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

105 MCGREGORY HALL
COLGATE UNIVERSITY
1987
REVISED 2003
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.

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 105 McGregory Hall upon your return.

Thanks, in advance, for your help and best wishes for a great semester in London.
PREPARING FOR YOUR SEMESTER ABROAD

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. It is highly recommended that before you leave the U.S., you either write or visit the following offices to request a few essentials that will aid you throughout the semester:

The British Tourist Authority
40 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019
Tel: (212) 581.4700
http://www.visitbritain.com/
(There are branches in Toronto, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, and eleven major European cities as well.)

STA Travel
107 Marshall Street
Syracuse, NY 13201
Tel: (315) 474.9563
http://www.sta-travel.com/
(There are other branches nationwide.
Check the website for locations)

At STA, 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. In this office, you will also be able to buy an International Student ID card (also available at Colgate Student Travel) and, if you’d like, the International Youth Hostel card and supplemental travel insurance.

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.

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.

- http://www.londonmaps.co.uk – site where you can buy all kinds of maps and books of London
- http://www.londontown.com – all kinds of information on tourism, going out, events, etc.
- http://www.telegraph.co.uk – online version of the London newspaper
- http://www.timesonline.co.uk/ – online version of the London newspaper
- http://www.thetube.com – everything you need to know about the London Underground

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

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 contacts – 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 contacts, you should consider taking an extra pair of them with you, as well as a copy of your eyeglass prescription.

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 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 the Colgate Student Travel center. See the address above for the STA in Syracuse. In London you can purchase the ID card at (among other places):

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<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
<td>Campus Travel, 77, Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0AG</td>
<td>0171.730.3402</td>
<td><a href="http://www.statravel.co.uk/">http://www.statravel.co.uk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STA Travel, 11, Goodge Street, London, W1P 1FE</td>
<td><a href="http://www.statravel.co.uk/">http://www.statravel.co.uk/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STA Travel, 85, Shaftesbury Ave., London, W1P 5DX</td>
<td><a href="http://www.statravel.co.uk/">http://www.statravel.co.uk/</a></td>
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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.

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 or so 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 approximately £2.50 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! (Also see note under “Visas” below.)

PASSPORT AND VISAS

Passport

If you are a U.S. citizen you must have a valid passport to enter every country except Canada, Mexico and certain Caribbean islands. In Europe, your passport will function as your most valuable form of identification, especially when cashing Travelers Cheques and making travel reservations.

If you have a passport it 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. If your passport expires before you return, it is possible to renew it, but to avoid unexpected difficulties it is much, much easier if you take care of this before you go away and are still in your own country.

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. In most cities, information about applying for a passport can be obtained from the county clerk. Some nearby locations:

**Colgate:** Each semester, Colgate sponsors a passport meeting the week after mid-term break. A photographer and the county clerk are present and the entire application can be completed during the meeting.

**Near Colgate:** The Madison County Clerk’s office is located in Wampsville, about 20 to 25 minutes from Hamilton (out past the Wal-Mart in Oneida). Tel: (315) 366.2261.

**Syracuse:** The Onondaga State Clerk’s office is located in the County Court House, 40 Montgomery Street. Tel: (315) 425.2230.

**New York City:** The Passport Office is located on Vanderbilt Avenue behind Grand Central Station.

To apply for a passport, you need:

a. A completed passport application;

b. Proof of U.S. citizenship;

c. **Original** birth certificate, or a **certified copy** of your birth certificate (original and certified copies can be identified by their embossed [raised] seals);

d. Two passport-size photographs taken within the last six months;

e. Proof of identity – photo ID, such as a driver’s license;

f. The $55 fee (plus the $30 execution fee – paid separately – if you’ve never been issued a passport before); and

g. The additional fee of $65 (fee of $60 plus $5 for shipping) if you opt for expedited service.

Once you have completed the application process, the passport will be mailed to you directly in six to eight weeks. If you elect for the expedited 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.

(In the event your wallet is lost or stolen, it is similarly helpful to have photocopies of credit cards and other forms of ID. Be sure to keep them in a safe place though. Another good idea is 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.

