

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## WELCOME TO THE YAOUNDÉ PROGRAM

Important Reminders  
Important Contact Information

## PROGRAM PREPARATIONS

Program Fees and Financial Aid Information

## TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

Passport and Visa Information  
Packing Tips and Travel Information

- Packing Tips
- Immediate Cash/Travel Funds

Flight and Arrival Information

## THE PROGRAM

Cameroon  
Yaoundé  
Climate

## ACADEMIC INFORMATION

The University of Yaoundé I and the Dickinson Centre  
Use of the French Language  
Academic Culture  
Spring Calendar  
Course Offerings  
Credit Transfer/Grades/Transcripts  
Internships

## TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVELING WHILE ABROAD

Vacation Travel  
Travel Guides

## HEALTH, INSURANCE & SAFETY

Health Care  
Insurance FAQs  
Health Matters

- Medical Check-ups/ Immunizations/Inoculations/ Medications
- Mental Health, Stability, and Stress/Special Accommodations
- Health and Safety in Flight/Health Tips

## **CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES**

Being Informed about the Host Country and World Affairs Local  
Customs (Cameroonian Etiquette) Racial/Gender/Sexuality  
Issues  
Suggested Readings/Websites

## **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

24-Hour Clock/Time Change

## **APPENDIX I: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

## Welcome to the Yaoundé Program!

---

Dear Yaoundé Program Participant:

Greetings from Carlisle! Congratulations to each of you on your selection to the group of students who will represent Dickinson College in Yaoundé. An academically challenging and personally rewarding experience awaits you. We wish you all the best!

This **Yaoundé Orientation Handbook** has been prepared to make your transition to Yaoundé and the Cameroonian educational system a little smoother. The handbook covers general topics affecting all students who study abroad: health matters, insurance, safe behavior, code of conduct and other policies, Dickinson course registration and room draw while abroad, and absentee voting. It also contains specific information about studying in Cameroon: packing tips, lifestyle abroad, an academic calendar, course information, and much more. Sections on cultural perspectives will help you put your observations and experiences into context. This program specific information will also help you to understand better and adapt more quickly to your new environment and culture. Everything in this handbook is very relevant, so please read it carefully. A copy of the handbook will be mailed to your parent(s)/guardian(s) at your home address.

If you have any questions, contact the Center for Global Study and Engagement at (717) 245-1341 or [global@dickinson.edu](mailto:global@dickinson.edu). The Center for Global Study and Engagement is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (EST).

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Important Reminders:**

If you plan to be at a different address during the break or if your insurance information has changed since you completed the Student Agreement form, please let the Center for Global Study and Engagement know right away.

You will need your passport and the yellow fever documentation to check in at departure and when you arrive in Cameroon. Do not pack it in your luggage!

If you want to change the date or itinerary of your return flight, do so early enough to secure the date you want. Airfare and any airline fees that occur due to changing the return date are the responsibility of the student.

As you read this handbook, if you feel anything has been left out that you wanted to know, or that some of this information is out-of-date, please let us know.

# IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

---

## **Program Director:**

**Mr. Teku Tanyi Teku**  
B.P. 14478  
Yaoundé-Centre Province  
Cameroon  
Tel: (011-237) 22.05.71.08  
(011-237) 94.53.60.79  
Mobile: (011-237) 776-644-61  
E-mail: [mr\\_teetee@yahoo.fr](mailto:mr_teetee@yahoo.fr)

## **Dickinson Center (Student's Apartment)**

Location: Shell Nsimeyong

All students will be asked, prior to departing for Cameroon, if they would like to receive a prepaid cell phone through the program. The cost is approximately 40 US dollars and will be deducted from the first official stipend.

## **Center for Global Study and Engagement:**

### **Marissa Mitchell**

Coordinator/Advisor, Education  
Abroad  
Center for Global Study and Engagement  
Dickinson College  
P. O. Box 1773  
Carlisle, PA 17013-2896  
Tel: 717-245-1034  
FAX: 717-245-1688  
E-mail: [mitchmar@dickinson.edu](mailto:mitchmar@dickinson.edu)

## **Major Emergency Protocol:**

If you need to contact the Center for Global Study and Engagement after hours for emergency assistance in a very serious situation, call the Dickinson College Public Safety 24-Hour Hotline (**001-717-245-1111**), identify yourself and the program, describe the emergency briefly, and give a number for call back. The operator will locate the proper staff member, who will return the call.

## **Cameroonian Embassy in the U.S.:**

Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon 3400  
International Drive, NW Washington, DC 20008  
Telephone: (202) 265-8790  
Fax: 202-387-3826  
Web site: <http://www.cameroonembassyusa.org>

**U.S.Embassy in Cameroon**

U.S. Embassy to Cameroon

Avenue Rosa Parks

P.O. Box 817

Yaoundé CAMEROON

Tel/FAX: (011-237) 22.20.15.00 ext. 4531

DOS Consular Information Sheet at: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1081.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1081.html)

CDC website for Cameroon: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationCameroon.aspx>

# PROGRAM PREPARATIONS

---

## Program Fees/Financial Aid Information

### **Payment of Fees/Financial Aid:**

The program fee for the Spring 2019 semester is \$33,942.00. Students at Dickinson College will receive invoices from the Student Accounts Office that show credit for the \$300 confirmation fee and any applicable amounts from your financial aid package.

**The program fee includes the following:** tuition and fees, room and board, and scheduled group excursions. **Not included in the program fee are:** required health and accident insurance (purchased in the U.S.), transportation to/from Cameroon, immunizations, visa expenses, books, vacation travel, meals during independent travel, and other personal expenses.

Arrangements for any type of monthly payment plan options should be made as soon as possible through Tuition Management Systems (1-800-722-4867, x 775, or [www.afford.com](http://www.afford.com)). If the balance due on your account is not paid by the deadline noted on the billing, or if special arrangements have not been made with Student Accounts (Tel. 717-245-1953 or email: [stuaccts@dickinson.edu](mailto:stuaccts@dickinson.edu)), you will not be allowed to participate in the program.

### **Financial Aid Information:**

Dickinson grant money and endowed scholarships are available only to Dickinson College students on Dickinson programs. Students from other colleges and universities should check with their own financial aid office to determine eligibility.

# TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

---

## Passport and Visa Information

The responsibility for ensuring that you have a valid passport and visa in time for your program is ultimately yours.

### Visa Guidelines

A visa is a stamped endorsement placed in your passport by the embassy or consulate of a foreign government that allows you to enter that country for a specific period of time. All students going to Cameroon will need to apply for a visa. The Center for Global Study and Engagement will assist students with the visa application.

Visa guidelines for each program can be found in the Studio Abroad application portal and on the CGSE website. Please refer to this when applying for your visa. However, please note the following:

The information in the visa guidelines is current to date and is to be used as a general guideline only. Each consulate has specific rules that must be followed and that you must comply with. Before submitting your visa application, you will need to check and recheck the consulate website to be sure that nothing has changed. Please note that the responsibility for submitting all documents required by you or your parents for your student visa ultimately rests in your hands. The Center for Global Study and Engagement will supply the supporting documents required from the College or your host institution.

## Packing Tips and Travel Information

### Packing Tips:

When planning what to take with you, the first rule is to take the minimum amount of clothes possible. You will accumulate things while abroad, so when in doubt – leave it at home! Be practical and focus on the essentials of a wardrobe. Choose clothes that can be mixed and matched and layered to serve different seasons and temperatures. Dark, conservative colors can be worn longer without laundering, but do not be afraid to wear bright colors. Please note that cleaning establishments and laundry services are expensive, and you should be prepared to wash most of your clothes by hand.

In general, it is better to dress modestly. In regards to the length of shorts and skirts, longer is preferable, but most teens in the area can be seen in shorter styles. Otherwise, bring anything you would normally wear in the US.

