Off-Campus Study in the semester prior to the study group so that they can send it to FSU for the ID necklace to be made prior to your arrival) each time you enter the building or either computer lab, so always keep your ID handy and in a safe location. The staff requires you to present your ID by wearing it around your neck whenever inside the FSU building.

There is also a study lounge in the basement with a soda machine as well as a library with books on a variety of British-related subjects. Many have been donated by past members of U.S. study groups to London, and students are highly encouraged to donate unwanted books to FSU at the end of the semester. It saves you additional room in your suitcases and allows others to benefit from the resources. Bathrooms are located throughout the Centre and are easily accessible.

The FSU Centre is very centrally located in the heart of London, literally a block away from the British Museum and a couple of minutes’ walk to the Tottenham Court Road tube stop. Many students walk to and from class each day; London is such a walking city, and the more of it you can see by foot, the better your experience there will be.
CLUBS AND PUBS

- China White
- Fabric – Usually has a £12 cover charge. Investigate the DJs before you go so you know what kind of music you’ll be hearing.
- The Goose (located on Leather Lane).
- J.D. Wetherspoon – casual, cheap chain pubs with a full menu and constant drink specials. Especially recommended: Printworks on Farringdon Road
- Long Island Iced Tea Shop (1 Upper St Martin's Lane, Covent Garden, WC2H 9EA) – Cocktail bar & nightclub
- MoMo’s (5-27 Heddon Street, Mayfair, LONDON, W1B 4BH) – Moroccan restaurant
- The Pint Pot (183 Tottenham Court Road, W1T 7PE)
- The Queen’s Head (13 Brook Green, Hammersmith, LONDON, W6 7BL)
- The Roadhouse (35 The Piazza, Covent Garden, WC2E 8BE).
- U. of London Student Union – The Jeremy Bentham (Pub) (31 University Street, Euston, WC1E 6JL)
- Walkabout, also a chain pub/club
- The White Horse on Parson’s Green (1 - 3 Parsons Green, Fulham, SW6 4UL) – a bit of a tube ride, but the real ale is worth the trip.
- Ye Old Cheshire Cheese (145 Fleet Street, EC4A 2BU, by the Holborn tube station) – has been around since before the Great Fire of London (1666) and has excellent traditional English food at very reasonable prices.
- Ye Old Mitre (1 Ely Court, off Ely Place, EC1N 6SJ) – traditional, rich history, great food and ale.
- Ministry of Sound – similar to Fabric. Highly recommended!
- NYC – a small hip-hop club just off of Leicester Square
- Champagne Bar (top floor of Harvey Nichols)

A few notes: Pubs are great for cheap dinners out. Many clubs have a cover charge after 10pm, but are free before that. Check the ZagOuts Night Club Guide for more club listings and info.

Leicester Square and the surrounding area is always full of prowling promoters who offer good deals to get into the nearby clubs (which tend to be cheesy and touristy, but always a sure thing). Angel is another hip area, boasting a lot of cool pubs.

CULTURAL EVENTS

You can check any guidebooks you’ve brought (Let’s Go London, Lonely Planet, etc.) for information on the bigger, recurring events that take place in London and look in Time Out (£1.50) to find out what entertainment is available in and around the city from week to week. Then again, most of the information contained in these publications can be obtained more cheaply in The Guide, provided free with the Guardian newspaper on Saturdays, or ES, given away with Friday evening’s edition of the Evening Standard. A few events to be on the lookout for are Carnival (end of August in Notting Hill), and all of the markets (Portebello, Covent Garden, and Spitalfields) are great all year round and have special events to watch for. Many of the holiday-related events are fabulous as well!

The website http://www.londonfreelist.com/home.asp lists all kinds of free events and attractions taking place in London. (Okay, so actually they also list things that cost up to £3, but come on – for London that’s practically free.)

Another freebie tip: on Sunday evenings The Green (bar & restaurant that is located near the student flats at 29 Clerkenwell Green) has been doing free screenings of in die films, shorts, and sometimes old films.
EATING OUT