If you are planning to travel around in Europe at all, 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 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 the 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 of 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. Your current insurer may also be able to provide you with information about short-term overseas insurance.

Hinchcliff International
11 Ascot Place
Ithaca, NY
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 you need 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 exchange rate on the day of service.

Doctors and dentists: Ask your health-care provider 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,” 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) before they see a physician. Most physician fees are at least 50 pounds.

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. These costs generally range from $50-$80, 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 and easy to maintain.

Some suggestions:

- Pack for maximum efficiency. Turtlenecks, t-shirts, flannels and light sweaters are all good because they can be layered and are easy to pack.

- 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 also find a hiker’s backpack to be useful for traveling on the weekends and during the break.

- 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. **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.

- If you plan on using a blow dryer, iron, shaver or any other small electrical appliance during the semester, you are best 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.

- Many students bring small speakers for a Walkman/Discman, but these can also be purchased once in London. One place to do so is at Argos.

- Bring towels or plan to buy some once you arrive in London.

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

- Portable alarm clock (preferably a battery-powered one that is small enough for weekend travel).
Clothing/Accessories thought to be Essential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book bag</th>
<th>Raincoat</th>
<th>Waterproof shoes, such as</th>
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<tr>
<td>Clothes that can be easily layered</td>
<td>Three-prong (U.K.) plug adaptor</td>
<td>walking boots, or waterproofing spray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloves</td>
<td>Travel alarm clock</td>
<td>Umbrella</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pocket calendar</td>
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TIME AND WEATHER

Time Difference

There is a five to seven hour difference between Europe and the eastern U.S., depending on the time of the year and the country. The eastern U.S. is five hours 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 http://www.timeanddate.com. Under the World Clock link, clicking on an individual city will give you more details about that city, including when it changes to and from Daylight Savings Time.

Climate

If you are studying in London during the fall, the average highs will be in the 60s in the daytime and the evening lows will be in the 50s. It will rain frequently 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 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, on the other hand, gives you pounds on the spot without any fee (they are located at 104 E. 40th Street, Suite 114, between Park and Lexington Avenues. Tel: (212) 983.4727).

You can exchange money in any of the London airports; however, the problem with this is that there are usually long lines where you will have to wait while simultaneously trying to guard all of your luggage. In addition, airport concessionaire exchanges charge an inordinately large commission compared to AmEx or most High Street banks. If you must, the Travelex offices will usually have the better rates. 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. 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 if for some reason your ATM card doesn’t work properly, so have a back-up option just in case.

Banking/Obtaining Cash during the Semester

You can choose to handle your money one of four ways in London: using Automatic Teller Machines (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.** Be sure your ATM card is on a checking, not a savings account. For some reason, ATM cards with just savings were not accepted 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. Don’t, however, rely solely on an ATM card. Occasionally cards won’t 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 will be almost impossible for you to obtain a replacement without returning personally to the U.S. Especially when traveling, using Travelers Cheques is the most reliable option.

Some short-term visitors to London may be better off carrying Travelers Cheques, spending them as needed. Get Travelers Cheques in varied amounts (hundreds and fifties are best) because sometimes you’ll only want to exchange a little bit of money into a foreign currency; if you exchange too much and then have to exchange it again, you’ll lose a lot 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.

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, like 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.

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 and 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 Lloyds 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’s 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’re the ones that buy it). 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. See http://www.aaa.com/prepaidcards 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 $1.61 per pound.

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’s 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 Charring Cross – they have lots of good, resourceful books! Some good book stores you might want to check out:

- Foyle's – Charring Cross
- Borders – Charring Cross
- Waterstones – Oxford Street & Gower Street

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

If you plan to take a laptop with a modem, some students have found that establishing an account with a commercial server that offers local dial-up service is the most convenient way to stay in touch via e-mail. One of the better ISPs in Britain is Demon Internet. If you pay by credit card, they will take your details over the telephone and will usually have you up and running the same day. This will give you access to the Web, assuming your machine has Netscape or Microsoft Internet Explorer loaded on it. Some students on recent groups have felt that setting up an ISP account was more trouble than it was worth though.

