

# dakar senegal

language and culture / fall 2013



CIEE program handbook

## CIEE Study Center at Dakar, Senegal

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**PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU HAVE A PEANUT ALLERGY, CONTACT YOUR CIEE STUDY ABROAD ADVISOR IMMEDIATELY!**

## Part I: The CIEE Language and Culture Program in Dakar, Senegal

### WELCOME TO YOUR ADVENTURE IN SENEGAL!

Senegal sits at the westernmost edge of the African continent, and is roughly the size of South Dakota. Abutting the Atlantic Ocean to the west, it has 350 miles of beautiful sandy beaches. Senegal borders Guinea and Guinea-Bissau to the south, Mali to the east, and Mauritania to the north. The independent nation of The Gambia, a former British colony and the smallest African country, is enveloped by Senegal. The most biologically diverse country in the Sahel, the semi-arid region south of the Sahara Desert, the Republic of Senegal is divided into 14 administrative regions: Dakar, Diourbel, Fatick, Kaffrine, Kaolack, Kédougou, Kolda, Louga, Matam, Saint-Louis, Sédhiou, Tambacounda, Thiès, and Ziguinchor.



Senegal has a population of nearly 12 million, with over 2.5 million people living in Dakar, the political and economic capital and one of West Africa's most important and vibrant cities. Among the many different ethnic groups in Senegal, the Wolof represent approximately 40% of the population; other groups include the Serer, the Peul, the Diola, the Mandingo, and the Bassari.

Although French is the official language in Senegal, Wolof is the principal African language and is spoken by around 80% of Senegalese. Other languages spoken are Pulaar, Sérèr,

Diola, and Mandingo. Many university-educated Senegalese also speak English. Thus, Senegal is a truly multi-lingual society.

Senegal is a secular state, but over 90% of the people practice Islam while the remainder are either Christian or hold indigenous beliefs. Islam, as it is practiced in Senegal, consists of different groups or brotherhoods known in French as *confréries*, each headed by a respected leader called a *Marabout* or Cheikh, who is a cross between a religious guide and a former traditional chief. The *confréries* play a key role in the political and economic life of the country.

### A Short History of Senegal

Senegal's recorded history dates back to the 8th century, when it became part of the Empire of Ghana. As this empire waned in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Jolof kingdom arose and flourished during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Portuguese traders were a presence in the coastal kingdoms in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries before being displaced by the French, British, and Dutch. The Europeans sought to control St-Louis and Gorée Island, from where slaves bound for the Americas were bought and sold, until the slave trade was abolished in 1815. The northern city of Saint-Louis, named in honor of Louis XIII, king of France, remained the capital of French West Africa throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In 1902, Dakar became the official capital.

Senegal gained its independence from France in 1960, and became a republic under the presidency of Leopold Senghor, a well-known poet and literary figure and one of the co-founders of the Négritude movement. Senghor remained president until December 1980 when Abdou Diouf succeeded him. Diouf was reelected several times. The March 2000 presidential elections were a close contest between Abdou Diouf and Abdoulaye Wade, but Wade emerged victorious as Senegal's third president. Wade was reelected in March of 2007 with 55.9% of the vote. Senegal's government is a republic under multi-party democratic rule (the president serves for 5 years – however, the constitution was temporarily amended by Wade to make presidential terms 7 years), with a free press (very debatable right now due to recent attacks and imprisonment of journalists) and several political parties. On March 25, 2012, Macky Sall was elected the fourth president of Senegal. He won with 66% of the votes in the second round.

In 1994, Senegal undertook an ambitious reform program to privatize and liberalize the economy, and currently boasts a low inflation rate (inflation

has shot up within past year due to gas and food price hikes. Dakar is currently ranked the 50<sup>th</sup> most expensive city in the world. A member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, Senegal is also working toward greater regional integration and actively participates in international diplomacy. Senegal is the United States' most important francophone partner in sub-Saharan Africa.

Senegal today enjoys political and social stability, has a well-developed infrastructure and tourist industry, and welcomes many visitors each year. Known for its dynamic culture, friendly people, beautiful beaches, and warm climate, Senegal has become one of the most popular destinations in Africa. Tourism is the country's second source of income. The Senegalese take great pride in their reputation for hospitality (*teranga*, in Wolof), as well as their cultural traditions including art, theater, music, and dance, which are actively promoted on the national level.

The CIEE Study Center in Dakar, through its academic program and opportunities for cultural immersion, enables participants to learn about the rich historical and cultural traditions of Senegal, as well as to experience life in contemporary Senegal and learn about the challenges facing the country from an African perspective. The CIEE program is based in a residential area of Dakar, but includes trips to historic Gorée Island, a 30-minute ferry trip from downtown Dakar, as well as other local and regional excursions.

## **Dakar**

Dakar grew up around a French fort built in 1857, and its importance increased significantly in the second half of the 19th century when a railroad linked it with the Senegal River. The city became the capital of French West Africa in 1902. Dakar remains the busiest port in West Africa, serving Mali and Mauritania as well as Senegal, and has modern facilities for handling and storing goods.

Senegal's administrative, communications, political, and economic center, Dakar is a colorful, lively city made up of an interesting mixture of modern buildings, stores, businesses, restaurants, and smaller, more traditional street vendors, shops, and markets. It is cosmopolitan, but not in a Western sense. It maintains a very African feel and boasts the existence of modern communication services, large banks, and numerous restaurants around the central *Place de l'Indépendance* and throughout Dakar. Like many large African cities or capitals, downtown

Dakar is teeming with people and vehicles during the day, and the noise and pollution level take some getting used to.

## **Your Host CIEE Study Center**

### **Host Institution**

The CIEE Study Center is located in the Amitié III neighborhood near restaurants, shops, cultural centers, and the largest public university in Senegal. Many students walk from their homestay to the Study Center, while others take public transportation. CIEE students study exclusively with other CIEE participants in a building that shares facilities with L'Institut Supérieur de Droit de Dakar (ISDD). The CIEE facilities include a small library, a computer lab, a student lounge, and a cafeteria, which is also socializing space for students from the two programs. ISDD, a branch of the Université de Perpignan Via Domitia in France, offers degrees in Political Science and Law and has a mostly Senegalese student body.

### **Academic Culture**

Modeled on the French system of higher education, Senegalese university degrees consist of several levels: the first degree, obtained after two or three years of study and successful completion of exams, is the DUEL, followed by a license (roughly the equivalent of a B.A.), the highest undergraduate level.

Participants will notice striking differences between their home educational system and the Senegalese model, which is based on the French system. While students in the U.S. are accustomed to a very structured system, the Senegalese method generally requires students to take greater initiative and responsibility in a less structured environment. Some American students could misperceive a course as having a light workload or few assignments, but students are expected to engage in a great deal of individual study and extensive reading outside of the classroom.

### **Nature of Classes**

CIEE classes are attended only by CIEE students.

### **Language Environment**

As students gain proficiency in French and Wolof, the Resident Staff encourages them to use their language skills in everyday setting. The more students participate in community activities, the more they develop French and

Wolof language proficiency and understanding of Senegalese society develops.

### **Academic Program**

All CIEE students must take both French and Wolof language courses and the CIEE core course: Contemporary Senegalese Society and Culture. The core course is offered in both French and English, and students enroll depending on the results of the on-site French language placement exam. In addition, students will enroll in two elective courses for a five-course semester load. Students may also take the two-credit Seminar on Living and Learning in addition to their course load of five courses.

Students complete a French language placement test upon arrival, and the test results determine their enrollment in French Language courses and their eligibility to enroll in French content courses. Only students who test into Advanced French may enroll in two French-taught content courses. Students who place into Intermediate II French may enroll in ONE French-taught content course with approval from the Resident Director.

The first week of the program is devoted to orientation sessions, neighborhood and city tours, and basic Wolof language instruction. French instruction and all CIEE academic classes begin during the second week and continue throughout the semester or year.

The one-semester core course on Contemporary Senegalese Society and Culture is required, but academic year students only take the course once in the fall semester. Students take two other elective courses chosen from among a selection of English or French-taught courses depending upon their level of French. Electives may include CIEE courses taught in English and French or a community service project or internship with a required seminar in French.

### **CIEE Study Center Courses**

The Resident Director oversees all CIEE courses, taught in both English and French. Senegalese professors, most of whom also hold faculty appointments at Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD), teach these courses. CIEE Study Center courses run for 12 weeks (two 2-hour sessions per week) for a total of 45 hours and include a broad range of subjects.

Classes are generally lecture-based, but CIEE teachers are encouraged to foster more interactive classroom dynamics. In addition to lectures and discussions, many classes involve student presentations, which may take up a

greater part of the course schedule than students are accustomed to in the U.S.

Courses are designed to offer opportunities for students to draw a parallel between the theoretical information they receive in the classroom and the social and cultural experiences they live outside of class. Field trips and guest speakers are organized to supplement students' education and give a practical orientation to their learning.

### **Grading System**

Final grades in CIEE courses are based on a combination of attendance, participation, papers, presentations, and a final paper or exam. For the internship option, the final grade is based in part on students' presentations and final reports on the internship project. The Resident Director translates Senegalese numerical grades (0 – 20 scale) into U.S. letter grades using a conversion scale.

### **Community Service/Internship**

As an elective, students can do a community service project or internship for credit. This option consists of approximately 60 hours per semester of practical experience and a 30-hour seminar taught in French by a CIEE-hired instructor/ internship coordinator. Depending on the number of students and domains involved, guest speakers from different areas (e.g., health, education, communication, culture) may be invited to speak to seminar participants.

Students interested in this option must submit a résumé and statement of purpose in French with the rest of their acceptance materials. These items must arrive in our Portland, ME, office by the stated acceptance materials due date (located on the Dakar Course Preference Form on your online MY CIEE checklist). Placements will be determined on-site after an interview with the seminar coordinator. For further information about this course, please review the academic course section of CIEE's website.

CIEE also has a resource list of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups in Dakar who might be interested in having volunteers for a few hours a week. This is a non-credit option. Students should inquire about these opportunities once on site in Dakar.

### **Cultural Activities and Field Trips**

Included in the program cost are day trips to historic Gorée Island, including the Slave House, the Historical Museum, and Women's Museum; and to Toubab Dialaw, a fishing village and

artists' colony. Occasionally, the program organizes excursions to Touba and other important religious centers. In previous semesters, CIEE has also taken students on weekend trips to the mangroves of the Sine-Saloum region; Saint Louis, the former capital of French West Africa; and other parts of Senegal where they experience life outside of Dakar.

Depending upon student interests and course topics, additional trips and cultural activities in and around Dakar may be organized or subsidized by the program.

CIEE also organizes a week-long visit outside of Dakar for students to experience life in other parts of the country. Mid-semester, students travel in groups or individually, depending on their preference, and stay with either Peace Corps volunteers, village host families, or local NGOs working in various fields. These visits provide CIEE students with the opportunity to better understand the contrasts and connections between rural and urban realities. Time and time again, CIEE students have cited these trips as the most profound and memorable experience during their semester abroad.

### **Academic Year Students**

Students who stay for an academic year may opt to do the majority of their coursework in French in the spring. During the second semester students are also strongly encouraged to do a community service project or internship for credit if they have not already done so in the fall. Academic year students can stay with their host families during the break between semesters. Academic year students are included in all program trips except those during orientation week in the spring semester (daytrip to Gorée).