- Brick Lane Brasserie (67 Brick Lane)
- Ecco pizza joints (there’s Ecco Holborn, 186 Drury Lane, WC2; and Ecco Victoria, 40 Strutton Ground, SW1) – great pizza and great prices
- Exotica (7 Villers Street Strand, in Covent Garden area) – Very reasonably priced ethnic food
- The Forum Café (8-10 Cooper's Row, The City, EC3N 2BQ) – Italian restaurant
- The GaUCHo Grill (125-126 Chancery Lane, Holborn, WC2A) – Argentinian restaurant
- New Picadilly (8 Denman Street, W1) – Not feeling like Starbucks or Bewleys? Check out this old-school coffee shop
- Pizza Express – They even have great desserts!
- Caffè Nero – tasty, cheap alternative to Starbucks
- Prêt à Manger – a chain of quality take-away sandwiches and snacks
- Wagamama noodle bar (4, Streatham St., WC1) – an awesome, popular Japanese noodle bar worth trying; get take out to save money.
- Any Italian restaurant in Soho.
- Kebab places abound (about one per block) – try it!
- All of the restaurants in and around Exmouth Market (esp. Smith’s of Smithfield, Pride of Siam, St. John)
- Ginnan, on Rosebery Ave, has an all-you-can-eat sushi buffet Mondays and student concessions.
- PUBS!! (See previous section.)
- To-go specials and sandwiches from local markets, Sainsbury’s, and other small food stores.
- Hotels also offer fancier and pricier meals – perfect for when the parents come to visit, etc.

Check out [http://www.toptable.co.uk/](http://www.toptable.co.uk/) for information on and special deals for London restaurants (other UK cities available too).

HEALTH CLUBS

- Central YMCA – down the street from FSU on Great Russell Street. It costs about £140 for a semester-long membership.
- Oasis – High Holborn Street, also close to the FSU centre.
- L.A. Fitness – the centre by Chancery Lane closed last November, but there is still one by Holborn which is huge, has plenty of machines and a pool, and offers special fall membership deals (i.e. pay for 2 months’ membership, get the 3rd free). Here, you will spend £75 max.
- UCL Gym-Bloomsbury. Monthly memberships are pretty cheap.
- Pineapple Dance Studio (can pay per class instead of buying a membership)

Take your time picking a health club. You’ll want to consider where the gym is located, who you like to work out with, and how much it will cost. Take at least a week or two feeling out the city before you settle in on one club. Decisions are final and the cost is substantial. Also check to see if any clubs are offering special deals like the three months for the price of two mentioned above, or even two memberships for the price of one (as has happened in the past). Watch the street for deals and fliers for local gyms.

Utilize the “Health Maintenance” funding that is available. Students participating on Colgate study groups can receive up to $100 – not pounds – from Colgate for a health-maintenance activity (you have to provide your director with a receipt for the activity). Putting the money toward a health club membership is a good way to use this. You can check with your director to find out how much the $100 translates to in pounds.
HOMESICKNESS CURES

- Burger King
- McDonald’s
- Pizza Hut
- Sports Café (Haymarket, SW1) – Has NFL, NHL and some college games live.
- Subway
- TGIFriday’s
- Starbucks

Warning: Fast food in Europe is not like fast food at home. Something tastes different… Try at your own risk.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

Emergency
For ambulances, police, fire department: dial 999
(This call is free from all phones.)

U.S. Embassy
24, Grosvenor Square,
London W1A 1AE.
Tel: (020) 7499 9000
Tube: Bond Street or Marble Arch
Open Monday – Friday
9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Rape Crisis Centre
Women Against Rape/Crossroads Women’s Center
230, Kentish Town Rd, London, NW5 2AB
Tel: (020) 7482 2496

City of London Information Centre
St. Pauls Churchyard, London, EC4M 8BX
Tel: 020 7332 1456

Hospital
In an emergency you will be treated free of charge in the casualty ward (i.e. emergency room). You will have to pay for routine medical care, however. Cromwell Hospital at the corner of Cromwell Road and Marlowes Road, W14, is an American hospital.

Pharmacies(Chemists)
Every Police Station has an emergency list of chemists and doctors in the area. Some chemists have longer hours:

**Boots** (equivalent to Kinney’s)
Locations throughout the city
Most are open Mon – Sat, 9 am – 8 pm

**Bliss Chemist**
50-56, Willesden Lane, London NW6
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.
Police Stations
Police Headquarters
New Scotland Yard
Broadway and Victoria Street, London SW1H 0BG
Tel: (020) 7230 1212
Tube: St. James’ Park

Snow Hill Police Station
5 Snow Hill, London, EC1A 2DP
Tel: (020) 7601 2406

Samaritans (Support services to anyone in crisis)
46 Marshall Street, London W1F 9BF
Phone: 020 7734 2800 (Phones are staffed 9 am – 9 pm)
London branch website: http://www.samaritans.org/~cls/
Main Samaritans website: http://www.samaritans.org.uk/