Here are some tips:

- flip-flops (known to Cameroonians as *sans confiance* because of their flimsiness and likelihood of breaking) are worn by many students who find them convenient and comfortable, though the sturdier they are, the better. They are readily available in Yaoundé for between 300 and 500 francs (about 1 USD). Sturdier sandals (like Birkenstocks) are a comfortable and practical way to go.
- sneakers are commonly worn by Cameroonians and are useful when the rainy season starts and mud develops.

- a nice pair of shoes will be appropriate for any important family or school related events.
- jeans and casual slacks are very common and many Cameroonian women admire them. Dress pants are more frequently seen in the streets of Yaoundé than in the U.S. Bring 5-6 pairs, but keep in mind that heavier fabrics (like denim) will be much more difficult to wash.
- skirts, especially knee-length or longer, are customary for women (this applies more so in the northern Muslim-populated region). Women dress up for school, so keep this in mind. At École Normale Supérieure women must wear a skirt to be permitted to enter the campus. Sundresses and maxi dresses are also a comfortable and an appropriate alternative. You will be invited to receptions and formal dinners and/or activities.
- 8-10 shirts and blouses in coordinating colors
- sweaters/cardigans are good for the changing temperatures throughout the season
- having clothes tailor-made in Yaoundé is a great option. To negotiate a good price, it helps to be accompanied by a more skilled Cameroonian. Fabric can be bought at one of many markets in Yaoundé then brought to the tailor. Prices vary depending on what you have made. A **kaba**, a kind of large, loose dress that many African women wear outside the home, costs about 3000 francs (\$6) or more depending on its complexity, but can also be purchased ready-made.
- 15-18 pairs each of underwear and socks
- a light jacket with a zip-in lining in case it gets cool & a raincoat
- a swim suit and beach towel
- 2 towels, 2 washcloths
- when packing, keep in mind that the streets of Yaoundé are extremely dusty, and that the dust is sometimes difficult to get out of clothing and shoes
- **an extra pair of contact lenses, eyeglasses and prescription (enough to last the duration of your stay)**
- **a plain, inexpensive wallet**
- a money belt or neck pouch to secure money and valuables
- (twin) bed sheets and pillowcase (you will need these for your first weeks in the apartment)

#### Other useful packing hints:

- space/Vacuum bags (can be found at Walmart or Target and can condense the amount of space your clothes use in your luggage)
- 2 converter/adaptor plugs if you plan to use U.S. appliances
- USB memory device for transferring documents and photos between computers (especially useful at internet cafés)
- a small supply of toiletries, especially bath soap, toothpaste, dental floss, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, and feminine hygiene products. All of these are available in Yaoundé, but may be more expensive than in the U.S.; if you prefer a particular brand of any of the above, bring them with you.
- first aid supplies, perhaps including burn ointment (Neosporin), **Imodium, Pepto-Bismol** (tablets), Tylenol/aspirin for pain/fever, antihistamine for allergies/colds (Sudafed, cough syrup, etc), **sun screen**, antiseptic/calamine lotion for bites, Band-Aids, scissors, **hand sanitizer**, tweezers, thermometer, and the like
- 2-3 bottles of insect repellent (20-30% DEET)
- plenty of saline/cleaning solution for contact lenses (about 2 large bottles) and a small bottle to take on trips
- zip lock plastic storage bags and some garbage bags (various sizes)
- raincoat
- a travel alarm and extra battery
- a plastic hanger or two
- a small sewing kit and safety pins



- all medications (both non-prescription and prescription) need to be in their original, labeled containers. Take copies of all prescriptions with you.
- Swiss army knife--with corkscrew, bottle opener, and scissors (packed in your checked luggage)
- playing cards
- DVDs and movies
- flashlight
- bag for daily use that can be closed securely
- sunglasses
- shower sandals
- small backpack
- portable music device with extra batteries
- address book
- packaged drink mixes (e.g., Crystal light, Kool Aid, Hi-C, etc)
- spices (spices commonly found in American cuisine may be expensive, so bring a few spice combinations to liven up your home cooked meals)
- roll of duct tape
- board games
- French/English dictionary
- lots of pictures of you and your family. Cameroonians love photos and photo albums, and will likely show you their photo books when you come to their houses. They may even ask you to leave a picture of yourself so that they can remember you.
- small gifts: candy, gum, Bic pens (children values these as gifts in many areas in and outside Yaoundé), hats and T-shirts with Dickinson and sports team logos, cheap digital watches, colored pencils and markers, match box cars, etc.
- a day bag or book bag for traveling (i.e. duffle bag)
- luggage ID tags inside and outside of your luggage

### **Immediate Cash/Travel Funds:**

**You will have to bring cash for your non-stipend needs.** It is suggested that you bring no more than \$500.00, which should be more than adequate. Keep in mind that your monthly allowance from the Program Director will exceed the annual income of the vast majority of Cameroonians. Some students report that they did not have to spend any of their own money. It is recommended that you leave your US money with the Program Director, where they will be safe.

### **Flight and Arrival Information**

#### **Travel Arrangements:**

**ALL students must be on the same flight from Europe (typically Charles DeGaulle in Paris) to Yaounde.** Students will receive an email from CGSE with the flight details. **Students are responsible for the payment of these flights.**

In general, passengers on international flights need to be at the airport at least 3 hours before departure. Be sure to leave yourself plenty of time for potential delays due to increased security measures. You will need your passport to check in and when you land, so have it available.

**In case you miss your connection or your flight is delayed, make a note of the Program Director's contact information** and carry it in your wallet so that you can get in touch with him.

When you have booked your flight, please complete the flight itinerary questionnaire found on the online application system at <http://dickinson.studioabroad.com>.

**Clearing Immigration and Customs in Cameroon:**

Your luggage will be checked through to the Yaoundé airport. When you go through customs and immigration in Yaoundé, you will have to show your **passport** and **yellow WHO card**.

After clearing immigration and customs and getting your baggage, the group will be met in at the airport by the program director. It is important that you wait until the entire group has collected their luggage and exit the airport with the program director.

In the case that your luggage does not arrive or is delayed, be sure to inform the program director. This does not happen often, but if it does, do not worry. The program will help you take the necessary steps to retrieve your items.

**Arrival in Yaoundé:**

After you arrive, you will be taken to the Dickinson apartment for a light meal and to settle in for the night. During the first several weeks of the program there will be an on-site orientation that includes intensive French instruction as well as excursions outside Yaoundé. Those with home stays will move into the family home a few days after the week-long orientation.

**Registering with the Authorities:**

You must register with the US Department of State STEP program. This will enable you to receive e-mail updates on travel and security from the US Embassy. **Dickinson staff in Cameroon will facilitate registering with the embassy authorities.**

# THE PROGRAM

---

## **Cameroon:**

The Republic of Cameroon is located in West Central Africa, and is bordered on the southwest by the Gulf of Guinea, on the northwest by Nigeria, on the northeast by Chad, on the southeast by the Central African Republic, and on the south by Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea. The country is shaped like an irregular triangle, covering 183,567 square miles, or roughly the size of California; it is divided into three primary geographical regions, ranging from the extremely arid sub-Saharan north to the thick rainforests of the south. Yaoundé is the capital and Douala is the largest city and main port. The population of Cameroon is comprised of more than 18 million people and between 130 and 200 different ethnic groups. 58% of the population lives in villages, while 42% are city dwellers. Three forms of religions are prevalent: Christian (65%), Islam (20%), and traditional worship (15%). Cameroon is unique in Africa in that two “official” European languages (English and French) are commonly spoken, although French is the more widely spoken of the two and is the dominant language in Yaoundé.

## **Yaoundé:**

Yaoundé, with an estimated population of 1.5 million, is the political capital of Cameroon as well as the country’s administrative, financial, and communication center. Items produced in Yaoundé include beer, cigarettes, dairy products, clay and glass goods, and lumber. Yaoundé is a regional trade center for coffee, cacao, copra, sugar cane, and rubber. The city is at a highway junction and is intersected by Cameroon's main railroad. Yaoundé is the home to the University of Yaoundé I and many other educational and research institutes, including a school of administration and law and a school of journalism.