### **Libraries in Dakar**

Many students live within walking distance of the CIEE Study Center. CIEE provides a weekly transportation stipend for students who live farther away. The Baobab Center, IFAN library, CODESRIA, and the West African Research Center (WARC) are located within car rapide (i.e., cheap public buses) distance of the Study Center and the students' host families. WARC has a library and small bookstore and is also a meeting place for graduate students and researchers from West Africa, the United States, and other countries. WARC regularly sponsors lectures, roundtables, and conferences for visiting and local scholars and researchers.

CIEE students may use the IFAN (Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire) library on the

UCAD campus. Bear in mind, however, that many of those resources will be in French and that the WARC Library is a better source of English-language reading and reference materials.

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) also has good resources that CIEE students may use for their research. CODESRIA is located next to the UCAD campus.

In addition, the Institut Français Léopold Sédar Senghor (also commonly referred to as CCF) in downtown Dakar has a lending library. A membership to the Cultural Center is available upon request; interested students should speak to the Resident Director.

### **Departure and Arrival**

*What should I know before I reserve my airfare?* When it comes to purchasing your airfare, there is no sure way of knowing whether or not you got the best rate. However, there are many on-line tools that can assist you. The best advice anyone can give you is to do your research before purchasing your ticket. One website is not enough and oftentimes the cheapest ticket is not the one that is right for you. The first thing to keep in mind is that airlines typically will not let you make a reservation nine months in advance. If you are studying abroad for the fall and spring semester, odds are that you will not be able to book your return ticket for the actual program departure date. Instead, you will have to look at purchasing a ticket that allows you to change your return ticket with little to no additional fees. Nowadays, many airlines will also not allow their customers to fly into a foreign country on a one-way ticket. As some countries require visitors to show their return ticket in order to acquire a visa, airlines have difficulty keeping track of which country requires what. In order to streamline their approach, most airlines simply will not allow a customer to board without purchasing a return ticket. All students, including academic year participants, should buy a round-trip ticket to Dakar.

Past participants have found great rates on non-refundable tickets with the following companies: [www.sidestep.com](http://www.sidestep.com), [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com), [www.mobissimo.com](http://www.mobissimo.com), [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com), and [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com). Others have gotten creative when making their travel plans by purchasing their domestic tickets separately from their international tickets. It's possible that you will find a better rate at an international airport in a different part of the country. If you can find a

deal on a domestic flight to that city, it might save you a significant amount of money.

Other participants have played around with the dates by arriving a day or two early. This is very tricky because participants who arrive early must make their own reservations for the extra nights they are in Dakar. Participants who arrive early may be able to receive assistance from Resident Staff with regard to accommodation and airport pick-up, but they are responsible for any charges incurred before the program start dates. After doing all of this, some students find that they spend their airline savings on hotels and taxis. The key thing to remember is that you cannot arrive after the official program arrival date, even if it's going to save you a lot of money.

### ***How do I get there?***

The cost of transportation to and from the program is not included in the CIEE program fee. Students should make their flight reservation to arrive on the date indicated in the link titled *Program Dates, Details & Handbook Updates*, which is posted on your on-line checklist. Please note that many flights into Dakar arrive in the middle of the night. Do not let this interfere with your travel arrangements, as Resident Staff will arrange for airport pickup at all hours.

### **Discount on Airfare**

As a part of your program fees you will receive an iNext ([www.iNext.com](http://www.iNext.com)) insurance card/student ID that allows a \$15.00 discount on flights costing \$100.01 to \$249.99 and a \$25.00 discount on flights costing \$250.00 or more when you purchase your airfare through Student Universe ([www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com)). Simply type "iNext" in the Promo Code text box when you go to finalize your reservation. Student Universe is a travel agency that offers plane tickets at a reduced student rate. Aside from Student Universe's already discounted student fares and the iNext discount, most Student Universe tickets allow changes to the ticket for as little as \$50. If you have one of these tickets, you can make your plans to travel independently even after you have already arrived on-site. Your iNext card is valid for 365 days and the code can be applied towards any two airfares purchased while you are covered by iNext.

### ***What happens when I arrive?***

All students arriving on the official program start date will be met at the airport by a member of the CIEE Resident Staff. After going through customs and exiting the baggage claim area,

students should look for a staff member holding a CIEE sign.

If you are arriving prior to the program start date, please contact the Resident Staff via e-mail to let them know. CIEE Resident Staff will assist students who have submitted their arrival information on time. Students who arrive early are responsible for reimbursing CIEE for early hotel and meal accommodations.

Please let your parents know that they may not hear from you *immediately* upon arrival since public telephones and cyber cafes are not open at all hours of the day and night. However, within a day of your arrival, please call or email your parents to let them know you had a safe flight and that everything is going well. A brief phone call will relieve them of their worries. At this time you can also pass along exact information on how they may reach you. Resident Staff will assist you with this process.

### ***Will I have to pay duty?***

To avoid paying duty on items coming into Senegal from the United States, declare all baggage, whether with you or unaccompanied, with a low declared value marked "Used Personal Belongings." Generally, computers, cameras, cassette recorders, radios, and other similar items can be carried in duty free. Be sure to pack any valuables in your carry-on luggage along with a spare change of clothes and your malaria medication, in case your luggage is delayed.

### ***When will I have more details?***

Please refer to the *Final Mailing* for more detailed instructions on arrival and orientation. The *Final Mailing* will be e-mailed to participants approximately 30 days prior to the program start date.

## **ONLINE PRE-DEPARTURE AND ON-SITE ORIENTATIONS**

Students begin their study abroad experience in Dakar before even leaving home – by participating in a CIEE Online Pre-Departure Orientation. In online meetings with students, the Resident Director shares information about the program and site, highlighting issues that alumni have said are important, and giving students time to ask any questions before leaving home. The online orientation allows students to connect with others in the group, reflect on what they want to get out of the program, and learn what others in the group would like to accomplish. The CIEE goal for the pre-departure orientation is simple: to help

students understand more about the program and site, as well as formulate their goals, so that they arrive to the program well-informed and return home having made significant progress toward their goals.

The program begins with a one-week mandatory orientation held in Dakar. Sessions are devoted to personal safety, medical issues, and Senegalese customs and values, including family life and gender relations. Students also have two sessions of “Survival Wolof” during orientation. In addition, a program of expanded orientation activities fosters integration by having students explore specific places or organizations in Dakar, in some cases with Senegalese students. Ongoing support is provided on an individual and group basis throughout the program.

All students will also receive a detailed handbook on Dakar with all sorts of practical information, including contact information for the U.S. Embassy, doctors, hospitals, banks, airlines, etc., as well as security tips and recommendations for social activities.

All students must arrive on-site by the arrival date and before the start of orientation. Students are required to attend all orientation activities and should not plan to arrive after the official program start date (as stated in the document titled *Program Dates, Details & Updates*). If your flight is delayed, you should leave a message with the CIEE home office in Portland or the Resident Director in Dakar as soon as you realize you will be late. You will receive more specific information about the orientation in the Final Mailing.

 **Tip: Phone home**  
Upon your arrival in Dakar, it is a good idea to call your parents. A brief phone call telling them that you have arrived and are fine will relieve them of any worries. At this time you can also pass along exact information on how they may reach you. However, it is important to inform your parents that they might not hear from you *immediately* upon arrival. Most host families have telephones where you may **receive** calls but not make outgoing calls. There are *télécentres* in every neighborhood to make outgoing calls.

As orientation is a busy time for our students and the main goal is to help our participants adjust to their new home, this is not the appropriate time for family and/or friends to visit the site. Past participants who arrived with family and/or friends have stated that the transition was more difficult because they felt that they had to both entertain their visitors while fulfilling all of

the orientation requirements. This added distraction made it more difficult to bond with their peers and to fully integrate themselves into the program.

## CIEE Program Staff

The Resident Director, appointed by CIEE in consultation with the academic consortium, supervises and administers the program. The Resident Director, the Assistant Resident Director, and the Resident Coordinator can assist you with academic, administrative, and personal matters.

The Housing Coordinator places students in their host families, based on the housing survey that you will fill out before leaving the U.S. Every student will meet with the Housing Coordinator at least three times per semester to discuss their homestay situation. It is VERY important that you submit your online MY CIEE housing survey by the due date listed in order to give the Coordinator sufficient time for housing placements.

Please bring problems to the Resident Director, Assistant Resident Director, Resident Coordinator, or Housing Coordinator’s attention as soon as they arise, and if possible during regular office hours, except, of course, in an emergency.

## HOUSING

All students live with Senegalese host families in homes located in residential areas within walking distance or a short public transport ride from the CIEE Study Center. No students are housed in downtown Dakar. You can expect your room to be furnished with the essentials: a bed, a table and a lamp to study, a fan, and a place for clothing. It is important to keep in mind that amenities, such as washing machines and microwaves, are not common features. Most host families do have a television, however.

Homestay placements are determined by CIEE’s Housing Coordinator on the basis of a questionnaire completed prior to arrival in Dakar (please see your online MY CIEE checklist). Students will be placed individually in host families (one student per family). The Housing Coordinator knows all host families very well and determines placement according to the student’s preferences and the family’s profile. All placements will be confirmed in consultation with the Resident Director and **distributed to students once on-site.**

Please remember that while French is the official language of Senegal, approximately 80% of the

Senegalese population speaks Wolof. Other languages spoken are Pulaar, Sérèr, Diola, Mandingo, etc. After feeling comfortable in their surroundings, some past participants have been surprised to learn that they can go a whole day without hearing any French!

**Please note that academic year students can stay with their host families during the break between semesters.**

## MEALS AND FOOD

Taking meals with the host family is an essential part of the study abroad experience, and your Senegalese "family" will expect you to eat at home most of the time. The Senegalese diet is considerably less varied than in the U.S; rice and fish or meat are served frequently whereas salads, vegetables, canned, or frozen foods are not common.

### Past CIEE Participants say...

Short of having a Senegalese study abroad program outside of Senegal, there isn't much anyone can do about eating a lot of rice and fish. But that was a wonderful experience because it showed us how the Senegalese live.

You will receive a modest bi-weekly food stipend to supplement your homestay meals and diet with fruits, vegetables, yogurt, occasional goodies, or even restaurant meals once in a while.

### Special Note to Vegetarians:

Many students state on their housing questionnaires that they are vegetarians, i.e., they eat no red meat, no meat at all, fish only, no animal or dairy products at all, etc. It is important to know and understand that most Senegalese families are not familiar with the concept of vegetarianism and that they rarely observe such dietary restrictions. Chicken, fish, and beef are staples of the Senegalese diet. The Housing Coordinator can place vegetarians with families that are aware of and willing to accommodate such restrictions, but they may not know how to provide balanced meals. Your suggestions and input are always welcome; don't hesitate to discuss your needs with the Housing Coordinator and family. Please also note that families that can accommodate vegetarians tend to be smaller in size. Participants who want to follow a vegetarian diet may not be placed in large families or in families that have children.