RELIGIOUS FACILITIES

Nearly all religious denominations are represented somewhere in London. Look online to find local places of worship if you wish to attend services during the semester. A useful site to get you started is http://www.cityorganiser.co.uk/more.php

RESEARCH FACILITIES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- Charing Cross Reference Library (6 Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0HF)
  http://www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/findalibrary/charing.cfm
- City of Westminster Archives Centre (10 St Ann’s Street, SW1P 2DE)
  http://www.westminster.gov.uk/archives/
- Guildhall Library (Aldermanbury, EC2P 2EJ) – an amazing resource for all subjects. Most students agree that this library was the easiest to use and most reliable for all the research projects and papers they had. The reference libraries and archives there are remarkably helpful. The library itself is also very close by the Bank tube stop. Information on the library accessible through http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/
- London Metropolitan Archives Library (Formerly Greater London Record Office) (40 Northampton Road, Clerkenwell, EC1R 0HB) – Information on the Archives is accessible through http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/
- Holborn Reference Library (32-38 Theobald's Road, WC1X 8PA)
  http://www.camden.gov.uk/holbornlibrary
- Westminster Reference Library (35 St. Martin's Street, WC2H 7HP)
  http://www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/findalibrary/westref.cfm

When you are doing local research, go to the library in the part of London in which you are interested because they will have the most information. Once you are in a library, ask for the yellow listing guide of all Central London libraries. Online indexes and addresses are also available. You will not be able to check out books out of most libraries, as they tend to be reference libraries rather than lending libraries, but you can photocopy or take digital pictures of most resources you will use. Be sure to ask permission from the librarian beforehand and have spare change available for copying costs, as many libraries cannot make change from larger bills for you.

Keep in mind that most, if not all, London public libraries open around 9:30 or 10 a.m. and close between 4:30-5 p.m. Many are not open on Saturdays or Sundays.
SHOPPING

- Argos (5 Grays Inn Rd, WC1X 8PH, Tube: Chancery Court) – for home needs.
- Bond Street, Regent Street for Burberry, FCUK, other British Chains
- Brick Lane & Cheshire Street Market (Brick Lane & Cheshire St, SW9) – clothing, antiques, furniture and all kinds of odds and ends. Also check out Beyond Retro at 110-112 Cheshire street; the cowboy boots are not to be missed!
- Camden Market – funky paraphernalia (Camden Town or Chalk Farm tube).
- Carnaby St. for trendy boutiques.
- Covent Garden area shops.
- Fortnum and Mason for quality teas and other British food items and souvenirs.
- German Street for fun window-shopping
- H&M - clothes.
- Leather Lane Market.
- Goodge St. for plenty of cheap thrift stores.
- Notting Hill—Saturday morning markets. (Go there hungry!)
- Oxfam Bookstore (26 Marylebone High Street, W1) – also has a considerable music selection. Get cheap books & music and have your money go to a good cause.
- Oxford Street for inexpensive London-style apparel and souvenirs (also chains like H&M, Gap, MNG).
- Portobello Road Market/Notting Hill – for just about anything you can think of. Go Friday for better deals and Saturday mornings for the most vendors (Ladbroke Grove tube).
- Sloane Square, Brompton Road – posh fashion area, think Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Prada.
- Selfridges (Bond St. Tube) is a must.

Check out the following website for information on all the various markets (antiques, clothing, food, etc.) in London, including descriptions, opening times, locations and how to get them:
http://www.talkingcities.co.uk/london_pages/shopping_markets.htm

TELEVISIONED SPORTS

For those pining for news of the home team, the newest of the terrestrial television channels, Channel 5, now carries Monday Night Football live, hosted by a hilariously incompetent pair of local commentators. The bad news is that with the time difference, kickoff is not until about 1 a.m., so the use of a VCR for taping and subsequent consumption is strongly recommended. Channel 5 also broadcasts Major League Baseball playoff games in season and a weekly NHL match-up, whose commentary team, reputedly, is even more inept than the one featured on MNF. For Sunday NFL games, the cable channel Sky Sports 1 broadcasts live whatever game is being covered by CBS that week. And NBA is shown Tuesdays at 2a.m. on Channel 5. An overseas ESPN channel called ESPN Orbit usually carries a live feed of the game shown by Fox. However, do NOT rely on getting these channels in your flat without cable; you typically will get 4-5 channels max.