The city is set in green hills some 2,500 to 3,000 feet above sea level, resulting in a much cooler climate than one would expect in a city only 5 degrees north of the equator. Students can take advantage of the large international community in the city, including the U.S. Embassy and other U.S. agencies. The city has many modern buildings, including a new airport, and sports arena. The many *quartiers* of the city are colorful and lively with their open-air markets and food stalls.

The city sprawls over undulating hills and thus lacks any semblance of street patterns; most streets snake their way around and up and down. The center of the city is Place Ahmadou Ahidjo, and the major commercial hub is Ave Kennedy.

A good map is hard to find, so be prepared to do a lot of self-exploration if you want to get to know the city, and don’t be afraid to ask a lot of questions!

## **Climate:**

The climate of Cameroon is as varied as the topography. There are three primary geographical regions, ranging from the extremely arid, sub-Saharan north to the hilly, central grasslands, and the thick rain forests of the south. Average temperatures (maximum and minimum in Fahrenheit) in Yaoundé between January and May are 85 and 66. Temperatures and humidity fluctuate greatly.

outside of Yaoundé. It can get surprisingly cold in the jungles of the East. Temperatures often reach 50 in the evenings. As for the North, the dryness is often very uncomfortable at first but students adjust after a few days. Also, the North is extremely hot and students should be prepared for this. There are two main seasons in Cameroon: dry and rainy.

## ACADEMIC INFORMATION

---

### **The University of Yaoundé I and the Dickinson Center**

The University of Yaoundé I is the oldest university in Cameroon and specializes in the arts and humanities. Most faculty members who contribute to the program also are contributing faculty at Yaoundé I. Due to difficulties obtaining space in courses already offered at the university, the Dickinson program hires faculty members to teach at the Dickinson center. Courses may meet at the Dickinson center or in a rented classroom not far from Dickinson's property. Program participants also have the opportunity to join clubs or sports teams on campus and to meet Yaoundé I students through their extracurricular involvement at the university.

Students who have a high level of French and who perform well in the French placement test are chosen to take courses at UCAC. These students are taught in French by the UCAC Faculty and have the opportunity of sitting in the same class with Cameroonians and students from other countries of the central African region. They take a maximum of two courses at UCAC, then two others with the Yaounde Faculty including Contemporary Cameroon, which is compulsory.

### **Use of the French Language:**

A working knowledge of French, while not required, is highly recommended. Because French is essential to navigating the city, shopping in the market, understanding your surroundings, the program offers a mandatory French Intensive program that begins soon after you arrive in Cameroon. Students are tested for French language ability and placed in an appropriate group. Experiential-based work focusing on the acquisition and use of functional French is the basis of study. Students whose language testing indicates advanced level French language ability are able to take courses at Université Catholique and also course taught in French at the Dickinson Center.

Very few people in Yaoundé speak English. To shop in the market, take a taxi, or ask directions, **you will need to speak some basic French.**

### **Academic Culture:**

Course work is by independent study/tutorials and lectures, much like at Dickinson. Each student will establish a list of courses in consultation with the Program Director who will then arrange tutorials with individual faculty members. Attempts will be made to arrange tutorials that fit students' academic needs, but students will have to be flexible. Due to the difference in schedules, classes will not be held with Cameroonian students at the University of Yaoundé I. Students may arrange to visit classes at the University of Yaounde I but it is not recommended.

## 2019 Spring Semester Calendar

DATE	ACTIVITY
20 Jan 2019	Students depart the US
21 Jan 2019	<b>Evening: Arrival of students at the Nsimalen airport Yaounde</b>
22 Jan 2019	<b>On-site orientation begins</b> (Talk with Cameroonian students on socio-cultural issues, talk security with police officers and lawyer, talk health with program doctor)
23 Jan 2019	<b>On-site orientation continues</b> (Academics with Academic advisor, Tutorial French with French coordinator)
24 Jan 2019	<b>*Morning:-</b> French placement test <b>*Evening:-Meeting with host families</b> (know your family)
25 Jan 2019	Weekend academic trip to sea shore touristic town of Kribi
26 Jan 2019	<b>Kribi:</b> (study economic activities: local fishing, tourism and hotel business, small businesses by youths)
27 Jan 2019	Return to Yaounde
28 Jan 2019	<b>*Start of Intensive French ( 9am – 11 am for 1<sup>st</sup> week)</b> <b>*Meeting with Yaounde Faculty ( 4.30 pm)</b>
30 Jan 2019	<b>Students move into host families ( From 3 pm)</b>
Feb 4-8, 2019	Orientation at UCAC ( selection of courses)
04 Feb 2019	<b>Start of classes with Yaounde Faculty</b>
12 Feb 2019	<b>Start of classes with at UCAC</b>
Feb 21-24, 2019	Weekend academic trip to <b>Mbalmayo</b> (Mefou Primate Sanctuary,Ebogo Touristic site), <b>Ebolowa</b> (Nkolandom village)
04 March 2019	Start of internship
Easter Break 2019	Academic trips <b>West Region</b> (Bafoussam,Dschang,Foumban & Fonjomekwet village- organic agriculture-coffee production)
April 25 – 28, 2019	Weekend academic trip to kribi (visit pygmy settlements & Industrial zone)/ <b>EDEA</b> Agro-industrial zone-(Oil Palm plantations, local manufacture of red palm oil and environmental pollution)
7 June 2019	End of classes UCAC
7 June 2019	End of classes Yaounde Faculty
June 10-14, 2019	<b>Exam Period: UCAC &amp; Yaounde Faculty</b>
June 17-19, 2019	Writing and presentation of internship reports
20 June 2019	<b>*Send –off Party</b> <b>*Deadline for submission of grades by Yaounde Faculty</b>
21 June 2019	<b>END OF SEMESTER: Departure of students</b>

### Sample Course Offerings:

#### **AFRICAN COLONIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION**

**Instructor:** Verki Fanso, PhD

The course deals specifically with relations between Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe from just after the abolition through the European scramble, partition and conquest of the continent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to colonial rule, de-colonization and independence in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Using Cameroon as case study, the course focuses on why Europeans came, their early interests and interactions with Africans before

the explosive competition for colonies, African resistance to conquest and colonization, the image of Africa and the African in the West, WW1 and its effects, systems of colonial rule, rise of African nationalisms and liberation movements, decolonization and independence from the late 1950s to the 1980s. A look will be made on the struggle by Africans in Southern Africa and the rise and fall of Apartheid in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

There will be in-class quizzes, a take home assignment and an end of course examination. These, together with attendance and active participation, will determine the final grade in the course.

## **AFRICAN CULTURE, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION**

**Instructor:** Godfrey B. Tangwa, PhD

This course is a general introductory overview of African Thought, Philosophy, Religion and Culture, in comparison with their Western counterparts. The course will be organized around the following main thematic issues: (1) Working within a different paradigm (2) In what ways do African cultures, religions and systems of thought differ from Western cultures, religions and systems of thought? (3) How does 'scientific knowledge' differ from indigenous knowledge systems? (4) What are the sources of African Philosophy? (5) What are the identification/distinguishing marks of traditional African religion? (6) What is at stake for African Culture, Philosophy and Religion in the phenomenon of Globalization? Does culture matter? (7) Understanding Africa and Africans.

The course shall be organized in weekly meetings, each of two hours duration, over a twelve week period, on a day, time and at a venue to be specified during orientation week. Course assignments are to be typed and, if preferred, submitted electronically by file attachment to (<[gbtangwa@yahoo.com](mailto:gbtangwa@yahoo.com)>).

The essential readings for the course shall be available for students to borrow and make photocopies.