The food in Senegal is generally very good. Regional specialties include yassa, marinated and grilled chicken or fish cooked in onion sauce; mafé, a peanut-based stew; and ceeb u jen (chey-boo-jen), Senegal's national dish,

which consists of rice cooked in a sauce of fish and vegetables. At breakfast, herbal tea or Nescafe with powdered milk (and sugar!) is commonly served with bread and butter. Peanut and palm oil are used widely for cooking and, thus, you may find Senegalese food heavy at first. Don't worry, you'll get used to it! **Due to the prevalence of peanuts and peanut derivatives in Senegal, you should inform your CIEE Enrollment Officer immediately if you have peanut allergies.**

You'll find that textures and tastes are quite different from those of American or European food. Try to eat balanced meals and maintain a healthy diet. Your meal stipend will help in this regard.

### Drinking Water in Senegal

Water is the main beverage, but there are also local juices made from tropical fruits such as mango, guava, and *bouy*, the fruit of the baobab tree, as well as commercial soda drinks such as Coke, Fanta, and Sprite. A popular local drink made from red sorrel leaves is 'jus de bissap' or bissap juice.

Although many Senegalese drink water from the tap, it's better for students to be on the safe side. Host families are asked to boil or filter the water they serve you. If necessary, drink bottled water, which is readily available and inexpensive in Dakar. Further, students should avoid ice in their drinks unless it was made with treated water. In rural areas, treating water prior to drinking it is a must; methods include adding iodine tablets and bleach. Special water filters are available in camping stores in the U.S. but not in Senegal.

Prepare yourself for a period of adjustment to local food and water. Initially, some students may lose weight or experience diarrhea, but these conditions usually do not persist. During the first week, CIEE organizes a brief medical orientation with an English-speaking doctor who has years of experience working with American students in Dakar and is available for appointments concerning any medical issue.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Living with a Senegalese family enables students to use their French and Wolof daily and to learn about family and social life in Senegal. Keep in mind that host families tend to view U.S. students as "adopted children" and expect them to take meals and spend time with family and friends.

You will discover that visits between family and friends are a common social activity and involve many customs and rituals. These may include

discussions and interactions while drinking tea (*attaya*); attending naming or wedding ceremonies, playing pick-up soccer games in the neighborhood with boys in the family, etc.

In sum, you'll find that one of the best ways of meeting Senegalese people will be through the host family. This issue will be addressed and discussed in greater detail during the first week on site.

### **Meeting Senegalese Students**

All of your academic classes in Dakar will be held alongside other CIEE students. However, there will be opportunities to meet Senegalese students through interaction with ISDD students but mostly through neighborhood activities and by frequenting cultural centers, music clubs, or participating in sports or other activities. Much will depend on your own efforts and initiative.

The community service and internship option is also a great opportunity to meet and work with Senegalese.

## **Part II: Before You Leave Home**

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### **A LOT TO LEARN**

You will benefit more fully from the program and your time in Senegal if you prepare well. Study a map of Senegal, and try to read, speak, and listen to as much French as possible. Arrive with a general idea of the political, economic, and cultural climate, as well as the social tensions and recent history of Senegal. In addition, refer to the list of books and websites in this packet; they are an important resource for preparation.

Preparing for study abroad entails a lot more than just packing a suitcase. In fact, the thought and effort you put into preparing yourself will largely determine the success of the program you are embarking upon. At CIEE, we will do everything we can to provide you with the information you need prior to departure. However, there is only so much we can do. It is important for you to recognize your own responsibilities, which include the following:

- Making any necessary arrangements for the following academic year, including housing, registration, and graduate school application. If you are a senior, be sure to make the necessary arrangements for graduation.
- Thoroughly discussing your study and travel plans with your financial aid office, study abroad office, academic advisor, and parent or guardian.
- Reading all of the materials that CIEE has sent you, including this handbook. Many of the

questions that students ask are answered in this handbook.

- Doing additional reading about the region/country you will be visiting and the customs of the host culture. While you couldn't possibly be prepared for every new experience that awaits you, reading about the host country will give you a knowledge base that will serve you well in the early weeks of the program. (Refer to the Reading List at the back of this handout for recommended reading.)
- Arriving at the program site with an open mind, a sense of adventure, and a positive attitude toward what lies ahead.

In addition to these required steps, we have a few more recommendations on how best to prepare yourself.

### **Get a Good Guidebook**

We recommend that you purchase a thorough and well-organized guidebook and read a lot of it before you go. The *Lonely Planet* series is useful, particularly their latest *Healthy Travel-Africa* guide. The *Insight* and *Rough Guide* also provide substantial background and cultural information.

### **Tap Other Resources**

Other good ways to learn about the host culture:

- Check your college or university study abroad office for useful services and information.
- Seek out Senegalese or other West African nationals through cultural organizations, international student organizations, and African area studies departments or centers at your college or university.
- Surf the web. Many web sites, such as [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com), offer travel information, slide shows, and tips from other travelers. Another good source for cultural events in Dakar and other resources around Senegal is [www.au-senegal.com](http://www.au-senegal.com).
- Check libraries for detailed information and keep yourself informed of current events through the news media.

### **Check Travel Advisories**

The U.S. government issues travel advisories and consular information sheets for most countries. To receive updated information or advisories for other countries you may be traveling to, call (202) 647-5225. You can also get this info at any of the 13 regional passport agencies, by writing and sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Citizens Emergency Center, Bureau of Consular Affairs,

Room 4811, N.S., U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., 20520, or via the web at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

### **Be Informed about Home, too**

It is important that you be well informed about your own country, region, and hometown. New friends and acquaintances in your host country will be just as curious about you as you are about them. Be prepared to discuss your home political system, culture, traditions, history, holidays, geography, and social structures.

### **Essential Documents**

When preparing to travel and live abroad, it is essential that you obtain all the proper documents prior to your departure. CIEE cannot accept responsibility, financial or otherwise, for a student who travels without the proper documents.

**Note:** You will need a passport, student visa, and records of your immunizations to enter Senegal.

### **Passports**

Participants are responsible for obtaining a passport prior to the start of their program, and prior to applying for a visa. You must have a signed passport, valid for a minimum of six months after the date you leave Senegal or for the duration of your program plus any travel, whichever is longer. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately as the process can take several weeks or even months. If you already have a passport, be sure that it is valid for the required period.

U.S. citizens applying for their first passports must apply in person at a passport agency or at one of the several thousand federal or state courts or U.S. post offices authorized to accept passport applications.

Applicants must present the following materials:

- 1) A completed Passport Application Form (DS-11)
- 2) Proof of U.S. citizenship (certified birth certificate, expired passport, certificate of naturalization, or consular report of birth)
- 3) Personal identification bearing your photograph and signature, e.g., a valid driver's license
- 4) Two recent passport-sized photographs
- 5) A check or money order for the passport fee

#### **Trap: Passport pitfalls**

Under no circumstances should your passport be altered. Guard it carefully against loss or theft. Do not forget to sign your passport. Never pack your passport in luggage while traveling; it should be easily accessible at all times.

Generally, you need to show your passport or other identification in Senegal when cashing traveler's checks, picking up packages, and registering at hotels while traveling. Please note that in Senegal authorized officials have the right to stop you at any time and ask for proof of identification. Once on site, the Resident Staff will provide students with notarized copies of their passports in order to avoid carrying original copies.

Detailed information, including passport issuing office locations, may be found at: <http://travel.state.gov/passport/index.html>.

#### **Tip: Take a lost passport kit**

It happens. So save yourself a major headache. Take with you two U.S.-produced passport photos, a certified copy of your birth certificate (which you can shrink to wallet size), and the face page of your passport. Keep this "lost passport kit" separate from your actual passport. Also leave one copy of the passport face page with your parents or guardian and give another copy to CIEE staff at the host site.

### **Visas**

A visa is an endorsement or stamp placed in your passport by a foreign government allowing you to enter and stay in that country for a specified period of time.

You are responsible for applying for your own visa. However, CIEE assists you by paying the consular and service fees when you use Travia. The sole responsibility of their consultants is to work closely with consular agents to expedite passports and visas on behalf of their clients. Most importantly, Travia enjoys very good working relationships with all consulates and embassies and are trained to walk you through any passport or visa situation.

For further information concerning your visa application, please refer to the link titled *Visa Information*, which is posted on your on-line checklist.

If you plan to be outside of the U.S. in the months or weeks prior to the program arrival date, you must inform CIEE as soon as possible. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to obtain the necessary visa documentation to accommodate an individual student's independent travel.

**What is Travisa?** Travisa is a visa service that CIEE has contracted with to obtain your visa for you. Located in Washington, DC, Travisa works with embassies and consulates to expedite visa processing on your behalf. As noted in the "Visa Information" document on your MY CIEE checklist, you will work directly with Travisa to get your visa. All consular and processing fees are covered by CIEE when you use Travisa.

**Trap: Applying from outside the U.S.**

A U.S. student applying for a visa from outside of the U.S. may not be able to obtain one. Please check with the appropriate consulate.

## Documents for non-U.S. Citizens

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please check with your consulate for regulations regarding your stay in Senegal and reentry into the United States. As visa procedures may vary, you should also check with the Senegalese consulate that has jurisdiction over your place of residence immediately for their specific visa procedures. Failure to do this may result in your being refused permission to enter the country or not even being allowed to board the aircraft at the point of departure. Also, you should call the nearest district office of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for information on the documents necessary for you to leave and re-enter the U.S.

Before departure from the United States, non-U.S. citizens must also obtain a Certificate of Compliance (often referred to as a Tax Clearance or a Sailing Permit) from the local Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office. This will certify that you do not owe taxes to the U.S. government. Contact your local IRS office

### **What documents do I need as a permanent resident?**

Permanent residents need to apply for a Re-entry Permit, which serves as a passport while overseas. Being out of the United States for more than one year may jeopardize your permanent resident status. Check with the nearest INS office for information regarding documentation and procedures for return to the U.S.

### **What documents do I need as a stateless person?**

If you do not have a country of citizenship, contact the nearest INS office and the appropriate consulate or embassy to determine the procedures you must follow to obtain the proper travel documents and visas. In addition, be sure to check with the consulate of any country where you may be spending a night or more in transit to the country of your study

program. Failure to do this may result in refusal of permission to enter that country or even to board the aircraft at the point of departure.

## Immunizations

You must have the following required vaccination to enter Senegal:

- Yellow Fever vaccination

We also require our students to follow a medical regiment to prevent **Malaria**. For detailed information on malaria and help choosing the proper medication, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/malaria/index.htm>.

Additional recommended vaccines include:

- Hepatitis A
- Polio
- Tetanus
- Typhoid

If you are a citizen of, or arriving from, one of a number of countries or sites of disease outbreak, additional immunizations may be required. But if you plan to enter other countries where immunizations are required, you must present a record of vaccinations.

Senegal requires that visitors show proof they have been vaccinated against yellow fever. The most widely recognized document for this purpose is the yellow World Health Organization booklet, International Certificate of Vaccination, which is available from most doctors and health centers. Carry this document with your passport.