These games can be seen at the Sports Café Restaurant, New Zealand House, Haymarket (Piccadilly Circus or Charing Cross tubes) (020) 7839 8300. This is essentially an American-style sports bar, much patronized by expatriates, and it’s a good place to go to if you want to run into lots of other American students on study groups (and a bad place to go if you don’t). Keep in mind that sports bars are great places to go, especially when wanting to get more of a flavor for the English love of football (our soccer) and rugby. You can buy drinks and food cheaply there with little or no cover charge most days.
TOURIST SIGHTS AND ATTRACTIONS

It will be to your great advantage to familiarize yourself with the city and all the wonderful things it has to offer. To begin with, a walking tour (or bus tour if you are willing to spend £18-20) of London is one of the best (and cheapest!) ideas. Then, you may want to see some shows, visit museums, stroll through the parks and zoo, and lots more. Below are a few suggestions, but there are countless other things to explore as well.

- **Tour of London** – London Transport, leaves from Piccadilly Circus. There you will find double-decker buses which will drive around the city to see the various sites, like Big Ben, Parliament, etc. This is a great way to get acquainted quickly with London.

- **Museums and Art Galleries** – Look in *Time Out* for weekly exhibitions. Most museums and galleries are open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 2 to 5 p.m. Sundays. For the most part, museums are government supported and charge no admission. If they do, it is usually a modest price, although when there are special exhibitions within the museum there may be an additional charge to enter those specified areas. When there is an additional charge or entry fee, don’t forget to inquire about a student rate. The museums which have been frequented by Colgate students in the past include:

  **The British Museum** (Great Russell St, WC1, near the FSU Centre) – Famous for its Greek sculpture, Assyrian and Egyptian antiquities, manuscripts of famous writers, the Magna Carta and clocks from around the world. Known as one of the great museums of the world. Should be visited at least once by all those who visit London.

  **Museum of London** – Cute, touristy, with period costumes and great souvenirs.

  **The National Gallery** (Trafalgar Square, WC2) – Britain’s major collection of “old master” paintings; important works by the most famous painters up to about 1900. There is also a bookstore and souvenir shop inside that is worth a browse.

  **The National Portrait Gallery** (Charing Cross Road, WC2) – This gallery contains pictures of almost every famous British person. Starting from the top floor and descending down the stairs, you begin in the early 14th and 15th centuries and finish in the present on the ground floor.

  **The Tate Britain** (Millbank, SW1 4RG) – The national gallery of British art from 1500 to the present.

  **The Tate Modern** (Bankside, SE1 9TG) – Britain’s national gallery of international modern art (1900 to present).

  **The Victoria and Albert Museum** (Cromwell Road, SW7) – This museum focuses on the “decorative arts.” There are beautiful exhibits of costumes from different periods, furniture of all styles and centuries, jewelry, Indian art, miniatures and more.

Those are the larger, more famous museums, but the smaller ones should not be overlooked:

- **Cabinet War Rooms** (Westminster) – Winston Churchill’s WWII artifacts.
- **Courtauld Institute** (Somerset House, Aldwych from Woburn Sq.) – Impressionists.
- **Foundling Hospital Museum** (Bloomsbury) – art gallery and history of caring for abandoned children in London.
- **Hayward Gallery** (Waterloo Station and in Piccadilly) – Modern art gallery that houses temporary exhibits.
- **Imperial War Museum** (Lambeth North Underground) – War and wartime life in Britain and the Commonwealth in the twentieth century.
Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) (The Mall, SW1) – Contemporary art.
Museum of Childhood (Bethnal Green Underground) – Dolls and toys; these days, more of a
children’s museum.
Sir John Soane’s (13 Lincoln’s Inn Fields, WC1) – Soane’s private art collections and personal
effects.
The Walles Collection (Oxford St.) – 18th century French furniture.

If you are interested in finding even more museums, check out the “24 Hour Museum” website which
has information on over 2,500 UK museums, galleries and national heritage attractions:
www.24hourmuseum.org.uk

- Some of the most enjoyable and memorable times students mention are the unusual events, clubs,
  places and things they saw. It might be useful to find out about all the events in Hyde Park while you
  are there. These are free and usually lots of fun (i.e. Westminster Horse Show, World Crew
  Tournament and, especially, Speaker’s Corner). Or, you may want to treat yourself to a medieval
  dinner in a stately home (Hatfield House, approx. 21 miles from central London, tel. (01707) 287 010,
  http://www.hatfield-house.co.uk/). Some students have enjoyed concerts at the Royal Albert Hall,
  Town & Country, or Wembley Arena. If you are interested in sports, you may want to get a cricket,
  crew, football or rugby schedule of local teams. These sports could prove to be a real cultural
  experience.