The lecture-seminar interactive method of teaching shall be used and the final grade shall be earned on the basis of a class presentation on an assigned reading, a written test and two written essays - one short (max. 5 pages) and one long (max. 12 pages)

## **AFRICANA AND CAMEROON MOSAIC STUDIES**

**Instructor:** Adolf T. Mbeh

This course has as its rationale to familiarize and adapt the students rapidly to the socio-cultural atmosphere of the country. They will equally be imbued with the creativity of African writers, writing and function, in a bit to highlight and project their aesthetics.

There shall basically be field work with much emphasis to be laid on the practicality of African aesthetics that is, the beauty of African arts, socio-cultural festivities and activities. Students are strongly advised to take pictures on field trips. This will be used in their final project presentation.

## **CONTEMPORARY CAMEROON**

**Instructors:** Verki Fanzo, PhD

Babila Mutia, PhD

Paul Ndue, PhD

The course is designed as a theoretical and practical study to experience Cameroon with a focus on the social, cultural, economic and political developments that have shaped the country. The course will include lectures, discussions, field trips, diary entries/presentations, and an academic essay on a subject related to the student's internship, field trips, or any subject on Cameroon. The academic essay **must** be a study that is largely based on field work in Cameroon (Africa) and not entirely on books and other written sources that a student might make in the US without visiting Cameroon and Africa. Students are encouraged to make diary entries at all times about their experiences with Cameroonian life and culture.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

**Instructor:** Dr. OJUKU TIAFACK Ph.D

This course on the Study of the diverse Environments in Cameroon is designed to give students a very wide perspective of the actors and actions that are being undertaken or felt in the rural and urban areas and which bring about positive and/ or negative changes in the welfare of individuals, peasant groupings and /or any other well-constituted communities. The themes selected cut across a very wide range of issues, ecological regions and communities. This approach thus offers greater opportunities for the student to also draw inspiration and possibilities of comparative studies from the wide perspective provided. Community perceptions and management of their own Natural Environment will each time be highlighted, since the way each community perceives and considers its environment is very vital. For example, the Baka (*Pygmies of Central Africa*), the Fulani people on transhumance, the settled Fulani or the indigenous village inhabitant all perceive and manage their Natural Environments differently.

## **HUMANITARIAN CRISES IN AFRICA: Prevention & Management of Humanitarian crisis including refugees and displaced persons**

**Instructor:** Elizabeth NKONGHO (Ph.D)

Humanitarian operations involve all the stages involved in bringing assistance or relief to the affected population as a result of a natural or man- made disaster where the government is not willing or unable to meet the people's needs. The course covers challenges that face humanitarian operators, in the implementation of humanitarian assistance in Africa. Emphasis is placed on international conventions, international institutions charged with helping refugees and displaced persons, NGOs, etc.

## **INSECURITY, CONFLICT, AND PEACE-BUILDING IN AFRICA**

**Instructor:** Willibroad Dze-Ngwa, PhD

The course will centre on the different types of conflict and insecurity in Africa, their manifestations and efforts geared towards sustainable peace and development. There will be a focus on violent extremism, youth radicalization, religious fundamentalism and efforts geared towards concerted peace and sustainable development in Africa in general and Cameroon in particular.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF AFRICAN STATES**

**Instructor:** Prof. NDUE N. PAUL

On gaining their independence, African states felt it essential that they play their part on the international stage as quickly as possible, and this led to an undue emphasis on diplomatic affairs. Even so, although the suddenness with which they acted resulted in considerable disorganization in the establishment of their diplomatic service, African countries were, by and large, quite effective, since they were able to draw on substantial previous experience. This course examines first, the subject matter of international relations, globalization and mainstream international relations theories. Second, it looks at intra- African and international relations with a focus on its actors. Foreign policy, global economy, African unity, African and the superpowers, colonial powers and the UN, causes of conflict in relations of African states and regional co-operation and integration, the AU and African Democratic reforms.

## **MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**Instructor:** Prof. Antoine SOCPA

Medical Anthropology emerged as a distinct and dynamic sub discipline of Anthropology at the end of World War II. As from this period, many anthropologists became more and more interested with health related issues. Their concerns were the study of the etiology of disease, the preventive measures and the

curative measures constructed by humans as members of socio-cultural systems as attempts to eradicate disease or at least its consequences. The involvement of medical anthropologists in international health work and their research in clinical settings (anthropology in medicine) were crucial not only for the visibility of the discipline, but also for the re-humanization of the physician-patient relationship. Medical anthropology is basically defined as the study of medical phenomena as culture. Medical phenomenon refers to anything concerning health. The aim of this course is to explore the socio-cultural perceptions and beliefs attached to health-related issues: disease causation, illness, sickness, culture, health and health care. More so, the course will insist on applied anthropological approach of health issues. This approach is called "anthropology in medicine" and refers to the close collaboration of anthropologists with medical professionals. By making their data available to medical doctors, anthropologists contribute to improve the quality of health care and medical services. The course begins by defining Culture and its characteristics, Anthropology, Medical Anthropology, its basic concepts and theoretical perspectives. Other issues discussed in this course are: Social sciences and Health, Alternative Medicine in Africa, Community participation and Primary Health Care, Anthropological perspective of some major prevalent diseases in Africa (HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Ulcere de Burilli, etc.), etc.

### **MODERN AFRICA: HISTORY, SOCIETY CULTURE AND CHANGE**

**Instructor:** Verki Fanso, PhD

This course presents and discusses the events and forces (foreign and local) that have transformed the African continent from ancient to modern, including the continuing societies and institutions that have survived and adapted to new situations, as well as the processes of development and modernization and their drawbacks. Focus is on the peoples and societies of Sub-Saharan Africa, the forces of change, the new states and traditional societies, family systems, folk and modern health systems, the race question and the new African heritage. The objective is to acquaint the student with the forces and challenges of change and a general and particular understanding of the historical evolution within the African context.

The lecture and discussion topics will include the Africa that was before the changes, colonization and emergence of new states, traditional groupings and family systems, art forms, traditional and modern markets and marketing systems, health and disease and treatment, race and division, and the effort to unite all Africa.

### **NEGRITUDE, FRANCOPHONIE ET MONDIALISATION ;LE « SUBALTERNE PEUT-IL PARLER » This course is taught in French at the Dickinson Center)**

**Enseignant :** INNOCENT FUTCHA

Le cours vise dans un premier temps à montrer les rapports sous-jacents entre le mouvement de la Négritude dans son contexte historique, la francophonie et le concept de la mondialisation dans sa dimension culturelle. Il se propose ensuite d'analyser les limites du discours du « subalterne » face au discours dominant.

### **ORALITY, LANDSCAPE, AND LITERARY CREATIVITY**

**Instructor:** Babila Mutia

This course is intended to sharpen students' creativity by making them transform the personal stories and life experiences of people they will encounter in Cameroon into material for their own creative and non-fiction writing. The course will enable students (through guided tours and arranged encounters) interact with individuals and the physical environment they inhabit. The course will lay emphasis on "participant observation," "keen interaction," and "elaborate recording" of people's lives and experiences as indispensable tools that students will utilize during scheduled field trips. The purpose of



this "close encounter" with the actuality of Cameroon life is to provide students the raw material they will use to write short stories, poetry, or non-fiction essays that will have a Cameroonian or African flavor.

### **Credit Transfer /Grades/Transcript:**

Participants enroll in one required core course and three other courses selected by the student.

**Students typically earn a maximum of 4 Dickinson transfer credits for work successfully completed in Cameroon.** Courses taken are recorded on the transcript with course titles and letter grades earned. Course grades equivalent to a Dickinson "C" or better will receive credit, but will not count toward the GPA. No credit is earned for a grade of C- or below.