If you haven’t brought a laptop with you, there are two options: The Florida State University Study Centre computer lab and Internet cafés. The availability of internet-accessible computers in London, once a nightmare, has become infinitely easier (and cheaper) with the opening of a chain of massive Internet cafés called easyEverything. 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. All are open 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Some of their locations are:

- 9-16 Tottenham Court Road (Tottenham Court Road tube)
- 457, Strand (Charing Cross tube)
- 9-13, Wilton St. (Victoria tube)
- 358, Oxford St. (Bond Street tube)
- 160-166, Kensington High St. (High Street Kensington tube)
Entertainment
Expenditures in these categories need to be budgeted in advance. Theater tickets, 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 10am for matinées. Many theaters offer special last-minute deals for students. If you have a student card and show up half and hour before curtain, they will sell you whatever tickets they have left at half price.

To estimate your budget for other types of entertainment, refer to a travel guide such as Let’s Go London. That 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, Safeway, Waitrose, Tesco, Asda and Somerville. Of the lot, we’ve found Sainsbury’s to be the best, while Tesco’s has the most convenient opening hours, with some 29 city-centre supermarkets open 24 hours a day. Check out the street markets for fresh fruits and vegetables. 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). Everyone should be aware of how expensive dining out can be. Even fish and chips can cost the equivalent of $8 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.

Mail
In case your semester abroad spurs you to revive the lost art of letter writing, an air-mail postcard costs 42p; an air-mail letter stamp (10g) 47p; an air-mail letter stamp (20g) 68p; a first-class stamp (10g) within Britain 27p and to the continent 37p. Mail to/from the U.S. takes a minimum of four days, more typically a week. 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 (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. 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, 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.

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. If you go in a big group they will give you a bigger discount! Opt for “Top-Up” or another pay-as-you-go plan rather than contract. You’re better off buying a phone once you’re in London, since most American cell phones don’t operate on the same frequency that’s used in the UK and Europe.

Transportation
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 (http://www.thetube.com). It is often advantageous to buy a weekly or monthly travel card. A Zone 1
pass should meet most of your transportation needs. 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. The weekly and monthly Travelcards are not only economical, they are also convenient – a must for those who really plan on getting around in the city. Passes save fumble time for change in buses and you need not wait in line to purchase tickets on the Underground. While the Tube stops running a little after midnight, night buses operate all night from Trafalgar Square and accept valid Travelcards.

For dyed-in-the-wool cheapskates, it is possible to get around with only a Bus Pass. This costs a mere £32.70 per month for most of the Greater London area. The disadvantages of busing it are that navigating the bus system is a bit tricky, and on many routes buses can be infrequent, erratic and/or subject to horrendous traffic delays. The upside is that taking the bus can also be really fun because you see a lot of the city.

**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 before you settle on anything. More and more students have felt that getting Eurail Passes simply aren’t 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’s not valid in Britain, 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. Don’t 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.

### 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 FSU Centre and your flat:

**Airbus:** Cheap (12 pounds), but with a lot of baggage it’s not very practical

**Heathrow Express:** Fastest way into London, but it brings you to Paddington station, so you still have to get to where you’re going from there.
**Hotellink:** Cheap, easy way for group travel.
**Taxis:** Really convenient but extremely costly (£60). **Note:** Don’t take gypsy taxis!
**Tube:** Hard to get around with luggage – lots of stairs and it can be crowded.

**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 doesn’t lose pages or start to fall apart at the folds. Even London cab drivers will be carrying some form of A to Zed, so don’t think that having one will automatically classify you as a tourist.

You’ll also need an Tube map. It is important to get used to using the Tube and locating which line is best to take. 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 from London Transport. Their 24-hour information line is on 0207.222.1234.

**APARTMENTS**

In recent semesters, the flats have typically accommodated five to seven students. They have been located in the area just 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.

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 before the end of final exams in the fall if you’re 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 whatever to the address below where you may pick up your key:

Florida State University  
London Study Centre  
100-103 Great Russell Street  
Bloomsbury, London WC1

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.

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.