## HEALTH

### **What health-related steps should I take before I leave?**

You are required to complete a physician's medical report and a student medical questionnaire in order to participate in the program; please be sure they indicate any allergies you have, in particular to medications and food (especially peanuts!). This information is confidential and has no bearing on your participation in the program. If you have a chronic illness that needs medical attention, please have your doctor write a clinical report that can be given to a specialist in Senegal if necessary. In addition, we strongly urge you to have a complete physical and dental checkup before departing. Any required dental work should be done at home. Women should also have a checkup by a gynecologist.

To arrange for your required yellow fever vaccination, please contact the local branch of

the U.S. Public Health Service for information about doctors or clinics in your area that give immunizations. Look in a phone book for U.S. Government Offices and then under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service International Vaccination Information.

**CIEE strongly suggests that you consult a tropical disease medical expert with regard to other inoculations, which are not required but might be strongly recommended.**

These include inoculations against cholera, tetanus, polio, measles (you'll need a booster if you were born after 1957 and never had the measles), typhoid, meningococcal meningitis, gamma globulin (protects against hepatitis A), and hepatitis B. All childhood vaccinations must be up-to-date.

Remember that vaccinations need to be planned well in advance; begin the process at least 2 ½ months prior to departure.

#### ***What medical supplies should I take with me?***

If you take prescription drugs, take a sufficient supply with you for your time abroad. (Be sure to take these in their original packages and with the original prescription.) Students who wear glasses or contact lenses should be sure to take an extra pair as well as a copy of their prescription. If you use oral contraceptives, please take an adequate supply with you.

Pack medication for diarrhea, constipation, upset stomach, surface scratches and cuts, sore throat, coughs, or colds. Bring a supply of multivitamins, including calcium and iron (especially for women). Be sure to take medicine for any recent or chronic ailment that might recur in Senegal. Some over-the-counter medications may be available, but it is highly advisable that you bring extra supplies of any medications or prescriptions that you use regularly. Bring the generic names, not the brand names.

**Toiletries:** For both men and women, common toiletries are available in Senegal but choice will be limited. Bring your own supply if you are particular about a brand or are on a tight budget. Tampons and sanitary pads are widely available in Dakar, but are often more expensive than what you are used to paying in the U.S (tampons are particularly expensive in Senegal). If there's a health food store in your area, consider buying a re-usable tampon called the Keeper.

**Contact Lenses:** If you wear contacts, bring a sufficient supply of contact lens solution, as it is not as widely available.

#### ***What other precautions should I take?***

Inform the Resident Staff of any existing health problems, including mental health, or any potential problems you anticipate arising throughout the course of the program. This includes allergies to any medications. CIEE staff will use this information to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made. Please inform the Resident Staff if you become ill during the program.

#### **General Wellness**

The following tips are offered in the hope that your participation in the program will be pleasant and free from illness.

**1. Watch what you eat.** While every student can expect at least one bout with diarrhea, you can take steps to reduce the frequency and severity of attacks.

- Carefully wash all raw fruits and vegetables, except those whose skins can be peeled (such as bananas).
- Avoid raw or undercooked foods.
- Drink only bottled, treated, or filtered fluids.
- Remember that ice cubes and water on the outside of a bottle or container may be contaminated. Dry all containers before opening and pouring, and wipe any surface that will come in contact with your mouth. Brushing your teeth with tap water is safe, however.

As a precaution, carry prescription anti-diarrhea medication with you at all times. Severe diarrhea can develop very quickly and, depending on where you are, you might not have immediate access to a toilet.

**2. Deal with common ailments.** When you first arrive in Senegal, your body will take a while to adjust. You may experience stomach and intestinal disorders (traveler's diarrhea) during the first couple of weeks, and these may recur from time to time during your stay. Prepare yourself before departure for Senegal by making an appointment with a tropical disease expert who can prescribe anti-diarrhea medication. Over-the-counter medications are good for minor ailments; however, in the event that you experience severe diarrhea, you will need a prescription-strength drug.

Contact the Resident Director and seek medical attention immediately if you experience any of these symptoms: a fever of 101 degrees or

more, severe cramping, vomiting, blood in the stool, dehydration, or persistent symptoms (those that do not subside within 3 to 5 days).

Pay particular attention to re-hydrating yourself when traveler's diarrhea occurs, as maintaining fluid intake is important. Smart travelers carry World Health Organization Oral Re-hydration Salts (WHO ORS) packets, which can be found at stores and pharmacies in almost all developing countries. If you cannot find these packets, to restore fluid levels drink 8 ounces of the following re-hydration solution after each episode of diarrhea:

1 liter boiled or carbonated water

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

4 tablespoons sugar

**3. Be aware of the sun.** Take care in the tropical sun. Students should take precautions when walking long distances during the hottest times of the day. Wear sunglasses and a large hat, and use sunscreen during prolonged exposure. Drink plenty of water and consume adequate amounts of salt to help avoid heatstroke.

**4. Treat minor cuts.** In the tropics, bacteria breed quickly. Minor cuts can turn into bad infections if not cared for promptly with an antibiotic cream or iodine. Keep your clothes, towels, undergarments, and shoes dry to prevent fungal growth.

**5. Avoid exposure to mosquitoes.** Besides possibly leading to serious illness, mosquito bites hurt. You can reduce the number of mosquito bites by using insect repellent and by wearing socks, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts whenever possible. Also, many seasoned travelers have found that Avon Skin-So-Soft oil repels mosquitoes well. However, it should only be used as a supplement to your regular anti-mosquito regimen.

**6. Don't swim or walk barefoot** in streams, lakes or rivers; to avoid the parasites that might live in such water.

**7. Stay active.** Sports and exercise can provide a well-needed release from the stress of class and culture shock.

**Malaria:** Malaria is endemic in Senegal. Unless malaria prophylactics are taken faithfully as prescribed there is a significant risk of contacting a serious or fatal disease. Consequently, **CIEE will not accept you or retain you on the program if you do not agree to take anti-**

**malaria medication as prescribed.** The only exception to this rule is if you produce a statement from your doctor prior to the commencement of this program, that for medical reasons, your doctor recommends against your taking any malaria prophylactic. Students are required to sign the form acknowledging this warning and agreeing to take prophylactic anti-malaria medication regularly as prescribed—unless prior to the beginning of the program the student submits to CIEE a statement from their doctor recommending against taking said medication.

Malaria is caused by a parasite transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. Only certain mosquitoes can transmit malaria, but they are present in almost all countries in the tropics and subtropics, including Senegal. They are most active from dusk to dawn. It is very unlikely that you will be infected with malaria during daylight hours. The symptoms of malaria include fever, chills, headache, muscle ache, and malaise. Early stages of malaria may resemble the flu.

Avoid exposure to mosquitoes. Besides possibly leading to serious illness, mosquito bites are unpleasant. You can reduce the number of mosquito bites by following these precautions:

- Wear protective clothing (long-sleeved shirts, socks, pants) during the period when mosquitoes tend to bite, which is from dusk to dawn.
- If possible, stay inside screened areas from dusk to dawn, and use netting over your bed if mosquitoes are present. Students can purchase inexpensive mosquito nets in Dakar.
- Use insect repellent with at least 30% DEET.
- Soak or spray your clothing and bed nets in Permethrin, an insect repellent licensed for use on clothing.

While many visitors to Senegal have prevented malaria by taking certain drugs and by using individual protection measures against mosquitoes, even these measures don't protect everyone. Malaria symptoms can develop as early as 6 days after the first exposure to infected mosquitoes or as late as several months after departure from an endemic area, even after preventive drugs are discontinued. Malaria can be treated effectively in its early stages, but delaying treatment can have serious consequences.

Check with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for current warnings and recommendations regarding risks of malaria. **CIEE strongly recommends that you review over the CDC's brochure titled "Preventing**

**Malaria in Travelers.**” You may find this document by clicking the following link:

<http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/pdf/travelers.pdf>

For more information about malaria prophylaxis, please review the information provided by the CDC:

(<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/malariadrugs.htm>)

Should you develop malaria in Senegal, you will likely be given a shot of chloroquine. While it is now common practice for physicians to use a new needle with each patient, if you are unsure, ask for a new needle and watch the physician remove it from its plastic wrapping. It is also possible to bring one from your first aid kit.

**AIDS:** The HIV virus is now pandemic, meaning it is present everywhere. Although the HIV rate in Senegal is very low compared to many other countries, it is still a very serious medical concern and you should take all appropriate precautions to avoid exposure.

H1N1: Like many parts of the world, Senegal was affected by the “swine flu” outbreak. To date, there have been 191 reported cases since the fall of 2009. However, medical facilities have been quick to respond to these cases and the hospitalization and mortality rates both remain at 0%. To prevent coming into contact with the H1N1 virus, you should take the same precautions (good hygiene...etc) as you would back home.

Source: [http://www.pressafrik.com/Grippe-A-H1N1-21-cas-recenses-par-semaine\\_a23755.html](http://www.pressafrik.com/Grippe-A-H1N1-21-cas-recenses-par-semaine_a23755.html)

**Smoking:** The non-smoking regulations that are common in the United States are not common in Senegal.

#### **CDC Recommendations:**

Consult the Centers for Disease Control for recommendations for American citizens preparing to go to Senegal. If you plan to travel after the program to other countries, you may want to consult the CDC’s information specific to these countries. The CDC web site is [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

#### **Medical Facilities:**

During orientation, you will receive information on which doctors to consult and clinics to use. In extreme emergencies, the Resident Director will medevac a student to an appropriate care facility.

## **INSURANCE**

If you are covered by a personal or parental insurance plan, CIEE recommends that you continue this coverage while abroad. Prior to departure, you should contact your current insurance carrier concerning coverage for accidents, illnesses and liability cases that occur outside the United States. Check your policy’s limitations before making any assumptions about coverage. Most U.S. based insurance companies will not cover property lost or stolen overseas.

### **Accident and Sickness Insurance**

Each participant is covered by the iNext Platinum Plan designed to help cover the cost of unforeseen illnesses or accidents that occur while abroad. Additionally, the policy offers Emergency Medical Evacuation coverage, together with 24-hour Emergency Assistance Services. The policy also offers coverage for travel document replacement and limited travel delay and lost/stolen personal effects coverage. Coverage begins two weeks before the program start date and continues for 364 days.

A complete description of the iNext Platinum Plan is in the online checklist accessed via MY CIEE. It is important that you read the plan carefully and note exactly what coverage it provides, and note items that are excluded from coverage.

The iNext Insurance is designed as a supplemental or secondary plan only, and does not cover liability. It also does not include routine physical, dental examinations or preventive medicine. Students are not covered for injuries resulting from acts of war or other political unrest such as riots and demonstrations.

Please note that CIEE does not cover medical expenses on-site. Students pay for any medical costs incurred and then file a claim directly with the insurance company for reimbursement. CIEE does not act as an intermediary between participants and the insurance company.

HTH Worldwide  
[www.hthworldwide.com](http://www.hthworldwide.com)  
Tel: 877-424-4325

Wallach & Company, Inc.  
[www.Wallach.com](http://www.Wallach.com)  
Tel: 800-237-6615

## **PERSONAL FINANCES**

The exchange rate is not constant. The *New York Times* and similar publications publish exchange rates daily. You may also reference

[www.x-rates.com](http://www.x-rates.com) or [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com) for up to the minute exchange rates. You should keep abreast of how a rate fluctuates leading up to departure.