### **Internships**

Some internships are available to students. Some past internships include:

1-MAYA INITIATIVES: (Coordinated by POCHI TAMBA NSOH, journalist with the Cameroon Radio and Television Company) NGO dealing with women issues. Fights against various forms of violence against women and young girls.

2-CAMYOSFOP (Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace. NGO sensitizing youths and students on Human Rights.

3-CIPRE (Centre for the Protection of Environment). NGO dealing with environmental issues: collection and recycling of plastic papers and bottles and management of garbage.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY WHILE ABROAD

---

## Health Care

The preferred physicians for students in Yaoundé are from the Hospital General Yaoundé. Contact details will be provided when you arrive in Cameroon. Excellent dental care is available as well from Clinique Dentaire Adventiste (tel 22 11 10), operated by the Seventh-Day Adventists near the American Embassy and the Adventist Church.

If you have diabetes, are allergic to penicillin, or have any condition that might require emergency care, carry some personal identification – a tag or bracelet – on you at all times. **CAUTION: Do not buy any medications in Cameroon without checking with the program doctor, especially medications on the street.**

Participants are reminded of the presence of avian flu (H5N1 virus) and swine flu (H1N1 virus) in various countries. For the latest information on these as well as CDC health suggestions, go to:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/outbreaks/current.htm>.
- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

## Insurance Information

### Health Insurance:

**You are required to purchase primary health insurance in the United States** that is valid overseas to protect against the costs of hospitalization and medical care in the event of sickness or an accident while abroad.

You are also covered by ACE/CHUBB Accident and Sickness insurance through Dickinson.

## Health Matters

### Medical Check-ups:

Before leaving the United States, you should visit your physician, gynecologist, eye care specialist, and dentist. Make sure you are in good health before going abroad so that you can avoid any potential problems.

### Immunizations/Inoculations:

Up-to-date information about vaccinations and other health precautions for Cameroon is available at the Centers for Disease Control web site at

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationCameroon.aspx>. It is recommended that you print out the CDC information and take it with you when you consult with your physician. Make sure that all of your routine inoculations are up-to-date. These include measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) and diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus (DPT). It is strongly recommended that you ask about other types of inoculations, such as Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B, or any medicines that are advisable.

You should start your immunizations **immediately**, so you will have plenty of time to complete them all. Local places to obtain immunizations are:

- **Holy Spirit Hospital Travel Center Nurse**  
Address: 503 N. 21st Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011

Phone: 717-972-4222 to schedule an appointment

- **Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center Clinic**

Address: 1711 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102

Phone: 1-800-243-1455 to schedule an appointment

All agencies will provide the yellow WHO vaccination card.

**The cost of immunizations and medications are the responsibility of the participant.**

**Have all inoculations or immunizations recorded on an “International Certificate of Vaccinations” (yellow World Health Organization [WHO] card). Carry the card with you; it will be checked at the airport upon entering Cameroon!**

**Please review the following with your physician:**

- ☐ **Yellow Fever:** the only immunization **required** for entry; you must get this immunization at least 10 days before departing for Cameroon. However, it is in your best interest to take of care of this well before this time.
- ☐ **Gamma Globulin:** helps prevent infectious hepatitis (type A). Given shortly before departure (not good beyond 6 months). Vaccination is available for some other types of hepatitis. Check with your doctor about this.
- ☐ **Typhoid:** oral or by injection. Takes about 3 weeks. Check with your doctor about this.
- ☐ **Polio booster:** if you have not had one within the last 5 years.
- ☐ **Diphtheria and tetanus:** good for 10 years. (If you are uncertain when you had the last one, it is recommended that you get the booster.)
- ☐ **Meningitis:** likelier in the north during dry season. Check with your doctor.
- ☐ **Cholera:** the cholera vaccine is largely ineffective; the State Department no longer requires it for overseas employees. Check with your doctor about this.
- ☐ **Measles** is endemic; you should be protected by prior disease or by vaccination. Discuss with your physician when updating your MMR (measles, mumps, rubella).
- ☐ **Smallpox** has been eradicated: no vaccination is necessary.

**Disease Prophylaxis:**

**Malaria:** Good prevention and immediate attention to symptoms will help shield you from malaria. You should bring insect repellents containing DEET (20-30%) with you; bring enough that you can use it every day. There are many different prophylaxes currently available. Consult your physician. Please note that some drugs available require a seven-month supply, and you **MUST** bring enough to last the entire semester. Please note that some insurance plans will only cover a supply for a few months, and you are advised to not ship medication to Cameroon as there is not guarantee that you will actually receive it. Therefore, you may have to pay a surcharge to your insurance company in order to secure a sufficient supply.

If you or your physician has any questions, call the Center for Disease Control, Malarial Division (770-488-7788). If you experience side effects, you may contact one of the preferred program physicians (see page 42 for contact information).

**Diarrhea-producing infections:** What is often called traveler's diarrhea is fairly common, lasting for a few days, characterized by watery non-bloody bowel movements. It is recommended that you take Imodium or Lomotil with you. More serious diarrhea is due to giardiasis and amoebic dysentery (parasitic) and bacillary dysentery (bacterial). These infections are caused by contaminated food and water. In the event of prolonged diarrhea, accompanied by cramps and vomiting, contact one of the preferred program physicians (see page 42).

**To minimize the risk of coming into contact with contaminated food or water, observe the following:**

- **Do not drink tap water**, even as ice or in alcoholic drinks (alcohol does not kill organisms) unless it has been boiled for 20 minutes or treated with tincture of iodine. Drink bottled water (Tangui, Supermont) which is available everywhere for about \$1.00 a liter. The cost of bottled water is factored into your allowance. Bottles are sealed at the factory, so make sure you see them opened in front of you in the restaurant. Beer and soft drinks are safe, if unopened. You can eat commercially packaged and pasteurized yogurt with no ill effects, though milk is a good medium for bacterial growth. CAUTION: Ice cream as well as "rebottled" water purchased from street vendors should be avoided. Generally, ice cream from a bakery is fine (i.e. Select Plus)
- Eating raw vegetables, including salads, may be risky. You should wash raw vegetables and fruit in a solution containing disinfectants like iodine solution (2%= two drops per liter, or crystals). Do not eat street fruit, unless it has a rind or peel (e.g. a banana or an orange). Meat and fish, especially shellfish, should be well cooked.
- You can probably eat most of the cooked street food without any ill effects.
- You will dine with Cameroonian friends, so use your common sense. Part of the pleasure of being in Cameroon will be lost if you become paranoid about food.

**Schistosomiasis (=bilharzia):** Do not swim in fresh water. Swimming in seawater or in properly chlorinated water is fine. Take showers in the hotels rather than baths (a bucket or sponge bath is better than a long soak in untreated water).

**Rabies:** Endemic in Cameroon. Avoid cats, dogs, and monkeys. If you are bitten by an animal, wash the area well and see a doctor immediately. If the animal can be captured and held for testing, by all means do so. NOTE: Rabies immunizations are available, but generally sought only by those who will be off the beaten path and alone for long periods of time.

**Sexually transmitted diseases (venereal diseases, hepatitis B and AIDS):** Epidemic in Central Africa. Please be careful and take the proper precautions. In the case of suspected exposure, please see the program physicians immediately.

**In general, be prudent and take precautions**, but do not be fearful. The worst sickness you will probably experience is diarrhea, but if a condition lingers or worsens, talk with the Program Director.

#### **Medications:**

Prescription/non-prescription medication(s) should be in the original container from the pharmacy and labeled with your physician's name, your name, and the medication name and dosage. **Do not**

**transfer any medication into an unmarked container.** You should also carry a written letter or prescription from your physician verifying that this medication was prescribed by a licensed practitioner and is necessary for medical reasons. If you are on prescription medications or take particular over-the-counter medications, such as a particular brand of painkillers, you should take enough with you to last the duration of your stay. It is neither advisable nor legal in some circumstances to ship medications by mail. It is your responsibility to make sure that your medications are legal in your host country. You can find this out by consulting the consulate website of the country you will be visiting. **You may also want to take along some cold/flu medication, anti-diarrhea, and anti-fungal medicine.** Women prone to gynecological infections should take an adequate supply of medication. Be aware of recent changes in airport security regulations limiting the type of liquids or gels that can be transported in carry-on luggage.