**n.b.** **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.**
CLASSEMS

Classes will be held in the Florida State University London Study Centre (see address above). Computing facilities are available in this building.

CLUBS AND PUBS

- China White
- MoMo’s
- The Roadhouse (Covent Garden, WC2)
- The Walkabout
- The Limelight (136, Shaftesbury Ave.)
- Long Island Iced Tea Shop (1, Upper Martin’s Lane, WC2)
- Look for Jazz clubs in Time Out
- U. of London Student Union – Jeremy Bentham’s pub

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*.

EATING OUT

- Any Italian restaurant in Soho
- Brick Lane
- Wagamama noodle bar (4, Streatham St., WC1)
- PUBS!!
- Dionysus (Tottenhamcourt Road and Oxford Street)
- Pizza Express
- The Forum (Great Russell Street)
- Charlotte Street

HEALTH CLUBS

- Central YMCA – down the street from FSU on Great Russell Street. Inquire about a deal with FSU.
- Oasis – High Holborn Street, also close to the FSU center.

HOMESICKNESS CURES

- Sports Café (Haymarket, SW1)
- TGI Friday
- Pizza Hut
- Garfunkel’s
- McDonald’s
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: 0207.499.9000
Tube: Bond Street or Marble Arch
Open Monday — Friday
9:00 a.m. — 5:30 p.m.

Rape Crisis Center
24 hour telephone #: 0207.837.1600

City of London Information Centre
Victoria Station
London SW1
Tel: 0207.730.3488

London Information Centre
St. Paul’s Cathedral
London ECY
Tel: 0207.606.3030

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

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

Boots
Many locations throughout the city
Open Monday – Saturday
9:00 a.m. — 8:00 p.m.

Bliss Chemist
55-56 Willesden Lane
London NW6
Tube: Kilburn
Open till 11:00 p.m.

Police Headquarters
New Scotland Yard
Broadway and Victoria Street
London SW1
Tel: 0207.230.1212
Tube: St. James’ Park

Samaritans
3 Mororton Place
London W8
Tel: 0207.283.3400 (24 hour hot line)
Tube: High Street Kensington
RELIGIOUS FACILITIES

Look online to find local places of worship.

RESEARCH FACILITIES

- Guildhall Library
- Charring Cross Reference Library

Once you’re in a library, ask for the yellow listing guide of all Central London libraries.

Note: There is a difference in London between lending libraries and reference libraries.

SHOPPING

- Oxford Street for inexpensive London-style apparel and souvenirs.
- Sloane Square, Brompton Road – posh fashion area
- Argos for home needs
- Bond Street, Regent Street for fun shopping
- Camden Market – funky paraphernalia
- Notting Hill – Saturday morning markets (Go there hungry!)
- H&M – clothes
- Portobello Market – for just about anything you can think of
- Covent Garden area shops

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 isn’t 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. An overseas ESPN channel called **ESPN Orbit** usually carries a live feed of the game shown by Fox. These games can be seen at the **Sports Café Restaurant**, New Zealand House, Haymarket (Piccadilly Circus or Charing Cross tubes) 0207.839.8300. This is essentially an American-style sports bar, much patronized by expatriates, and a good place to go to if you want to run into lots of other American students on study groups.

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 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 the see the various sites, like Big Ben, Parliament, etc. This is a great way to get yourself 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 the 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) – 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.

**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 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.

**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 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.

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

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

If you’re interested in finding even more museums, check out this website which lists “Museums around the U.K. on the Web”: [http://www.mda.org.uk/vlmp/](http://www.mda.org.uk/vlmp/). You can look at the listing in alpha- or geographical order, or even by order of popularity. Clicking on the name of a museum will send you to that museum’s website.

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, tel: 0207.262.55/292.738). Some students have enjoyed
concerts at 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.

- Many students when they arrive back on campus discuss all the pubs they frequented. One should not miss the Ashes, Punch & Judies (Covent Garden), Dirty Ducks, Blackfriar’s, Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, Slug & Lettuce, and the Imperial Bar. Other favorites include Moon Under Water (Leicester Square) and Gordon’s Wine Bar (Embankment or Charing Cross Tube), The Mitre, ÒNeils, Waxy O’Connors & Waxy’s Little Sister.