### **What costs are covered by my CIEE fee?**

CIEE Study Center fees include tuition, housing, meals, optional on-site airport meet and greet, full-time leadership and support, a supplemental food stipend, orientation, cultural activities, a weeklong rural stay, membership to cultural and/or resource centers such as the West African Research Center (WARC) library, pre-departure advising, a comprehensive student handbook, and a CIEE iNext travel card, which includes insurance and other travel benefits.

CIEE does **not** cover the cost of transportation to and from the program site, books and supplies, personal expenses, local transportation, or any visa fees associated with independent travel.

### **What expenses should I budget for?**

You will need money for entertainment, toiletries, gifts, local transportation, school supplies, and independent travel.

Besides inflation and currency exchange, another variable that will affect your spending abroad is your individual lifestyle. When creating a budget, it may be helpful to consider how much you normally spend in a semester and inflate it a bit. Although the cost of living for a student in Senegal is considerably less than that of a student in the United States, the added cost of independent travel along with the impulse to splurge makes **careful budgeting** imperative. Though monthly expenses vary greatly depending on living conditions and frugality, we suggest you take extra money, if possible, for unforeseeable expenses.

Please see the CIEE website for an estimated additional cost breakdown:  
<http://www.ciee.org/study/programOverview.aspx?plD=136#6costs>.

#### **CIEE Participants say...**

Keep track (better than I did) of what money you spend along the way so that you can rationally cut unnecessary expenses. Dakar is expensive!

### **Financial Arrangements**

You will need to make arrangements regarding traveler's checks, personal checks, credit cards, and bankcards before leaving home. See the section Money and Banking in Part III for details.



#### **Tip: Forget "Hey Mom, send money"**

It is important that you make arrangements to receive enough money to cover your personal expenses overseas **prior to your departure from the United States.**

### **PACKING AND BAGGAGE**

Try to organize and pack a day or two prior to departure to make sure you'll be able to carry your bags (you must be able to do this). In Dakar, entrances and exits rarely have ramps, so you must be able to carry all your luggage easily. **Pack light!** Also, by packing early you'll have time to rest before the long trip.

#### **What are the baggage limits?**

We recommend that you bring no more than two pieces of luggage (not-overstuffed!) plus a small day pack or purse. In addition, read the weight limitation and baggage allowance information provided by your international airline carrier. Generally flights overseas permit two pieces of checked baggage and one carry-on piece. Each checked bag must weigh less than 70 pounds. Total dimensions (length + width + height) of the first piece must be less than 62 inches, and the second piece less than 52 inches. Total dimensions of the carry-on must not exceed 45 inches and must be able to fit below the seat in front of you or in the overhead compartment. If your baggage exceeds any of these standards you may be charged for excess baggage. Check with your airline regarding any items that are oversized.

#### **What should I pack?**

For a complete list of what to take, please see the Suggested Packing Checklist at the end of this handbook. Experienced travelers agree: take as little as possible.

**Clothing:** Generally, you should be able to wear the same sort of clothing you would wear in hot and/or rainy weather in the United States. You want to make sure your clothing is always neat and clean. **Senegalese society places a premium on looking neat and presentable (the women are especially fashionable).** To the Senegalese, appearance reflects the degree of one's respect for oneself and others.

Bring lightweight, versatile, easy-to-care-for clothing that can be hand-washed and drip-dried; hand-washing laundry is quite common. During the fall semester it's hot, so bring comfortable cotton clothes, which are also easy to wash and dry quickly; avoid synthetics. Another reason for taking cotton clothes is that you may be spraying your clothes with insect

repellent, which damages synthetics. Men and women both will want to bring at least one comfortable long-sleeved shirt as protection against mosquito bites and cool evenings.

Much of your time during the semester is spent outdoors walking. Therefore durable, comfortable, and practical shoes are absolutely essential. Take a couple of extra pairs of shoes, including at least one pair of dressy shoes. For women, a soft-soled and comfortable dress shoe will be especially useful.

**During the spring semester, bring a jacket or sweater since it will be cool in the evening and most Senegalese homes are not built to shield from the coastal winds. If you get cold easily in general, we suggest you bring warm pajamas and more than one warm jacket or sweater.**

Women should be conscious of the clothing they wear. Skirts above the knee and tight, low-cut tops may lead to being perceived as "easy" and invite unwanted attention. Senegalese women almost never wear shorts unless they're working out. Long skirts and dresses are the norm although many young women and students wear jeans and trousers. You can easily have some inexpensive clothing made from the colorful African fabrics available in markets.

Some past participants have commented that Senegalese women do not dress all that differently from students in the U.S. Please keep in mind that while a Senegalese woman might dress casually, she is more experienced with warding off the aggressive advances and wedding proposals of her male counterparts.

U.S. students have often said they have taken too much clothing. Nothing ruins traveling abroad more than having too much luggage, especially when you have to carry it yourself. You can save packing space by coordinating your clothing so that tops and bottoms can be easily mixed and matched. Bring comfortable walking shoes.

**Jewelry:** Do not take expensive or elaborate jewelry with you to Senegal. Not only is there a very good possibility of loss or theft, but also fine jewelry is rarely appropriate.

**Electrical Appliances:** Standard voltage in Senegal is 220 Volts, 50 cycles/AC. If you bring appliances from the United States, you will need to bring a 110/220 converter (unless it is a laptop, in which case it most likely has a built-in voltage converter). Electric converters and adapter plugs must be used to connect North American equipment. Travel supply shops and

some hardware stores in the U.S. carry them; you should buy these before you go. If you are buying any new electrical items to bring with you, try to get dual-voltage models so you won't need a converter at all-though you will still need the adapter plug.

**Laptop:** In the past many students who brought their laptop found it extremely helpful and time-saving. So, feel free to bring a laptop if you want. Although you will have access to a computer lab with an Internet connection on campus, it can be crowded and/or closed during certain times of the day or semester. Students should note that they bring their laptops at their own risk, and that CIEE is not responsible for them. Additionally, we recommend that any students taking a laptop consider installing security/theft recovery software. One example of this software is Computrace LoJack for laptops, made by Absolute software. **Students who choose to bring their laptops should pack them in their carry-on luggage.**

**Tape recorder:** You may want to bring a small portable tape/digital recorder to record your voice for French and Wolof courses, to tape lectures, or to make tapes to send to family and friends back home.

**Prescriptions:** If you take prescription drugs, ask your doctor to give you a copy of the prescription **with the name of the generic drug, not a brand name**, as your brand may not be available in Senegal. In fact, if the drugs are not perishable, take a supply sufficient to last you through the end of the program, as you may have difficulty renewing the prescription in Senegal.

**Mementos from home:** Bring things from home that you can share with your Senegalese family and friends. This includes pictures of yourself and your family in the U.S., recipes you like to cook, typical items from your community, college or region of the U.S., and items related to talents you might have and wish to share.

**Gifts:** You will soon discover that the Senegalese are very generous and sometimes view Americans by comparison as stingy. Proper etiquette in Senegal includes presenting small, inexpensive gifts to friends, particularly your host family. Simple items that reflect your personal character or background make the best gifts. Since you will not know your details of your host family before departure, try to choose general gifts that could be enjoyed by all members of the family.

Some gift ideas:

- For women: cosmetics, perfume, perfumed soaps and powders, jewelry, and hair accessories.
- Paper products: stationery with local designs, calendars with photos of the U.S.
- Pens, crayons, and coloring books for children.
- Clothing: T-shirts, baseball caps of well-known or local teams, patches, pins.
- Household objects: sheet sets, dish towels with local pictures, motif soaps, coffee mugs, pins, pens or pencils from your university.
- Music: tapes or CDs of your favorite music or music from your local area. R&B, rap, and hip-hop, in particular, are very popular with young people.
- A photo album that you can fill with pictures of you and your family during your stay.

 **Tip: Passport and credit card numbers**  
Remember, leave a copy of your passport and a list of credit card numbers at home.

## PREPARING FOR CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Although cultural adaptation is highly individual, research indicates that most people go through similar stages in adapting to a new environment. Any travel you've done abroad and, perhaps, even within your own country has exposed you to culture shock. But if you've never had to overcome culture shock, you might want to read about it before you depart. You'll find books relating to cultural adaptation and culture shock on the recommended reading list at the back of this handbook.

During your on-site orientation, the Resident Staff will discuss culture shock and suggest strategies for adapting to your new surroundings. Near the end of the program, they will also provide information on reverse culture shock and suggest ways of coping with returning home.

 **Tip: Attitude for the latitude**  
As with most developing countries, the crucial factors for a rewarding experience are openness, curiosity, flexibility, tolerance and a solid grasp of the way things work. Here are some tips:

- The transportation system has a culture of its own.
- The ritual of bargaining is fundamental to virtually every financial transaction.
- The bureaucracy can be oppressively staggering, yet strangely inoffensive.
- Formality and hierarchy are dominant themes.

## Part III: Living in Dakar

Students should always keep in mind that they are in another country with its own laws and customs, and they are different from the ones you're used to. Be aware of this and conduct yourself accordingly. Also, be sure to attend classes regularly and participate in program activities.

The orientation described in Part I will also cover practical aspects of living in a new place, Senegalese laws, proper social conduct, and cultural differences, including race, gender, and class. In particular, people may have a distorted and stereotyped image of U.S. women, often acquired through advertising, television, and movies. The Resident Staff will provide insights into the local culture's view of women and suggest ways to reduce anxiety and to ensure personal safety.

### Climate

Senegal has two well-defined dry and humid seasons resulting from the northeast winter winds and southwest summer winds. The rainy season is from July to October and tends to be hot, humid, and wet, although recurrent drought has been a problem for the past 15 years. The dry season, which makes up the rest of the year, tends to be hot and arid, except in the coastal regions where the temperature and humidity are modified by ocean breezes. Between June and October, maximum temperatures average 82°F and humidity is high; temperatures average 63°F from December to February. The first few weeks of the spring semester can be colder than you expect, with temperatures dropping to 50°F or below.

### Meeting Senegalese

Just as it is impossible to define a typical American, it is equally impossible to define a typical Senegalese. You will meet many types of people in Senegal who have different opinions, attitudes, and habits. The more you interact with Senegalese people, the better chance you'll have of forming relationships and understanding the culture. During these interactions, use common sense, intelligence, and a sense of objectivity. Be prepared to discuss your views freely and openly, and try to listen with an open mind.

You will arrive in Senegal with some preconceptions about Senegalese or Africans in general and will encounter some Senegalese with preconceptions about people from your country. Try to put aside stereotypes and make judgments based on real experiences. If you are

confronted with what you feel is a false stereotype about your country, be frank and truthful, yet tactful in your response. Avoid refuting arguments with odious comparisons to Senegal. This type of response will only create bad feelings. A positive and serious response from you will help dispel myths about your country.

If you experience any uncomfortable situations or are unsure of how to deal with a particular problem, consult with the Resident Director. Be cautious until you know and understand local values and customs.

#### **Participants on other CIEE-Africa programs say...**

Enjoy yourself, socialize with the people, learn about their culture and respect it, don't compare things to life back home. If you do, be critical of Americans as well as Africans. And be prepared for culture shock, including surrounding issues of race. No doubt you'll think about such issues as development, imperialism, and neocolonialism.