- Theatres: Student concessions or stand-by are available at most theatres; call in advance.
  National Theatre – Located on the South Bank; fun area.
  The Globe Theatre – very close to the Tate Modern.
  Lyric Hammersmith – famous, fallen into hard times but Kevin Spacey’s adopted it
  Orange Tree Theatre – Theatre in the round
  Royal Court Theatre – good shows, historically rich.
  Royal National Theatre – grand setting, big name shows
  Barbican Centre – cool place, near most of the flats
  Riverside Studios – “on the fringe,” more experimental

- Some outdoor places and areas that you might want to visit include Battersea Park, Covent Garden,
  Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, Piccadilly Circus, Regent’s Park (look for Charlie – he feeds
  squirrels), Leicester Square, Kew Gardens, Hampstead Heath, Soho and St. James’ Park.

- Explore different cultural areas like Hackney, Little India, New Malden, and Chinatown (by Leicester
  Square).

- And, of course, there are the tried and true tourist attractions that you just cannot leave London
  without having seen, such as the Houses of Parliament, the New British Library (St. Pancras), St.

TRAVEL

Although you will find countless cultural experiences right in London, you will no doubt be tempted to
travel on some long weekends or during the break. Travel in Europe can prove to be inexpensive if one
does some research beforehand and use student travel agencies. They are particularly useful for planning
your travels during the longer break which will likely have multiple destinations. Below are some student
agencies in the U.S. and in London:

In the U.S.:
You must sign up to use this service, but it is free to do so. The company has a good reputation in the student travel world.

In London:

**STA Travel**
Several offices in London
See immediately above for website and #4 under “Making a Checklist” for more details.

**Trailfinders**
194, Kensington High St, W8 7RG
(020) 7938 3939
www.trailfinders.com/index.htm
(They are especially good for long-haul flights.)

**Travelosophy**
http://www.itravelosophy.com/
In London:

**STA Travel**
Several offices in London
See immediately above for website and #4 under “Making a Checklist” for more details.

**Trailfinders**
194, Kensington High St, W8 7RG
(020) 7938 3939
www.trailfinders.com/index.htm
(They are especially good for long-haul flights.)

**Tradefinders**
Lower Ground Floor Waterstones,
203-205, Piccadilly, W1J 9HD
(020 7292 1888)

**Travel by Air**

Flying can be economical if you shop around and compare prices. All the Sunday newspapers advertise bargain specials, and London Student Travel often has weekend specials. Check websites such as lastminute.com, Travelocity, etc. Also check the airlines’ websites, as they often run special, web-only deals. *See note below about low-cost airlines.*

- Flights to Scotland are worth looking into. **EasyJet** and **Ryanair** have low fares each way from London to Edinburgh or Prestwick (for Glasgow). (EasyJet and Ryanair are the two primary airlines most frequently used by students in London.) **BMI Baby** is a good option as well.

- Flights to Paris and Brussels are about the same length and almost as cheap as going by train, although the airports are on the outskirts of the city, so you still have to get from the airport to the city center. If you prefer to go by train, the Channel Tunnel trains, or **Eurostar**, leave from Waterloo station. Book there or through any travel agency. The train is by far the easiest way to get to Paris, and the advantage is that you arrive in the heart of the city (journey time about three hours). If you buy a student rate on the Eurostar (about £30 each way) you must have an ISIC student card to receive a student ticket. Also, book at least a month in advance because Eurostar offers only a limited number of student seats on each train.

- Flights to Greece, Spain, and locations ever further a field can sometimes prove to be real bargains. Compare prices, especially at Thomas Cook, London Student Travel and Alapes Travel. These agents usually list inexpensive charter flights. During vacation time, Thomas Cook (Kensington High Street, Queensway, Earl’s Court) and Abreu (Westbourne Grove) have package deals including airfare, hotel, and some meals that are quite good deals. As always, shop around and do not be pressured into buying on the spot.

**London Airports**

There are three major airports and two smaller ones. The student travel agencies often use the less popular airports for their cheap flights. When flying, always make sure you give yourself plenty of time to arrive at the airport and check in.

- **Heathrow** is the largest and is 15 miles west of London. It is possible to get there by Tube on the Piccadilly Line and this method is probably the fastest. The “Heathrow Express” train from Paddington (£13 one way) is an inconvenient and expensive rip-off. The Airbus from Victoria is also a way to get to Heathrow but it is much slower than the Tube. The airport is usually very crowded and quite confused. Make sure you know which terminal you need (there are four of them) and give
Gatwick is somewhat smaller than Heathrow and it is further away: about 40 miles to the south. There is a train referred to as the “Gatwick Express” that leaves from Victoria Station every half hour. These trains go non-stop to the airport and take half an hour. They cost £9 o/w with your student rail card (£12 o/w and £23.50 r/t without). Conveniently, these trains leave you in the middle of the airport with easy access to all flights. Gatwick has two terminals: North and South.