- Some outdoor places and areas that you might want to visit include Battersea Park, Covent Garden, Highbury Stadium (go Arsenal!), Hyde Park, Leicester Square, Kew Gardens, Notting Hill, Soho and St. James’ Park.

- And of course there are the tried and true tourist attractions that you just can’t leave London without having seen, such as the Houses of Parliament, the New British Library (St. Pancras), St. Paul’s Cathedral, the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey and Windsor Castle.

**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. Below are some student agencies in the U.S. and in London:

**In the U.S.**

**Amerops Travel, Inc**
26 Court Street
Brooklyn, NY
Tel: (800) 221.9696, (718) 522.1000, (510) 272.2130, (914) 939.7227

**Access International**
250 West 57th Street
Suite 511
New York, NY 10107

**STA Travel**
205 E 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017
Tel: (212) 661.1414

**Charter International Center**
35-09 Ditmars Blvd.
Astoria, NY 11105
Tel: (800) 782.3436, (718) 274.5151

**In London**

**London Student Travel**
52 Grosvenor Gardens
0207.730.3402

**STA Travel**
Several offices in London
See #4 under “Making a Checklist for more details

**Trailfinders**
215 Kensington High Street
0207.937.5400
(They are especially good for long-haul flights.)

**Travel by Air**

Flying can be economical if you use a reputable student agent and compare prices. All the Sunday newspapers advertise bargain specials, and London Student Travel often has weekend specials. Also check the airlines’ websites, as they often run special, web-only deals.
Flights to Scotland are worth looking into. Go Airlines, Debonair, EasyJet and Ryanair have fares as low as £29 each way from London to Edinburgh or Prestwick. They specialize in cheap flights, but you get what you pay for. Airports are often not centrally located. You can book online for Ryan Air.

Flights to Paris and Brussels are about the same length and almost as cheap, although the preferred way of traveling to both these cities is now by train via the Channel Tunnel (about 3.5 hours, city centre to city centre). The Channel Tunnel trains go by the name of Eurostar and leave from Waterloo station. Book there or through any travel agency.

Flights to Greece and Spain 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 don’t be pressured into buying on the spot.

London Airports

There are three major airports and one smaller one. 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 (£10 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 because there are four of them and give yourself plenty of time to get there and check in.

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 roundtrip with your student rail card (£11 single and £21.50 roundtrip 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, is perhaps the most user-friendly of the lot. It’s the newest of the three principal airports but is still under-used, so there’s far less pressure on the facilities – which are every bit as extensive as those available at Gatwick. A West Anglia/Great Northern (WAGN) express train runs every day on the hour and the half-hour from Liverpool Street station in the city centre. Journey time: 48 minutes.

Luton is used primarily for cheap charter flights and is about 40 miles to the north. There is a bus (Flightline 777) from Buckingham Palace Road, at the side of Victoria Railway Station, which goes to the Luton airport. It takes one and a half hours and costs £3. This bus does not run between 12 a.m. and 7 a.m., but it does run every half hour during the day.

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. Also see http://www.nationalexpress.com/neh.cfm for more information on traveling by coach in the UK or Europe.
Travel by Rail

The rail network in Britain is extensive, but complicated. 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 (Victoria, Paddington, Euston, Liverpool Street, King’s Cross, Waterloo and Charing Cross). Some tips on saving money using the train:

1. 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-size 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, Edinburgh and St. Andrews to name a few. If you are planning to go to Scotland, go early 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. Americans are popular in all parts of the island.

- **Italy** is one of the most popular, though pricey, destinations. Some students felt that Rome was their favorite place in all of Italy, while others felt Sicily, Venice, and Florence were even better. 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.
For a more unique 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!

**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.”

**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. Don’t 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 don’t expect things to fall into your lap. You’ll need to get out there and make the effort to do 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. England is no exception. Things will be different, and you’re going to be expected to adapt to the English way of life, not the other way around. Remember: “When in Rome...”