It made me realize how wasteful and greedy Americans can be.

### **Special Note to Female Students**

You may notice that women in Senegal do not necessarily take on the same roles as do women in the U.S. Encountering this may be a difficult experience for female students. Many Senegalese do not understand that the American style of familiarity with strangers is merely a gesture of friendliness. Outgoing behavior may sometimes be misconstrued as something more. In certain situations, a smile at someone of the opposite sex could possibly be misunderstood as an invitation to spend the evening together. As a precaution, give your address or phone number only to people you know and trust.

Some difficulties arise because of the stereotypical image of Western women portrayed in movies and the media. American women, in particular, have acquired a reputation for enjoying a free and easy lifestyle. This contrasts with the more traditional ways in many African countries, including Senegal. As a result, even though you are accustomed to having a lot of freedom in the way you dress and the way you interact with others, be cautious until you become familiar with the Senegalese social norms. Single Senegalese women, for example, do not typically go out alone. Host families will be very concerned if you do, and they discourage such behavior. Similarly, being alone with a man is frowned upon.

As a foreign woman in Senegal, you can expect to be propositioned quite often by men in ways you are not used to back home. Your initial

reaction may be to lash out or feel insulted. Unfortunately, this reaction may only lead to laughter from the man and more discomfort on your part. The best way to handle the situation is to keep the conversation light. For example, you might say you don't have time or that you are on your way somewhere. "*Ba beneen yoon*" or "until next time" is a useful phrase to end the event on a stable note. On the other hand, be alert for someone pushing too far. If a man becomes physical with you at any time, tell him very firmly to stop, and remove yourself from the situation immediately.

The ways men and women relate in Senegal may make it difficult for female students to make male friends. It's not hopeless, however. Some past female participants, with time and patience, made some trustworthy male friends.

#### **Participants on other CIEE-Africa programs say...**

Be prepared to be approached by men a lot. It's not necessarily threatening, but it does get annoying after a while. Also, you'll feel much more comfortable in town and on campus wearing pants or long skirts instead of miniskirts or shorts.

### **Special Note to Male Students**

Some male Senegalese students may assume that you, a foreign man, have connections with the foreign women. Don't be surprised if a Senegalese man approaches you, asking you to get him an American woman in exchange for a Senegalese woman. Some Senegalese men may not have the same view on gender relations as you do. You should be prepared to explain that men and women have very different relations in the United States and that men and women are not viewed as "goods" to be exchanged upon request (whether a man requesting a woman or a woman requesting a man). A good way for Senegalese men to understand foreign women is through you.

### **Special Note to Minorities**

Students that are members of certain ethnic groups and overweight students may be the object of particular attention in Senegal and may receive very direct comments about their appearance. This directness in communication is very common for everyone (e.g. people will let you know if you have a pimple or have gained weight). Usually this is not meant to offend and should be taken lightly.

On the other hand, homosexuality is a social taboo and is rarely, if ever, discussed in Senegal. Thus, gay and lesbian students should exercise extreme discretion and avoid openly discussing sexual issues. These issues will be

discussed in-depth during the on-site cultural orientation.

## Customs and Etiquette

Use only your right hand when greeting or when giving or receiving something from another person. Use of the left hand is considered rude.

Remember that a useful phrase in difficult social situations is "ba beneen", or "next time." If someone begs for money, demands that you purchase something, or is otherwise insistent, say that you have no money but will "next time." This phrase might get you out of the oddest circumstances.

Senegalese are very generous. If you visit a person's home, you will most likely be offered a drink. If they are eating, they will invite you to join them. Never smell food that has been given to you before you eat it. Doing so may imply that you think you have been given bad food. Better to just say, "thank you" and enjoy! The on-site program orientation will provide participants with other useful tips to avoid cultural "faux pas."

## SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

The health and safety of program participants abroad is understandably an important issue for all concerned. CIEE was a founding member of the Interassociational Advisory Committee on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad. The following website contains information about the Task Force and study abroad safety issues: [http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge\\_community\\_net/work.sec/education\\_abroad\\_1/developing\\_and\\_managing/practice\\_resources\\_36/policies/guidelines\\_for\\_health](http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge_community_net/work.sec/education_abroad_1/developing_and_managing/practice_resources_36/policies/guidelines_for_health)

CIEE's approach to safety is threefold. First, we conduct a careful safety evaluation of every program we run. Next, when students arrive on site, we conduct a thorough orientation which includes tips on reducing risk and handling difficult situations should they arise. Finally, program staff continuously monitors local conditions in order to provide guidance to participants throughout their stay.

Experience has shown that the single most important factor in assuring a safe study abroad experience is the sensible and cautious behavior of the participants themselves. When traveling abroad, you should exercise additional caution until you become familiar with your new surroundings. Always remain alert to what is going on around you, especially in crowded tourist areas and on public transportation.



### **Trap: Letting down your guard**

When visiting a foreign country, you may well be enchanted by your surroundings and engage in behavior that is not typical of you. This may cause you to let your guard down and be susceptible to crime. Practice common sense and exercise good judgment. **Remember that you are more likely to be a victim of crime if you have been drinking alcohol.**

Certain areas of Dakar are unsafe, and you must be careful about what you do and where you go. Follow these general rules:

- Tourists and foreigners in central Dakar are often targeted by young men interested in befriending them, selling them something, or being their guide - to marketplaces, interesting sites, etc. You will find that most of them are harmless but can be extremely persistent and may try to tag along with you. You will need to exercise caution with these people and keep your belongings close to you. Don't walk around with a camera, visible money pouch, or anything that might look tempting.
- Women will definitely feel pressured, but should feel confident in being straightforward when it comes to unwanted attention. Be clear that you are not interested!
- Tourists are common targets for pickpockets. Be aware of your backpacks and cameras especially in marketplaces and on downtown streets. Don't carry large amounts of cash or your passport with you. Never leave belongings in a parked car.
- Leave your money, passport, camera, and other valuables secured at home in a locked space.
- When you carry your passport, wear it around your neck or waist in a thin travel pouch underneath your clothing.
- Never carry valuables in the pockets of your pants.
- Vehicles are often battered and unsafe and seat belts are almost non-existent. In addition, roads are often in bad shape. If you are in a taxi and feel uncomfortable with the way the driver is driving, tell him. If the situation does not improve tell the driver you want to get out after ascertaining that you are in a safe area where you can get another taxi easily.
- It is also not advisable to ride in a taxi alone. Although rare, there have been reports of passengers being taken off the beaten path and asked for money before taken to their destination.
- At night, don't take shortcuts. Take a cab even if you are in downtown Dakar and not going far.
- Do not accept rides with anybody you do not know.

- As noted earlier, keep a photocopy of your passport in a separate place. This will speed up the process of replacing your documents should they be lost or stolen.
- There are no pedestrian rights in Senegal; if you hear a horn, get out of the way!
- Be especially cautious in areas frequented by tourists, such as markets, cafés, and the ferry to Gorée Island.
- Be aware of the heating situation provided by your host institution and host residence. For locations where carbon monoxide-producing appliances may be present – i.e., any appliance that burns fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal – detailed information on the possible dangers associated with such appliances, along with safe operating instructions, will be provided in the on-site program orientation. For further information, please visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov). You may wish to take a small battery-operated carbon monoxide detector to have in your housing.
- If you are the victim of a pickpocket, or if something is stolen, inform the Resident Director immediately.

#### **Participants say...**

Be prepared to be targeted; you will be very noticeable and therefore a target for theft, shady business propositions, questionable sexual propositions, etc. But keep a sense of humor.

Try keeping a journal, both to deal with stuff on your mind as well as a record of your travels.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND MAIL**

Depending on the time of year, Senegal is 4 or 5 hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Standard Time. When it is 4:00 p.m. (or 5:00 p.m.) in Dakar, it is noon in New York.

### **Telephone**

Dakar has a plethora of *télécentres*, usually open until late evening, for phone calls and faxes with rates similar to those at the public SONATEL offices. In the past, most students have preferred to buy cell phones (new and used) on site. The Resident Staff will provide more information on how to acquire a cell phone during on-site program orientation.

If purchasing an international calling card before leaving the U.S., it would be wise to confirm whether the card can be used for making outgoing calls from Senegal. We recommend that you wait until arriving in Dakar to explore the various options available.

### **Fax**

The CIEE Study Center has a fax machine, but it is for business purposes and should only be used for emergencies and academic purposes. You can send or receive faxes in *télécentres*.

### **E-mail**

Computer labs with a high-speed Internet connection are available for student use on campus. Also, the Study Center has wifi access for those who bring their laptops. In addition, inexpensive cybercafés can be found in every neighborhood. Nevertheless, participants should not expect the same access to Internet that they find in the U.S.!

### **Mail Service**

You may receive mail at the CIEE Study Center address. Mail to and from Senegal is very sporadic, with letters taking anywhere from 2 to 4 weeks; the norm is about 2 weeks. Sometimes curious postal workers open your mail looking for cash or credit cards, and packages may also be opened. Be careful about what you send and what you receive.

### **Packages**

Packages can be sent to the CIEE Study Center address, and most arrive unopened. However, losses occasionally occur. You should expect to pay between \$3 and \$10 to receive a package, and you will have to go to the main post office to pick it up. If you must have an urgent or valuable package sent, you should have it sent to you via DHL, Federal Express, or some other mail service where the package can be insured and tracked. If you must have an electronic device (for example, a laptop battery) sent to you in the mail, we recommend you wrap it in clothes so as to diminish the risk of paying a high fee.

## **MONEY AND BANKING**

The Senegalese currency is the *Communauté Financière Africaine Franc (F.CFA)*. The official rate of exchange fluctuates daily. CFA francs cannot be bought or sold in the U.S.

Arrive in Senegal with several ways to obtain money; so that in the event one method fails or is inconvenient, a back-up option is available.

**The best option for obtaining cash is a Visa or MasterCard ATM card**, since Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are found easily throughout the city. Prior to departing the United States, ask your bank for a list of the banks in Senegal that will accept your ATM card, and memorize your pin number in numbers (not letters), since keypads may read differently

overseas. Visa is accepted at more places than MasterCard.

#### Participants say...

When changing money, make sure to ask about commission charges; some banks don't charge, but others do.

It is also recommended to bring some traveler's checks in denominations of \$50 or \$100 and possibly some American cash. Traveler's checks are safer to carry than cash, and the better-known brands are American Express and Visa. In main cities such as Dakar, credit cards are rarely accepted, only occasionally in major restaurants or hotels. Many program participants however have said that they prefer to use ATM cards as traveler's checks can be very inconvenient to cash.

Most banks are open Monday to Friday, 8-11:15 am and 2:30-4:30pm or thereabouts. Remember to be extra careful with your bags and person when coming out of a bank with cash or after using an ATM. Don't be an easy target for pickpockets!

There is no sales tax in Senegal.

#### **Tip: Credit card and traveler's check numbers**

Remember to keep a list of your credit card numbers and traveler's check numbers separate from the cards and checks.

### Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are a safe form of payment. As long as you have a record of your traveler's check numbers, you can recover stolen or lost amounts. Be sure to buy your traveler's checks before you depart the United States. You will need your passport to cash them.

