Why study abroad?

As an academic field, Asian American Studies is moving toward transnational studies of race, identity, and inequality. We are deeply interested in the impact of Western colonialism on Asian nations since the 16th century—from the arrival of the Spanish in the Philippines in the 16th century, to the continued military presence of the United States in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and throughout the Pacific. Western nations and Asian nations have been inextricably linked in our modern era. The migration of explorers and missionaries from Europe to Asia was an integral part of the migration of Asians to other parts of the world. These exchanges transformed religious understandings, gender roles, racial identities, and class and status formations. They formed the bases for mass global migrations, and they explain why Asians now live in practically every major city in Europe, Africa, North America, South America, and Australia. And Asians often experience hostility in the places where they settle, just as they also express hostility toward their own newcomers.

How illuminating it would be to study up close the continuing interaction of Western and Asian influences in Asian countries. Japan, China, Taiwan, Vietnam, South Korea—these are just a few places where our students could gain insights about Western imperialism and Asian adaptations to the West. Japan and Korea now have large non-Japanese and non-Korean populations in their midst—again, how illuminating to see how these states deal with “foreign workers,” “illegal immigrants,” and other “threats” to their national identities. For our students who visit European cities and capitals, they will have the opportunity to see “post-colonial” migrations—for example, the Vietnamese community in Paris, or the South Asian community in London. Yet if the broader story of Asian American Studies has been one of learning to cope and to resist white supremacy and American racism, our majors can learn a great deal about American race relations by examining these same themes in other countries, in other places with different histories and entirely different cultures. As more people have moved across the world, bringing disparate cultures and ways of life in close contact with one another, we’ve seen more intense conflicts based on race, identity, immigration status, and class. We hope our majors will appreciate how the methods and insights of our field can help us better understand these trends.

The Cost of EAP

Studying abroad through EAP can be comparable to the cost of study at UCSB. EAP participants continue to receive UC financial aid while abroad. EAP students are also eligible for special grants and scholarships from UC and other sources.
Where should I study abroad?
Almost all of the UC Education Abroad Programs offer classes in ethnic studies, history, global studies, political science, media studies, and American studies, and all of these would be appropriate for our majors. For specific suggestions, please consult our faculty advisors in the department.

When should I study abroad?
We recommend, but do not require, that students studying abroad complete all of the lower division requirements in Asian American Studies before leaving. Regardless of when you plan to study abroad, start planning NOW!

What classes should I take?
All EAP students automatically earn UC credit for the work they complete abroad. However, the application of credit to major requirements is subject to the discretion of the department and approval of the college. Students are advised to email course descriptions to our undergraduate advisor and keep relevant faculty and staff fully apprised of their plan of study throughout the entire time they are abroad.

Plan Ahead!
Applications are due as much as eight months prior to a program’s start date and some programs have academic or language prerequisites that must be satisfied in advance. Please check the EAP web site for application deadlines: eap.ucsb.edu

Keep in mind that at least 20 units of upper-division major coursework (or 12 upper-division minor units) must be completed in residence at UCSB along with other residence requirements. Consult a Letters & Science College advisor for more information.

How do I get started?
Begin by identifying your goals for study abroad and then consult the EAP web pages (eap.ucop.edu) to identify appropriate EAP programs. To find programs which offer particular disciplines or to search courses taken by EAP students over the last 5 years by subject, keyword and/or location, explore the resources found under Program Search and Course Catalog. Navigate to host universities’ web sites on the available links to learn more about the schools and their departments.

Stop by the EAP office at 2431 South Hall. Peer advisors who have recently returned from studying abroad as well as staff advisors are eager to answer your questions.

Go see your undergraduate advisor in the department office and make an appointment to speak with an advisor in the College of Letters & Science. All of these campus resources can point you in the right direction, and all of us have a keen interest in making your experience abroad as easy and enjoyable as possible. So, go abroad!

What happens when I return?
If you go abroad your junior year, you should strongly consider doing a senior honors thesis based on the coursework and intellectual interests you developed abroad. This provides an ideal way of integrating time abroad with the completion of the Asian American Studies major.

Returnees must submit a Petition for Degree Requirements in order to receive department major and/or General Education credit for work completed abroad.