The Center for Disease Control recommends that students with diabetes or health situations that require routine or frequent injections should carry a supply of syringes sufficient to last their stay abroad. If you carry narcotics or syringes, you should also bring a copy of the prescription and a statement from the prescribing physician.

## CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

---

### Safe Behavior Abroad

#### Personal Safety in Cameroon:

The social consequences of Cameroon's economic situation and occasional political tensions have sparked isolated incidents of violence in the several areas of the country, in most recent times this has been limited to the far northern region and to the North West Province (Bamenda). The Program Director will notify you if travel to these regions becomes risky.

#### Final Thoughts:

Observing these mentioned precautions will be reassuring to you and to your parents, relatives, and friends at home. However, being overly concerned with safety should not interfere with the enjoyment of life and study in another country. Yaoundé is relatively safe. Do not feel scared just because you believe you should be. Women who can understand French can travel alone during the day and be fine. However, please keep in mind the following:

- No cabs for women (who are alone) after 9 pm.
- Do not take money out inside of a cab and count it.
- Do not speak English too loudly.
- Do not bring backpacks when you are downtown. Keep items you are carrying with you on your front.

## **Local Customs (Cameroonian Etiquette):**

**GREETINGS:** Always greet people when you see them, even if you have already seen them earlier in the day. Greetings can be quite elaborate and show respect. Hand-shaking is usually involved; always use your right hand (if your right hand is wet or dirty, you may present your right wrist and the person will shake that). If your right hand is occupied (if you are carrying something), a Cameroonian will give you time to change hands. The left hand is considered unclean, and is used for toilet purposes. Saying *bonjour* or *bonsoir* is most often sufficient for less formal settings.

### **USE OF “*tu*” & “*vous*”:**

Adults use *tu* to children.

Children use *vous* to all adults.

Adults use *vous* to other adults whether in business or social contacts.

Give Cameroonian acquaintances, office employees, workers, etc. the dignity of a *vous* greeting.

If a friendship develops, a Cameroonian will sense when to shift to *tu* and you can follow.

**HOSPITALITY:** To friends and respectable acquaintances who have arrived by invitation (but not the casual drop-in visitor, especially strange men), you should offer something to drink: water, a soft drink, even beer. Open the bottle in front of them and pour it into their glass. It is always wise to serve your guest. If you offer fruit or cookies, pass them around yourself. (If you give the plate to one person, he might think he is supposed to eat it all and that you eat a dozen cookies at a sitting.) The idea of “make yourself at home, help yourself” will be unfamiliar to Cameroonians who do not know American habits of hospitality. If you invite someone for dinner, be aware of food taboos (some cultures, for example, do not eat pork).

Neighborhood kids will take to hanging around day and night. They are curious and affectionate. They will be happy to run little errands for you in exchange for your hospitality. If a child is there and you are eating, offer him/her some. Children belong to the community. When you’ve had enough of them for the day, ask them to go. If you don’t have time to meet with them when they knock on your door, tell them to return another time. **DO NOT ALLOW** strangers to wander in and out of the Centre. Do not tell casual acquaintances where you live. Keep the gate closed and locked so that visitors must knock to enter. Cameroonians do not leave their doors open to passersby, and neither should you. The Program Director will discuss how to secure your possessions against theft.

**INVITATIONS:** When invited out for food, expect it to be a rather formal occasion.

Cameroonians like an agenda, and may even give formal speeches of welcome. A person’s acceptance of you as a friend often involves sharing food. Try a polite bite. You will probably like it. Cameroonians won’t try to force anything exotic on you. You may be offered the gizzard of a chicken. This is a sign of honor and respect. Likewise, if you are offered a kola nut, take a bite;

although bitter, the kola nut is a symbol of honor and respect. If you cannot deal with something, fill up on other stuff and plead that you are full. If you are a vegetarian, be flexible; rice and vegetables are common staples of a Cameroonian meal. If you invite someone to meet you somewhere to eat, you will be expected to pay for them as your guests.

**GENERAL CONVERSATION:** Cameroonians may avoid direct eye contact as a way of showing both respect and attention. When seated in conversation, they may cross their arms, but not their legs (especially women – while women may cross their legs in urban areas, they rarely do in more rural areas). Pointing is considered rude. Cameroonian men often hold hands with other men, women with women. People of opposite sexes, married or not, do not hold hands in public. Public displays of affection are considered inappropriate. Social kissing, the kiss on each cheek *à la français*, is practiced by most Cameroonians. Having your hands in your pockets and whistling are often considered rude.

**APPROPRIATE TOPICS OF CONVERSATION:** Generally, avoid political discussions as casual conversation with Cameroonian acquaintances. Such discussions can be sensitive. Likewise, it is impolite to interrogate Cameroonians about their ethnic origins. Such subjects are fine among friends, but it is best to let Cameroonians bring them up. Do not be afraid to ask your host families about appropriate topics of conversation.

Avoid the use of the following expressions because they have derogatory connotations:

- (Un)civilized – *civilisé*
- savage/primitive/native – *sauvage, primitif, nègre*
- hut (say house)/ *butte* (say *case* or *maison*)
- bush (say countryside) – *brousse* (say *village, compagnie*)
- race (meaning same ethnic group) – *race* (say *ethnie* or *groupe ethnique*)
- indigenous/ *indigène*

You need not fill up the air with chatter. Relax and listen. Cameroonians who come to visit and talk may take some time in coming to the point. The principle virtue to be cultivated in Africa is patience. People don't pay as much attention to time and punctuality. They believe that people should not be enslaved to a clock.

### **Racial/Gender Issues:**

**RACIAL ISSUES:** If you are a U.S. citizen, you will be seen as privileged, so you should expect to pay more for things. There are some 200 ethnic groups in Cameroon, each with its own language. Not all of these groups are treated equally, and you may witness signs of discrimination. Do not get involved in what you do not understand and are unable to change.

**GENDER ISSUES:** (For women): **Men should not be allowed to hang out or become a nuisance.** Tell them politely and firmly that you are busy and they should please go away. If trouble persists, talk to the Program Director. Men will pester/verbally harass you, accost you in the street, and propose marriage; play it as a joke, which it mostly is. When they persist, or show up at your

door, allow your irritation to show. Men are not allowed to grab your arm or pull at you. This is rude in Cameroonian culture, as they well know, but they will try it – especially in markets. Insist that you be treated with respect.

A good phrase to know is “ne me touchez pas. Laissez-moi.” Do not invite a man alone to the Centre after dark; expectations might arise. Use good sense, as you would in the U.S. You may become embarrassed at times, but you are not likely to be assaulted, or worse.

**SEXUALITY ISSUES:** Homosexuality among both men and women in Cameroon is against the law. Public displays of affection between men, except the customary walking arm-in-arm, is typically avoided.

### **Suggested Readings:**

You should read as much as you can about Cameroonian and African history and culture before you leave. It is also important to know something about your own culture's relationship with Africa -- you will inevitably be asked questions about the U.S. A basic knowledge of the history of colonialism in Africa and the impact of globalization is important to know. Here is some suggested reading:

#### **BOOKS:**

1. Basil Davidson's *The Black Man's Burden; Africa and the Curse of the Nation State* (New York Times Books, 1992) and *The Search for Africa* (Times Books, 1994).
2. Roland Oliver, *The African Experience*
3. John Reader, *Africa* (Vintage Paper).
4. Mark W. DeLancey, *Cameroon, Dependence and Independence* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989, 2000).
5. Michael G. Schatzberg & William I. Zartman, *The Political Economy of Cameroon* (New York: Praeger, 1986)
6. Joseph Takougang & Milton Krieger, *African State and Society in the 1990's; Cameroon's Political Crossroads* (Boulder: Westview, 1998).