Stansted, 43 miles to the north-east, used to be the most user-friendly of the lot, but its facilities are now severely strained by hordes of passengers traveling on the low-fare airlines that predominate at this airport. Expect major delays at security throughout the day. A West Anglia/Great Northern (WAGN) train, the Stansted Express, runs seven days a week on the hour and the half-hour from Liverpool Street station in the city centre between 05:00 and midnight. Journey time: 48 minutes. Cost: £13.80 o/w, £24 r/t.

Luton, like Stansted, is used primarily for cheap charter flights and is about 40 miles to the north. The fastest way there is by taking the Thameslink train from St Pancras to Luton Airport Parkway (35 minutes) and connecting there with the free shuttle bus (15 minutes). The cost is £9.50 o/w. There is also a bus (Green Line 757) from Buckingham Palace Road, at the side of Victoria Railway Station, which goes to the Luton airport. It takes between one and two hours, depending on the time of day, and costs £7.00 o/w.

London City Airport is the newest, and smallest, departure point. It’s in the Docklands of east London, and is the closest of all the terminals serving the city, just six miles from the Bank of England. The runway is actually built over a disused dock and is pretty short for commercial aircraft. Because it’s mainly used by financial types willing to pay extra for the convenience of traveling from there, fares to the principal European destinations tend to be on the high side. To get there, take the Docklands Light Railway to Canning Town station, and transfer to the airport shuttle-bus which leaves at ten-minute intervals (£3 o/w)

A Cautionary Note on Low-Fare Airlines: With the deregulation of the European airline system, a host of new operators have appeared, often offering comically cheap flights to various destinations (Ryanair, the largest of the low-fare airlines [LFA], has periodic seat sales starting at £0.01 plus tax each way). A lot of Colgate students, however, have been badly caught out while traveling with the LFAs. Some points to consider:

Many of these flights land at remote airfields far from their stated destinations. Ryanair’s flight to Frankfurt, for example, actually lands in Hahn, a small airport some 60 miles away. Not only is this inconvenient, but you could easily get stranded at the destination point. If your flight is delayed and arrives late at night, you may find that the last ‘bus to civilization’ has long since departed, confronting you with the choice between an extremely expensive taxi fare or cooling your heels outside a closed terminal until morning.

Many of these airlines close their gates 45 minutes before the scheduled departure time. That means that you have to have cleared the initial check-in desk and be at the departure gate well before that time or else you’re out of luck. Even if you’re en route to the gate after having checked in, after that 45-minute mark is past they close up shop and will not let you on the plane. Nor will they refund your ticket, so you’re stuck buying a full-price fare for the next available flight.

Some of these airports are also places that have been abandoned by the full-fare airlines because of unfavorable weather patterns. Jerez de la Frontera in southern Spain, also used by Ryanair, is regularly shut down in the winter for days at a time because of fog. If you have to be back in London for a Monday-morning class, your return flight might be more expensive than you had originally
If you’re trying to make a connection on an LFA (e.g. London Stansted to Charleroi, then Charleroi to Rome Ciampino) and your outbound leg is delayed because of the airline’s fault, under European law they are under no obligation to find you a seat on a later service. You will have to buy an entirely new ticket for the Charleroi-to-Rome leg; and without any advance purchase, it’s likely to cost you a lot more than what you originally paid.

Should the airline cancel a flight, their only legal responsibility is to find you a seat on the next available service. If there’s only one flight a day, and it takes five days to clear the backlog of stranded passengers, that’s just too bad.

The free baggage allowance on most of the LFAs is only 15 kg (33 lb) for checked baggage. Anything over that is charged at around £7 per kilogram. These limits are rigorously enforced. (Ryanair is now talking about doing away with the free baggage allowance altogether, and charging for all checked bags.)

None of this is to suggest that you shouldn’t use LFAs, but you need to know what you’re getting for your money. Don’t assume, though, that the lowest fares are always to be found on Ryanair or EasyJet. Aer Lingus or British Midland, for example, often beat the low-fares to Dublin or Milan. You should also bear in mind that flying from Stansted rather than Heathrow will add nearly £20 to the overall cost of your trip when transport to and from the airport is factored into the equation.