Some banks cash traveler's checks, but forex (foreign exchange) bureaus have better rates for large denomination checks such as \$100 or \$50 checks. Shop around. You can, of course, bring and exchange U.S. dollars for Senegalese currency, too. The exchange rate is slightly better, but the risk is higher. Avoid money-changers at the airport or on roadsides.

**Please note that not all banks in Dakar cash traveler's checks. Many students have said that in Senegal, traveler's checks are not a convenient method of changing money, and most program participants prefer to use ATM cards. So you may choose to bring some travelers checks as a means to secure secondary or alternative access to funds.**

### Credit Cards

Bring a Visa as a backup means for getting cash from banks. Many shops and restaurants in

Senegal do not accept credit cards, but airlines and large hotels will usually accept Visa, MasterCard, and American Express.

### Sending Money

Checks or money orders sent from overseas take about six weeks to clear. Cabled money can take anywhere from a few days to two weeks to clear. You can also have funds wired to you through a Western Union or Money Gram office.

#### **Trap: PIN numbers**

For both credit cards and bank cards, inquire with the issuer to verify that the card is valid for an international banking system. And memorize your PIN in numbers not letters. Foreign phone pads are often configured differently.

## GETTING AROUND

### Local Transportation

The cheapest and most common means of transportation in Dakar are the *car rapides*, but if you're in a real hurry and don't mind paying more, you can always take a taxi.

The *car rapide* (i.e. often a minibus) may not be rapid at all and is usually very crowded and noisy. They go to most places but their destinations are unmarked. You will have to listen carefully to the destinations, which the driver's assistant usually yells out.

There are lots of taxis in Dakar. In theory, taxis have meters, but they rarely work. Be prepared to bargain before getting in, preferably in Wolof! Rule of thumb: Never agree to the flat rate that the driver first offers. This is one of the skills you will learn during the cultural orientation sessions. The cost of a taxi from the CIEE Study Center or your host family to downtown Dakar is around \$4.

### Independent Travel

You will no doubt want to explore Dakar, particularly on weekends. You can also plan longer vacations exploring other regions of Senegal. Before leaving the United States, gather as much information as possible about places you may want to visit. Of course, this will require additional funds.

Be aware that in many countries in Africa, possession and display of a camera near certain government and military sites is considered to be suspicious and **taking photos may not be allowed.**

**CIEE's Rules for Independent Travel:** Since you may not miss any classes, you may travel independently only on weekends, breaks and

after the program ends. Do not travel to regions of Senegal or other countries where transportation is unreliable or scarce. The Resident Director has final authority over the appropriateness of all travel plans.

Male students may be able to travel alone, but female students should not. Travel with just one or two others; this will allow you to meet and talk to people more easily.

 **Trap: Wherever you go...**  
You must inform the Resident Director of any plans to leave the Dakar area. Failure to do this may result in your dismissal from the program.

### **Modes of Travel for Long Distance**

**Bus:** Buses (holding 30-40 people), minibuses (15-30 people), and "bush taxis" (7-9 people) make the long-distance routes between Dakar and other large towns. These tend to be reliable but are sometimes crowded and uncomfortable and also stop periodically along the way to pick up other people. There are generally no timetables: they leave when full. The government fixes fares, but there is sometimes an extra charge for luggage.

### **ILLEGAL DRUGS**

Penalties for drug violations in Senegal are often harsher than in the U.S. If you use illegal drugs, you may be expelled from the study program, and the local police may prosecute you as a criminal. Remember that you are subject to Senegalese laws. Your own country's laws do not protect you. The U.S. and other governments can only seek to ensure that their citizens are not discriminated against; that is, that they receive the same treatment as citizens of the country in which they are arrested who are charged with the same offense.

### **DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM**

You must comply with any regulations established by your home university as well as those of the CIEE Study Center in Dakar. The Resident Staff may establish additional requirements that they consider essential either to achieving your educational goals or to continuing good relations with the university or community. Resident Staff may dismiss from the program any student who does not comply with the regulations and requirements as outlined in the Release, which all students must sign before being allowed to participate in the program.

If your Resident Director warns you that you are not complying with program regulations, you must take responsibility for changing your behavior as requested, or risk early dismissal

and consequent loss of time, money and academic credit. CIEE does not refund program fees to students who are dismissed from their programs.

### **VOTING WHILE ABROAD**

U.S. citizens who expect to be away from home on Election Day may request absentee ballots in person or by mail from their local election offices. Procedures vary by state but are usually quite simple if you have already registered to vote.

If you have not arranged this before leaving home, you may use the provisions of the Overseas Voting Rights Act of 1975, which requires states to establish a means for citizens residing overseas to apply for voter registration. Some states permit you to use an FPCA (Federal Post Card Application) to register. Others use an SF76, which serves as both an application for registration and as an absentee ballot. You can get a list of states' voting requirements from a U.S. Embassy or consular office.

 **Tip: Notarize your ballot**  
FPCA forms used to register or obtain a ballot must be notarized. If you believe you have been wrongfully denied the right to vote, you may write to the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Washington, D.C. 20530.

If you are a citizen of another country, consult the authorities governing elections in your own country for similar instructions before you leave.

### **Income Tax**

Most U.S. citizens and residents must file U.S. income tax returns even if their earned income is exempt from taxes. State requirements vary; call or write to the appropriate state office.

Internal Revenue Service income tax information and forms are available at U.S. Embassies and Consulates. Since tax laws change from year to year, direct any questions to the U.S. Consulate. Non-U.S. citizens should contact the appropriate authorities in their own countries for taxation information.

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

In case of an emergency, parents or family can reach you by calling CIEE. The CIEE home office is in daily contact with our Dakar office.

Contact information for the CIEE home office will be included in an electronic final mailing to both

you and the emergency contact designated in your application materials.

#### **Participants on other CIEE-Africa programs say...**

Always keep an open mind and be ready to take on things you might not normally attempt. It is so valuable to travel and experience new things.

This has been an incredible experience for me: I have benefited academically in the humanities, especially since I am from a science background, and I have grown emotionally and personally. I've become stronger, more confident, and more open-minded to new experiences and ways of life. It has been an enriching experience through and through.

## **Part IV: Policies and Procedures**

Please click on the following link to view CIEE's Policies and Procedures:  
<http://ciee.org/study/terms.aspx>.

This website includes:

### **General Policies**

- Admissions
- Late Arrival and Early Departure
- Exceptions
- Drug and Alcohol Violations
- Alcohol Policy
- Dismissal from the Program

### **Academic Policies**

- Student Academic Orientation
- Course Loads, Credits, Equivalencies and Grades
- Academic Records
- Attendance
- Pass/Fail and Audit
- Drop/Add Period
- Incompletes
- Withdrawal from a Course
- Academic Honesty
- Appeals

### **Program Fees and Payment Policies**

- Confirmation of Participation
- Payment of CIEE Program Fees
- Due Dates, Late Fees and Interest
- Exclusion from Participation
- Late Fees and Interest
- Withdrawal and Deferral Policy
- Program Cancellation

Please make sure to review this website. Your signature on the "Program Participant Contract" indicates that you have read and agree to comply with all of the policies provided to you on that website.

## **A NOTE FROM CIEE**

### **Credits and Grades**

Most students who choose to go abroad, for a term or a year, report that the experience is one

of the most powerful and enjoyable parts of their undergraduate education. We hope that when you return home, you will have had an equally memorable experience.

Many students report that study abroad is also challenging, and that coming to terms with the challenges is one of the things that make it so powerful and memorable. Some students, however, report that the challenges of dealing with another country's academic culture are sometimes more frustrating than enjoyable.

The academic programs that CIEE provides are to varying degrees integrated into another culture's academic framework, and are often governed by rules that are unfamiliar to U.S. students. At CIEE we want you to experience the challenges of adapting to a new culture, of accepting different teaching styles, and embracing forms of learning that may be different from what you are used to.

But we are sure you will agree that problems associated with your credits and your grades should be avoided—that these should not turn out to be "opportunities for growth." We want to help you avoid these problems, and with some careful planning and attention to detail, you can:

### **1. Managing Your Registration.**

You are probably going to sign up for five classes during your session overseas. Although it's surprising, one problem faced by some students when they return home is that the Course Registration Record we have for them doesn't match what the student actually took. You can avoid this. Read on.

### **Make it your responsibility to keep your Course Registration Record accurate and up to date.**

Students select a preliminary course schedule, either in the U.S. before going abroad or after arrival at the Center. The courses selected constitute your Preliminary Registration, which will be sent to your home or sending school. There will be an opportunity to change courses during the first days of the regular semester (the "drop-add" period). Once this add-drop period ends, all courses for which you are registered will remain final, and will be permanently listed on your Course Registration Record. These will be the courses that will appear on the credit and grades report that we will send to your home or sending school after the session ends (called the "CIEE Academic Record").

Although CIEE staff, both in the U.S. and at your site, will make every effort to ensure that your Course Registration Record is accurate, we

cannot do this unless you correctly follow all the formal procedures for making changes. **You must fill out a form to drop or add a course.** It is not sufficient to tell your professor, the CIEE Resident Director, or another staff person that you are changing courses—you must complete all required paperwork or the change is not official. In some cases you will also be required to obtain permission from your home institution.

To sum up, **make it your responsibility** to ensure that your Course Registration Record is accurate. If at any time you are not sure, ask to see a copy of it.

### **There's a difference between DROPPING a course and WITHDRAWING from one.**

As noted above, once the drop-add period is over, all the courses for which you are registered will remain permanently on your record. However, if you realize, *after the end of the drop-add period but before the middle of the session*, that special circumstances will prevent you from completing a course successfully, it may be possible to “Withdraw” from the course. Please also be aware that it is not possible to add a course after the add-drop period. If you do withdraw from a course, it will remain on your CIEE Academic Record with a “W” grade. Permission to Withdraw from a course is not automatically granted just because a student is not doing well; it is only granted when there are circumstances that the Resident Director believes *prevented* a student from doing well, and *only before the program's withdrawal deadline*. There is also required paperwork to complete if you are withdrawing from a course.

After the withdrawal deadline, all courses that remain on your Course Registration Record will be posted on your CIEE Academic Record with a letter grade. If you stop going to a course, fail to take the final examination, or fail to turn in required coursework, you will receive an F.

## **2. Getting Good Grades.**

### **The time to think about your grades is at the beginning of each course, not at the end.**

Make sure you understand the basis on which the professor will be assessing your work. Practices vary from country to country. Often a single final paper or examination will be the most important (perhaps the only) opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned and/or achieved in the course. In some courses, the basis for grades may have been explained during orientation or during the registration process. An explanation may appear on the course syllabus, and/or the professor may

announce grading policies. In some cases, you may not be sure how the professor will be calculating the grade. In this case as well, **make it your responsibility to be sure you understand the basis for grading in each course.** If you're not sure, ask the professor or the Resident Director.

### **How am I doing?**

Although grading differs from country to country, there are general guidelines that we can offer.

In the U.S., a student usually forms an idea of how he/she is doing as the semester progresses based on a self-appraisal of participation in class and a general sense of what the professor cares about. In most overseas situations, it is much more difficult, and often not possible at all, for a student to determine this. Although we ask our teachers to give students ongoing feedback, their own academic cultures are often very different in this regard, and many teachers do not always offer feedback in a way that enables a student to form a reliable opinion of his/her progress. We strongly recommend that you ask your professor how you are doing, perhaps two weeks after the semester has started and again two or three times during the session. Don't wait until mid-term time to do this.