Cameroonian novelists include Ferdinand Oyono (*Houseboy; The Old Man and the Medal*), Mongo Beti (*Mission to Kala; Perpetua and the Habit of Unhappiness, The Poor Christ of Bomba, Remember Reuben* and writing as Eza Boto, *Vie Cruelle*), Francis Bebey (*Agatha Moudio's Sons*, Calixthe Beyala, *Loukoum*, *The Sun Hath Looked Upon Me, Your Name Shall be Tanga*), and Werewere Liking (*It Shall be of Jasper and Coral, Love-across-a-Hundred-Lives*).

Some West African women writers are: Ama Ata Aidoo (*Our Sister Killjoy, No Sweetness Here, Changes: A Love Story*), Buchi Emecheta (*The Joys of Motherhood, The Double Yoke*), Flora Nwapa (*Efuru, One is Enough*), Mariama Bâ (*So Long a Letter, Scarlet Song*) Yvonne Vera, Zainab Alkali, Bessie Head, and Tsitsi Dangaremba.

The college owns several Cameroonian films, including *Afrique, Je Te Plumerai*, *Sango Malo*, *Quartier Mozart*, *Chocolat*, and *Le grand blanc de Lambarene*



## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

---

### 24-Hour Clock/Time Change:

Telling time in Cameroon (and in the rest of the world) is based on a 24-hour clock. To convert, add 12 hours to any time after 12:59 p.m. – e.g., 1:15 becomes 13:15. There is a **five-hour time difference** between the U.S. (east coast, daylight savings time) and Yaoundé (it is five hours **later** in Yaoundé).

# APPENDIX: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

---

## ABOUT CAMEROON

### **Where can I find some information about what is going on in Cameroon?**

CRTV ([www.crtv.cm](http://www.crtv.cm)), based in Yaoundé, is Cameroon's official state TV and radio company.

AllAfrica, accessible at [www.allafrica.com/cameroon](http://www.allafrica.com/cameroon), is a great site that provides daily updates in English from several countries major newspapers.

The local weather is available through the BBC website at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/5day.shtml?world=1605&links>.

### **What is the currency in Cameroon?**

Cameroon uses the Communauté Financière Africaine franc, often noted as the FCFA or referred to simply as the “franc”. It is used in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. It is a product of the BEAC (Bank of the Central African States), and its official code is XAF. NOTE: There is also a West African CFA (code XOF), which is used in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. You don't want this!

## PACKING

### **Do you have any suggestions as to what we should bring if we're living with a host family as far as house warming gifts, etc?**

A gift for your host family is a good idea, though there is no need to spend more than \$20. Something unique to your town or area is always interesting, as is something from your school's bookstore. Your host families and friends would also enjoy t-shirts or hats from NYC, Washington D.C., or your school. In addition to a little present, you may want to bring some food or candy that is typically American.

It is highly recommended to bring a lot of photos. Your friends will want to see everything, including your house, your town, your family, your school, your friends, and your vacations. You will be asked about all of these things, and Cameroonians love looking at your pictures and showing you theirs. They will want to see your “exotic” pictures from home as much as your friends at school will want to see your “exotic” pictures from Cameroon.

### **How much money should I bring?**

Past participants have brought between \$400 and \$500 in cash. Most people do not spend much of their own money, even when spending liberally, but it is recommended to have some extra; **you will need cash to cover non-stipend needs and personal travel**. Some people report spending only around \$100 of their own money, while others do not spend any at all. Any cash you bring can be stored in the Program Director's safe.

Also, bring whatever ID or credit/debit cards you normally have with you. Once you get to Cameroon, you can give them to the Program Director and he can store them in his safe for the duration of your time there.

**Is it safe to bring expensive electronics, like iPods, laptops, and digital cameras?**

Electronics, especially small or portable ones like iPods and cameras, are convenient to have and can improve the quality of your experience abroad. It is, of course, a matter of personal preference. As with any electronics or valuables, you just have to be careful. Don't flash them around. Keep track of them when in large crowds, don't leave them sitting out in the open, and don't tell people where you store them. Your homestay room door will have a lock on it, and you may also lock up your things in the apartment. Remember, most of the people you will meet are honest, lovely people. Only a very small number of people will be, for various reasons, dishonest or unsavory characters.

**If I am living with a host family, should I bring sheets? If so, how many pairs?**

Everyone should bring at least one set of twin sheets. Your host family will probably provide them, but you will definitely want a set to cover the mattresses in the Dickinson apartment during the first few days before you move in with your host family. After you move in, you may keep your bedding at the Centre in case you spend the night there.

**What kind of shoes should I bring?**

Flip-flops, sturdier sandals (like Birkenstocks or Teva sandals) and sneakers are the most appropriate shoes for every-day life in Yaoundé. If you like to hike and explore, bring good athletic sneakers or hiking boots, and make sure to bring at least one pair of dress shoes. Everything else depends on how much room you have left! Remember, Cameroonians take pride in dressing well; shoes should always be clean and in good repair.

**What type of ID should we bring, if any, other than our passport and visa?**

In the first few days in Cameroon, you will have your passport and visa copied, and the Program Director will have it notarized. Your original will be stored in a safe place (although you must have it with you if you travel outside of Yaoundé). You must keep this passport copy on you AT ALL TIMES. You will be stopped regularly and will have to present it to the officers. The Program Director will tell you how to deal with these stops. Also, you may want a driver's license, which can be kept in the safe. You DO NOT need an international student ID card. It will not do you any good.

**What over-the-counter medication should I bring with me?**

- Multi-vitamins: Unlike eating in the United States, you will miss out on a lot of important nutrients. Vitamin B is especially important. There is evidence that mosquitoes are attracted to people with vitamin B deficiencies.
- Insect repellent: Bring 2-3 bottles, or enough to last the entire semester.
- Pain killers: You will not find ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol), but there are generic pain killers and fever reducers available. Make sure to buy them from a reputable source, such as the pharmacies with green crosses.
- Saline solution for contacts: Contacts in Yaoundé are rare, so the cleaning solutions are very difficult to find.
- Imodium AD/Pepto-Bismol/Tums/Rolaids: Helps with digestion and adjustment issues.
- Sleeping pills/nighttime medication: Medications Tylenol PM or melatonin will reset your biological clock; if you have a problem with jet lag, you may want these so you can be well rested from day one.

- Oragel: Bring if you are prone to cold sores.
- Cipro: This isn't technically over the counter, since you need a prescription, but make sure you have 20-30 pills, just in case of infections and stomach bugs.
- Tampons/pads: Tampons and pads are expensive. Many women prefer having their particular American brand and bring them. Another suggestion is The Keeper or The Diva Cup, both of which are sold online.
- Hydrocortisone cream: This reduces swelling and discomfort from insect bites; buy the strongest percentage available (usually 1%).
- Heartburn medication: *Piment* is a hot pepper commonly used in traditional cuisines, and past students have reported discomfort.
- Calamine Lotion
- Benadryl/Claritin

### **What kinds of toiletries should I bring?**

Bring enough shampoo, soap, conditioner, and toothpaste to last several days. Once you are settled in Yaoundé, you can go to a market and get more. Some toiletries, such as deodorant, hair styling products, shaving cream and razors, are sold in local stores but may be expensive. If you are particular about the brand you use, bring enough to last you all semester.

**Bring sunscreen!** There is little sunscreen in Cameroon. Bring plenty, as it is very sunny almost every day. Even during the rainy season, it is mostly sunny with a brief mid-afternoon downpour.

### **Do I need a raincoat?**

A raincoat may come in handy, but if you don't have the space, don't worry about it. The rainy season means that it will rain most days, but only for about an hour or two at a time. When the showers do arrive, almost everything shuts down and the streets empty. A lightweight jacket, a small travel poncho or a small umbrella will suffice.