Travel by Coach

In Britain, “buses” mean local transportation and “coaches” mean long-distance travel. Coaches in general are significantly cheaper than trains, and are sometimes more convenient into the bargain. The British equivalent of Greyhound is called National Express. It operates out of Victoria Coach Station, about a three-minute walk from the railway terminus of the same name. Many coach companies offer student discounts; inquire in each case. These buses are great for day trips to Oxford, the Cotswolds, or Bath, and also for getting to the airports. The Oxford coach has laptop ports and reclining seats, and makes for a fantastic weekend trip – there is a four-star hotel masquerading as a hostel (YHA Oxford) which will treat you very nicely – see http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/hostelpages/836.html. Also see www.nationalexpress.com/neh.cfm for more information on traveling by coach in the UK or Europe. Check Terravision, which offers cheap shuttle service to airports and elsewhere.

Travel by Rail

The rail network in Britain is extensive. The recent and badly bungled privatization of the railways, which by common consent has resulted only in a deterioration in services and an increase in prices, has created a situation in which even the various rail companies themselves do not fully understand the range of options involved in getting from A to B. The train is still the preferred, and in some cases, the only means of travel to many parts of the country; however, expect confusion and delay en route. Information – although not always accurate – about destinations, prices, and times can be obtained from the main train stations in London (Charing Cross, Euston, King’s Cross, Liverpool Street, Paddington, St Pancras, Victoria, and Waterloo) and online through the National Rail website. If you are traveling for only a day, ask for a “cheap day return” ticket. These can only be used after 9:30 am on weekdays but anytime on weekends. With your youth card, a return ticket (roundtrip) will cost about the same as a single (one-way) ticket. Some tips on saving money using the train:

1. If you plan to do a fair amount of traveling by train, buy a “young person’s rail card” at any main-line station. These cards are for anyone under the age of 24 and can save the holder up to 33% on the regular fare. You will need a passport-sized photograph to obtain the card. When you
receive your card you should be given a pamphlet that will describe other discounts the card offers.

2. If you are traveling for only a day, ask for a “cheap day return” ticket. These can only be used after 9:30 am on weekdays but anytime on weekends. With your youth card, a return ticket (roundtrip) will cost about the same as a single (one-way) ticket.

3. If you are traveling to one of Britain’s major cities and plan to stay more than a day, ask for an “intercity saver ticket.”

Popular Destinations in the U.K.

Some popular cities and towns: Bath, Cambridge, Cornwall, Coventry, Devon, Dover, Oxford, Stratford-upon-Avon, York, Winchester, Cardiff, Swansea, Edinburgh and St. Andrews to name a few. If you are planning to go to Scotland, go early (autumn) or late (spring) because it gets very cold, very fast. It also rains twice a week – once for four days, the other time for three days, as the saying goes. Edinburgh is much more fun than Glasgow, the other principal city, which is a sort of Scottish Cleveland.

Some popular sites and areas: Eastbourne, Hampstead, Hampton Court Palace, Kew Gardens, the Lake District, Richmond, Stonehenge, Warwick Castle, Wimbledon.

Popular Destinations on the Continent

- **Amsterdam** is an easy weekend trip that many students feel is a must. If you’re not an overly-confident traveler, go in a group. *Women especially*. That said, some women on past study groups who went to Amsterdam felt that it was not that scary to travel alone as a woman. Just be street smart and keep your eyes open.

- **Ireland** has beautiful countryside and lots happening in Dublin. Student fares there are affordable. Kerry, the Dingle Peninsula, Kinsale, and Killarney in the south are all beautiful. The West is Yeats’ Country if you’re a fan of the poet, there’s lots going on in Galway, and the Aran Islands off the coast of Galway have a rugged beauty to them. Donegal to the north is sparsely populated but incredibly beautiful (as is the Antrim Coast in Northern Ireland), and the East is home to Dublin (a very cool city), the Wicklow Mountains and Glendalough. Don’t be put off from dropping in on Derry or Belfast: Americans are popular in all parts of the island.

- **Italy** is one of the most popular, though pricey, destinations. Some students thought that Rome was their favorite place in all of Italy, while others considered Sicily, Venice, and Florence to be even better. So far as the smaller destinations are concerned, Assisi, Lucca and Orvieto are all drop-dead gorgeous. Italy is an extremely easy country in which to travel; the buses and trains are comparatively inexpensive and usually very efficient (local and national strikes can make a hash of that efficiency, however). Some say that Venice and Florence are more accommodating to tourists and less dangerous than Rome. If money is an issue when visiting Venice, the hotels in Mestre are a lot cheaper and just eight minutes away from the city by train.