### **“Demanding” doesn't mean the same thing in most overseas academic cultures.**

U.S. students are accustomed to forming an idea of how demanding a teacher is based on the pressure that is applied on a day-to-day basis. In the U.S., if a professor repeatedly challenges students to show they have read and understood the assignments, and then chastises those who can't answer, students will conclude that this is a demanding teacher. This doesn't always happen overseas. “*Demanding*” in an overseas context may mean simply that the grades awarded at the end of the course are lower than those awarded by other professors.

Because of these differences, you need to take stock of your situation early and often. If the regular clues are not present, you should ask, “How am I doing?” If there isn't yet any basis for the professor to answer that question, you should ask, “What is important in this class? What should I be doing in order to succeed?” Make it your responsibility to actively seek confirmation of how well you are doing in each course.

All the CIEE staff, both in the U.S. and at your program site, want you to have an enjoyable and successful session overseas. We are committed to offering top-quality assistance to help you

understand the host culture and its constraints. Please do not hesitate to contact any staff member if we can advise you on how best to manage your overseas experience.

Have a great year, learn all that you can about your temporary home, and try to bring back an excellent and accurate academic record.

## **CONCLUSION: THE CHALLENGE IS UP TO YOU**

Your stay abroad may be one of the most vital and rewarding times of your life. Don't worry about what you are going to miss at school by going overseas. You will learn so much abroad! The people you meet and the situations you experience may be invaluable in the years to come.

We hope you will arrive prepared to adjust to a way of living that is different from your own; to a way of thinking that may be, in some cases, more traditional, more conventional, and more conservative than your own. You will also most

likely encounter new and different views about the U.S. and its people. Take the opportunity to learn from these and to clarify misconceptions about the U.S. when you can.

Remember that each person you meet will see you as a representative of the United States. If you can accept differences cheerfully and with an open mind rather than attempting to alter the environment around you, you can contribute to a positive relationship between the country and the United States.

**CIEE wishes you every success during the coming months.**

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### **Participants say...**

Overall my experience abroad is something that I would not trade for anything. Being abroad gave me the opportunity to push myself beyond my comfort zone thus increasing my abilities to deal with more confidence. My only advice to those coming abroad is to constantly push yourself. Venture out on your own and don't let your fears deprive you of the opportunity to try something new.

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# Part V: Additional Resources

## RECOMMENDED READING

We urge you to read several of these publications before you arrive overseas, in order to expand your knowledge of Senegal and ease your adjustment to Senegalese culture. Many of these books can be purchased at your local bookstore or may be available for reference at your campus study abroad office or local library.

### Books on Senegal

- Lonely Planet: the Gambia & Senegal (Lonely Planet Senegal, 1999)
- God's Bits of Wood (African Writers Series, 1996) and other works by Ousmane Sembène  
"In 1947–48 the workers on the Dakar-Niger railroad came out on strike. Sembène Ousmane, in this vivid and moving novel, evokes all the color, passion and tragedy of those decisive years in the history of West Africa."
- So Long a Letter (African Writers Series) by Mariama Bâ.  
Well-known novel by a Senegalese writer that takes the form of a correspondence between two women, close friends who have made very different life choices, one choosing a career and a more European or "Western" life while the other has maintained African traditions, including polygamy.
- Africa Notebook (1986) by C.W. Gusewell  
"This collection of essays lets you experience the sights and sounds of Senegal. He writes of the images of Africa as she reveals her secrets. He presents through the limited window of immediate experience, an intimate sense of Africans and life in a small corner of that vast and wonderful and suffering part of the world."
- Mandinko: The Ethnography of a West African Holy Land (1987) by Matt Schaffer and Christine Cooper  
"The portrait of the Mandinko that emerges in this case study is one of a particularly religious people who have a deep sense of their own history and of their importance to the history of their particular region of West Africa. The book accomplishes what a good ethnography should--the description and interpretation of the significant institutions of contemporary Mandinka life, including social organization, sex roles, marriage, kinship, leadership and authority, warfare, a slave caste system, religion, subsistence and environment. Where possible, these institutions are viewed in the context of social history and in light of the advent and impact of Islam."
- The Collected Poetry (1998) by Leopold Sedar Senghor  
"Leopold Sedar Senghor was not only president of the Republic of Senegal from 1960 to 1980, he is also Africa's most famous poet. A cofounder of the Negritude cultural movement, he is recognized as one of the most significant figures in African literature. This bilingual edition of Senghor's complete poems made his work available for the first time to English-speaking audiences. His poetry, alive with sensual imagery, contrasts the lushness and wonder of Africa's past with the alienation and loss associated with assimilation into European culture."

### We also recommend the following books by Cheikh Anta Diop:

- The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality (1983)
- The Cultural Unity of Black Africa: The Domains of Patriarchy and of Matriarchy in Classical Antiquity
- Precolonial Black Africa: A Comparative Study of the Political and Social Systems of Europe and Black Africa, from Antiquity to the Formation of Mode (1990)
- Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology (1991)  
"This last work of the well-known Senegalese scholar is a summation and expansion of his two previous volumes—Precolonial Black Africa and The African Origin of Civilization—and offers a refined statement of his life's work, to prove the primacy of African culture by proving that ancient Egypt was a black society, first in many cultural achievements later claimed by the following Indo-Aryan cultures. To this end, Diop discusses the paleontology, sociology, anthropology and intellectual history of the ancient Egyptians set against contemporaneous cultures and also the modern Wolofs. "

### Books on Cultural Adaptation

Adaptation to a new culture can be difficult. The following reading list contains publications that deal specifically with issues of culture shock and the difficulties associated with living overseas. Many of these books can be purchased at your local bookstore or may be available for reference at your campus study abroad office or local library.

- Citron, James. Short-Term Study Abroad: Integration, Third Culture Formation and Reentry, NAFSA: Association for International Educators, 1996.
- Kepets, Dawn. Back in the USA: Reflecting on Your Study Abroad Experience, NAFSA: Association for International Educators, 1999.
- Kohls, Robert. Survival Kit for Overseas Living: For Americans Planning to Live and Work Abroad, Intercultural Press, 2001.

- Storti, Craig. The Art of Crossing Cultures (Second Edition), Intercultural Press, 2001.
- Storti, Craig. The Art of Coming Home, Intercultural Press, 2001.
- Wolfgang, Aaron. Everybody's Guide to People Watching, Intercultural Press, 1995

## Websites

For those students with access to the Internet, we also encourage you to look at the many sites on Senegal and Dakar including the following:

<b>Where:</b>	<b>Why?</b>
<a href="http://www.statravel.com">www.statravel.com</a>	Information on student tickets, travel gear, and other interesting information for the student traveler.
<a href="http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/AFLIT/CountrySenegalEN.html">www.arts.uwa.edu.au/AFLIT/CountrySenegalEN.html</a>	Great website about literature and women writers from Senegal. Also includes links to other interesting sites about Senegal.
<a href="http://www.senegal-tourism.com">www.senegal-tourism.com</a>	Senegal Tourism Office
<a href="http://www.senegalaisement.com">www.senegalaisement.com</a>	Comprehensive website for information on Senegal's past, present, and future.
<a href="http://usembassy.state.gov/dakar/">http://usembassy.state.gov/dakar/</a>	American Embassy in Senegal
<a href="http://www.senegalpost.com">www.senegalpost.com</a>	Website for Senegal Post, an English-language newspaper.
<a href="http://www.ucad.sn">www.ucad.sn</a>	Website for the University of Cheikh Anta Diop
<a href="http://tekrur-ucad.refer.sn">http://tekrur-ucad.refer.sn</a>	Website for the Department of History at UCAD
<a href="http://www.au-senegal.com">www.au-senegal.com</a>	Website on Senegal, Dakar and Gorée Island. Includes detailed maps, information about daily life, markets, transportation
<a href="http://www.seneweb.com">http://www.seneweb.com</a>	Website for information on Senegal with links to Senegalese newspapers
<a href="http://travel.state.gov">http://travel.state.gov</a>	The U.S. State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs home page providing Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, U.S. Passport Information and Application Procedures, U.S. Consulate and Embassy Addresses Abroad, and U.S. Customs Information.
<a href="http://www.oanda.com/converter/cc_table">www.oanda.com/converter/cc_table</a>	Current exchange rates.
<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>	U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Provides updated information on required immunization and regional health advisories for travelers.

Additionally, the Overseas Studies Office at the University of Southern California (USC) maintains an extensive web site with a number of relevant links under topics including cross cultural information, currency conversion/money abroad, financial aid, government sites, health and safety issues, insurance, passports and visas, phone codes and time zones, weather, and transportation. This site can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/overseas/links.html>.

## **SUGGESTED PACKING CHECKLIST**

Naturally you'll want to pack what best reflects your own lifestyle and taste, but CIEE recommends the following:

### **Important Documents**

- Roundtrip Airline ticket
- CIEE Student Handbook
- Credit card/Calling card
- Senegal student visa
- Home Advisor's address, fax, E-mail
- iNext card
- Passport/Photocopy of passport (keep separate from passport)
- Traveler's checks/List of traveler's check numbers (keep separate)

### **Clothing**

- Bras (3)
- Pajamas (2)
- Pants (4-5 pairs); for men, one or two should be dressy
- Shirts or tank tops (5-7); one or two should be dressy
- Shoes (2 pairs, including good walking shoes and a dressier pair)
- Sneakers (1 pair)
- Shower sandals
- Long skirts or dresses (3) for women
- Socks
- Sweater or sweatshirt (especially during the spring semester)
- Swimsuit
- Durable underwear (10)
- Long-sleeve shirt/light sweater (2-3), especially for the spring students

### **General**

- Address book/e-mail addresses
- Any medication you are taking and a copy of the prescriptions
- Camera (film, if needed)
- French grammar book
- Gifts/Photos from home
- Glasses or contact lenses, extra pair, prescription
- Guidebook
- Headlamp
- Journal
- Laptop (optional) with electrical adapter and security/theft recovery software
- Medicine kit: aspirin/antacid/cold medicine/anti-diarrhea medicine, Band-aids
- Money belt or pouch
- Pictures of your home, family, university and region
- Pocket French-English dictionary
- Portable tape recorder, tapes
- Reading material: books, magazines
- Sunglasses, good pair
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Travel alarm clock
- Umbrella (it rains frequently during the fall semester)
- Washcloth, towel, and beach towel

### **Optional**

- Backpack/Overnight bag for traveling
- Batteries. You can purchase batteries in Senegal, but good quality batteries are quite expensive here.

- Bottle & can opener
- Brush/comb
- Contact lens solution (available but expensive in Dakar)
- Contraceptives
- Deodorant
- Gynecological supplies (available but more expensive in Dakar, especially tampons)
- Headphones/iPod
- Pocket knife (do NOT bring this on the plane)
- Sewing kit
- Soap and soap dish

**PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU HAVE A PEANUT ALLERGY, CONTACT YOUR CIEE STUDY ABROAD ADVISOR IMMEDIATELY!**