### **What should I bring in my carry-on?**

Make sure you have all medications with you (especially for malaria), official documents (especially your passport and yellow WHO card), at least one extra change of clothes, and your toothbrush. If your bag gets lost, you will want everything valuable with you.

### **Any other packing tips?**

Bring books. Everyone ends up reading A LOT, and between long bus rides, hot, dull afternoons, and rainy days, you will have plenty of time to do all that pleasure reading you've been missing. There are novels and nonfiction books that were left in the apartments from past years, but you'll still want your own. Also, bring movies to watch both at your homestay and the Dickinson apartment. They are a good and entertaining way to pass the time.

Bring a lot of baby wipes. When you're hiking in the rainforest, riding the bus, or there is no water, you'll want to be able to get relatively clean. In daily life in Cameroon, you are likely to get dirty. Bring a money belt or secure bag that you can keep close to you. It is the best way to keep your money safe.

### **Should I exchange money before I go to Cameroon?**

If you can even find a place to exchange money, which is rare, it isn't worth it. Not only will you probably get a bad exchange rate, but it is unnecessary. You will not need any money before you actually receive your stipend, and it is easy once in Yaoundé to exchange USD for francs.

## **DAILY LIFE**

### **What we can expect to find when traveling in the markets?**

In local food markets, you will find commonly used ingredients – fruits, vegetables, spices, beans, peanuts, palm oil, rice, beef, and chicken – as well as second hand clothing, dishes, and other random goods. Go to the markets often. It's a great way to see Cameroonian culture; if you are friends with the vendors, they will often help you out with whatever you need. There are a few large markets in Yaoundé where you will have a diverse selection of clothing and almost anything else you can imagine! There are a few craft and artisan markets, where you can buy handmade gifts and souvenirs.

In every market, you will have to bargain. Bargaining is a learning process. Some people are amazing, while others have a hard time. It can be a fun game for me, and you will end up with some interesting things. Ask your Cameroonian friends or your host families how much you should be paying for things to make sure you are paying a fair price!

### **How should I carry money?**

The best idea is to invest in a money belt or secure bag that you can wear close to you, which is worn around your waist but under your clothes. It's similar to a fanny pack, but much thinner. Some students also choose to wear neck pouches. In the belt or pouch, you can keep your notarized passport copy, money, extra coins for a cab, and even an extra malaria pill. You don't want a wallet or purse with you all the time since they are too easy to take in markets or crowded area. Keep coins and small bills in your pockets for cabs for shopping in the market. Do not bring attention to your money if you do not have to.

### **How will I do laundry?**

You will probably be doing laundry by hand. Frequent water outages complicate the laundry process, so be patient and flexible. There is a particular brown square soap (called Maysoap) that everyone uses for laundry, as well as a powdered detergent called "Blu" Another good detergent to use is Total, which comes in packs. If you don't know how to do laundry by hand, ask a professor, Cameroonian friend, or host mother/siblings. They will probably be happy to show you.

At the Centre, there is a basin and clothesline to do your laundry. For students staying with host families, there will be a central location where everyone does laundry. It is probably best to ask your host mom or sisters about this. Some host families actually did laundry for the students, but don't count on this.

In the past, people have hired friends to do laundry for them in exchange for some "small money," but that is your choice. It can take days for clothing to dry during the rainy season, so plan accordingly. After four months of hand washing, your clothing may be worn out and faded. Don't expect to get things as clean there!

You should probably iron all your clothing. It's been said that bugs can crawl in and lay eggs that will then get in your skin if you don't iron them, although this may happen when Cameroonians lay clothing to dry over bushes and in the grass. In any event, ironing your clothing and maintaining a generally neat appearance is important to many Cameroonians, and you will be expected to do the same.

### **Can we have friends stay over in our apartment?**

Absolutely not. The only people who can stay overnight in the Centre are others in the program, or, with approval from the director, family members who are visiting. There is too much of a risk if others stay there.

### **How can I be safe with water?**

Don't bother with a water purifier; it's not worth the hassle. When cooking, make sure the water is thoroughly boiled, or you can treat it with iodine.

It is very easy and cheap to get bottled water to drink and for brushing your teeth. Never buy water on the side of the road that comes in bags, and when buying water from random vendors, make sure it is sealed from the factory and not just refilled.

Never go swimming in fresh water and avoid baths (showers, however, are fine). Oceans are fine, and if you would like to go to a pool, there are good facilities at the American School, Club France, and various upscale hotels.

### **Do I need to know French?**

The more you know, the better. Study up on basic pleasantries, food, and numbers. The more you make an effort to speak French, the more warmly you will be received.

## **ELECTRONIC GADGETS**

### **What is the deal with cell phones?**

- IF YOU HAVE A CELL PHONE in the U.S.: your American phone may not work in Cameroon. Most companies offer some sort of deal where, for a small fee, you can suspend your service contract without a penalty for up to 6 months.
- GETTING A CELL PHONE IN CAMEROON: It really is worth buying a cell phone when you are there. Nearly everyone has a phone or access to a cell phone, and it is the best way to communicate with your friends and host families. Your Cameroonian cell phone will be a pay-as-you-go system, and small boutiques selling minutes are on nearly every street corner. It does not cost you to receive domestic or international calls. The program can help you get and set up a cell phone.
- IF YOUR FAMILY WANTS TO CALL YOU: Skype, FaceTime, and What's App are probably the best way to go.

## **RANDOM QUESTIONS**

### **We are not to use the banking system, so how do we access money?**

It is best not to use the banking system. You should be able to get most of what you need with the money from your stipend. You will have to bring cash with you, which you may store with the Program Director, for your non-stipend needs. If you give him a few days, he can exchange your USD for FCFA. There are a few ATMs available, but remember that the fees will most likely be exorbitant.

### **If I need medicine, where can I get it?**

DO NOT buy any medicines off the street. If you really need something, the pharmacies with green crosses are fairly reputable, such as the one in Biyem-Assi. In any event, talk to the doctor or Program Director, and one of them can help you find what you need.

### **I know that the mail system is unreliable. Is there anything I can do to make sure things get to me?**

Basically, no. Almost everyone got most of their mail, but there is always a chance that things will be lost. The best tip is to tell people to write to you in red ink. Cameroonians associate it with death and bad news,

and are often more likely to make sure the letter gets to the recipient. If you do receive a package, do not go to pick it up alone. Go with a Cameroonian. Having someone there who is knowledgeable about the inner workings is helpful. Another recommendation is to have things sent in padded envelopes instead of boxes (if possible) to shorten the time it will take to get to you.

### **How are women treated in Cameroon?**

This is a delicate subject. As a woman, especially if you are white, you will be subject to a lot of unwanted attention by men. Most likely, you will be harassed and touched as you walk down the street, especially in crowded market places. This type of behavior is not acceptable, but unfortunately it does happen. There is not really a way to prepare for this before leaving, and to be frank, there are times when it will seem unbearable. Talk to each other – you can really be supportive of one another, because it can be a difficult issue to deal with.

Tell people you have a boyfriend/fiancé/are married when they ask. A few helpful phrases:

- “J’ai un petit ami/fiancé/mari.” = I have a boyfriend/fiancé/husband.
- “Je suis fidèle.” = I am faithful (men will tell you it’s ok to be with them, even though you have a significant other)
- “Ne me touche(z) pas.” = Don’t touch me.
- “Laisse(z)-moi seule.” = Leave me alone

Be aware that Cameroon reflects a patriarchal society in ways that are much more overt than in the United States. It is important to keep in mind that, if you are from the US, you are operating under a Western framework of thought and values, and you must keep an open and objective mind while in Cameroon. Finding a balance between respect for where you are and adherence to your own personal beliefs may be difficult but will prove to be worthwhile for the experience.