- **Paris** is an easy weekend trip. Make sure you have a place to stay before you get there. Hostels and B&Bs in the city are decent. Weekend packages for £150 are an expensive, yet easy, alternative since they include meals and hotel. Student Travel usually runs specials for weekends. The most convenient way of getting there is by train via the Channel Tunnel. Eurostar, departing from Waterloo, has round trips from £79.

- **Spain** is a good choice for longer trips. Hostels and B&Bs are nice and the Spanish Tourist Office can give you a listing of hostels throughout Spain and answer any question you might have. Try Abreu Travel agency (Westbourne Grove) first for the best price. The warmest weather on the
mainland is to be found around Sevilla, Malaga and Cadiz, where you can expect short-sleeve
temperatures even in January. It is also possible to find a really cheap flight to the Balearic Islands
in the Mediterranean (Majorca, Minorca, and Ibiza) and the Canary Islands in the Atlantic during
off-peak seasons. Agencies give huge discounts to makers of last-minute reservations when they
have empty seats on holiday charters to fill: look for “seat only” offers. Barcelona is also wonderful,
but watch out for pick-pockets.

- Switzerland is a lot more expensive than most other places in Europe, but students felt that
  Interlaken and Lucerne are incredibly scenic. It is cheaper to fly into Zürich or Mulhouse/Basle
  rather than Geneva.

- Other popular destinations for longer trips: Austria, Berlin, Brussels, the Greek Islands, Morocco,
  Munich, Portugal, Prague and Turkey.

- For a more distinctive and off-the-beaten-path experience, try going to some smaller places/villages
  when you travel. Keep in mind that many smaller places on the continent do not accept credit cards
  so make sure you have euros on hand!

No matter where you go, try to learn at least a few words of the language spoken in the countries in
which you are traveling. You will find it both useful and fun.

IF I HAD KNOWN THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW, I WOULD HAVE...

- “...traveled much more in the beginning and brought fewer clothes. A warm jacket is key.”
- “...read Let’s Go London.”
- “...brought more money.”
- “...remembered that you have to bring everything you buy home.”
- “...brought more money. Things in London are more expensive than you can imagine.”
- “...gone to more museums earlier in the trip.”
- “...traveled more and earlier! You never know when you’ll have another chance.”
- “...saved earlier on and more for the entire semester.”
- “...spent less on tube fares and chose to walk to destinations more.”
- “...learned the art of buying cheap sandwiches early on and avoided eye-catching, tempting, and
  touristic food joints and restaurants.”
- “...tried more Indian food.”
- “...gotten a better memory card for my digital camera to save money on developing regular film.”
- “...bought an A to Z guide earlier on and actually used it more often.”
- “...not have blown all my savings in the first month there.”
- “...tried harder to burst the ‘American Bubble’ and made some British friends.”
- “...planned trips before getting there or within two weeks of arriving.”
- “...bought and used a Eurail Pass before leaving for London.”
- “...tried to see more of the English countryside and the outskirts of London.”
- “...tried more new things instead of settling into a routine.”

A FEW NOTES FOR HISTORY MAJORS:

- Research your archives in advance: know where you are going and what you are looking for.
- Start early – the semester will end and you will wish you had just one more week to track things down.
- Take immaculate notes: you won’t be able to retrace your steps
- Don’t spend too much time in the beginning of the semester reading secondary sources: spend your
time in the archives.
➢ On research trips, pack a lunch. You’ll save yourself a considerable amount of money, and there is NEVER any good food in archival cafeterias.
➢ Talk with each other – some of the most productive moments students from last year’s group experienced were in coffee shops discussing their research and theses.
➢ Talk with UK professors – look up their bios online, find a professor with your research interests, and introduce yourself. They will point you to new sources, and may lead to useful intellectual friendships.
➢ Make friends with the archivists: they will find things for you that you hadn’t even considered.

FINAL NOTES

This guide is meant to be used as a starting point and a tool to help get you oriented when you first get to London. Do not rely on the guide too much – half the fun of being in a different country is exploring and discovering things on your own! You are in for an amazing semester; just do not expect things to fall into your lap. You will need to get out there and make the effort to try new and different things and meet some Brits!

Be aware, too, that other countries have different ways of doing things and part of the education that comes with studying abroad derives from experiencing how other cultures operate. Britain is no exception. Things will be different, and you’re going to be expected to adapt to the British way of life, not the other way around. Remember: “When in Rome (or London!)…”