

SSTers from all our locations return with reports of the warm hospitality they received while there. Most say SST was a time of learning, fun, friendship and tremendous personal growth. They wouldn't trade the experience, regardless of the challenges.

All the same, each experience is unique based on the traveler's identity, physical condition, attitudes and goals. Below are concerns SSTers report in various locations. If one or more would challenge you, don't assume you can't be part of the group. Talk to the faculty leader or the director of Global Education before committing to see if there is a workaround for your concerns.

All SST Travel Experiences

- Require flexibility, openness to new contexts, cultural humility and patience with others.
- Require adherence to the Goshen College standards. Drug use, including marijuana, is illegal in all the contexts we visit. Consequences for alcohol infractions may be more severe than on campus, including returning home.
- Students without U.S. citizenship will need to research paperwork requirements and/or choose a U.S. destination.

Semester-long Units

- 13 weeks abroad, live with two different host families throughout that time where privacy, choice of food and leisure time is constrained.

Ecuador

- High altitude; Quito is at 9,350 feet with a cool, damp climate.
- Frequent walking in natural contexts and in the hilly city of Quito; stairs.
- Frequent use of a well-functioning public transportation system.
- Limited Spanish is a liability.
- Currently has a late-night curfew, and consequences of breaking this may be severe.
- Women may experience street harassment.
- Black and Asian students may experience negative bias.
- LGBTQ Equaldex Rating is 63/100. Legal rights for LGBTQ people, but culturally not as progressive as the GC campus.
- Active Deaf Association in Ecuador. ASL students can live with a Deaf family and have a service assignment related to the Deaf community.

Tanzania

- Hot and humid temperatures with little or no air conditioning available.
- Unreliable wifi
- Need to navigate a large, crowded urban public transportation system. Some students have long bus rides from their homes to class.
- In some cases on service, no indoor plumbing, and/or limited water supply.
- Few accommodations for accessibility. Need for a lot of walking and stairs.
- Religion is central in this culture; families expect student behavior that respects religious norms.
- Women may experience street harassment.
- Asians may experience negative bias.
- LGBTQ status is not respected legally or culturally. See the Equaldex Rating, which is 12/100.

Short-term SST Courses

India (three weeks to six weeks)

- Be prepared for heat and high altitude.
- Be able to climb stairs, climb in and out of public transportation and hike for an extended period. The hiking elevation will top out around 10,000 feet.
- Food choices are limited and legumes are a staple of the diet: would be hard to avoid.
- Be prepared for noise, traffic, crowding, a lower standard of living.
- Be prepared to live in a shared dormitory with other students and share a room with at least one other person.
- Living situation for students in GLST 271 is a homestay most of the time.
- Religion is central in this culture; families expect student behavior that respects religious norms.
- Health care resources are accessible and comparable to those in the U.S., but students with health issues or the need to access prescriptions should discuss local resources with their leader.
- Women may experience increased anxiety about safety and/or street harassment. Some anti-Asian bias.
- The LGBTQ Equaldex rating is 66/100.

Puerto Rico (three weeks)

- Hot climate.
- Walking in both city and rural areas.
- One-week homestay; the rest of the time students stay in a hostel setting.
- Students are expected to speak some Spanish.
- LGBTQ Equaldex rating is 80/100.

Navajo Nation

- Hot, dry climate in a desert landscape.
- Lots of walking and hiking.
- Cell phone service is spotty.
- High expectations for respect, particularly of elders.
- Remoteness, open spaces, silence.

- Students camp several nights, providing their own sleeping bag, pad, pillow. They share tents.
- Students also stay with host families several days and spend several weeks in a college dormitory setting.

Enviro Disaster & Response (three weeks)

- Must be able to do physical work eight hours per day, including in outdoor conditions which may be hot.
- Limited food choices, since food is provided by Mennonite Disaster Service.
- Other on-site volunteers are often religiously conservative and will include the group in devotions.
- Students sleep in very basic bunk rooms with multiple people per room.
- Constant interaction with your group throughout the course.

Chicago (four days)

- Must be able to climb stairs, use public transportation.
- Lodging will be in a dorm-like setting with limited privacy.

Detroit (five days)

- Students are likely to share a hotel or guesthouse room with at least one other person.
- A student accustomed to Goshen, IN, should not find this context difficult.

Philadelphia (three weeks)

- Need to use public transportation, climb stairs
- Students will live with a host family throughout the course, with limited privacy.
- Students visit religious locations and groups, and religious sensitivity/awareness will be expected (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and more).