

Study Abroad for Ethnic Studies Majors

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The Department of Ethnic Studies (ES) urges all of its students to participate in Berkeley Study Abroad (BSA). In an increasingly interdependent world, it is critical that we develop greater international skills and improve our cross-cultural understanding at the global level. As a major, we focus on racial and ethnic diversity within the United States. Studying abroad expands the field of comparative ethnic analysis. It provides an opportunity to examine how ethnic identities are constructed in different cultures and how race and ethnicity are reflected in the social, political, and economic life of other countries. Examining these topics abroad allows students to expand their comparative theoretical terrain, whether they look back at diverse communities in the U.S. or compare histories and challenges of ethnic communities across nations, borders, and boundaries.



Why study abroad?

Study abroad is important for the intellectual development of anyone seeking higher education. There is a distinctive economic, political, and cultural shift under way in the U.S. and across the world that requires a global perspective to fully comprehend. It is imperative for our students to be immersed in this process of change and be able to analyze it from a wider, international location.

From a practical point of view, study abroad will enhance your experience and skills by:

- increasing your understanding of the world and your own society
- developing self-confidence and independence
- increasing language proficiency
- improving critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- enhancing your resume for job and graduate school applications

“Being a student researcher in Mexico really changed the way I look at the world. I already considered myself somewhat transnational given that I was born in London to a Vietnamese refugee family and resettled in California in 1990. However, EAP gave me the chance to travel to a place where I had no family, no language background, and no prior connections. I now see clearly the connections that Mexico has with the U.S., and I carry those connections with me as I look at the world.”

Cat Bao Le



When can I study abroad?

While it is possible for Ethnic Studies students to go abroad at almost any point in their academic careers, the particular semester, summer, or year that you study abroad depends on what courses you plan to take.

Students interested in Language and Culture programs or in fulfilling major preparation and General Education requirements can participate as early as their sophomore year. Students wanting to fulfill upper-division major requirements should, in most cases, go abroad their junior or senior year.

Transfer students are encouraged to seek opportunities for study abroad. Consult with your Undergraduate Advisor to determine the best year or term to study abroad. Careful planning and an early start will allow transfer students to find the right program.

Plan ahead!

Applications typically are due six months to a year prior to the program's start date and some programs have academic or linguistic prerequisites that must be satisfied in advance. Please check the BSA website for guidance on “how to apply”:

studyabroad.berkeley.edu/how-to-apply

Cost:

Study on BSA can be comparable to the cost of study at UC. In some cases, it is less. BSA participants pay UC fees and continue to receive UC financial aid while abroad. Furthermore, BSA students are eligible for special grants and scholarships from UC, the host country, and other sources.



Where can I study abroad?

The Berkeley Study Abroad offers classes in ethnic studies, history, global studies, diaspora, political science, media studies, and other fields that would be appropriate for ES majors. The following are just a few of the institutions where our students have studied:

- National Autonomous University of Mexico
- University of Cordoba, Spain
- UC Center, Madrid, Spain
- University of Hong Kong
- Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand
- Summer Institute at the UN-mandated University for Peace, Costa Rica
- Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom



What classes can I take?

The maximum number of major credits that Ethnic Studies gives for BSA courses varies from student to student. The maximum amount generally depends on which major requirements the student has left and which requirements the student is trying to fulfill with BSA courses. The maximum number of BSA courses accepted generally ranges from 1-3. Please note that language courses do not count towards the major.

Whenever possible, students should provide their undergraduate advisors with course descriptions, syllabi, etc. of the courses they plan to take abroad and may want to use towards any major requirements.

Students are advised to keep relevant faculty and staff informed about their plan of study and academic progress throughout their time abroad. Course lists and descriptions of classes should be emailed to the Undergraduate

Course credit:

Students will earn UC credit for BSA courses they complete abroad. However, application of credit to major requirements is subject to the discretion of the department. To search for program and course options, go to the BSA website: studyabroad.berkeley.edu/programs and follow the links to courses offered through UCEAP and Berkeley Abroad.

What happens when I return?

Plan to meet with your faculty and/or major advisor upon your return to have your coursework approved.

Bring back course materials such as syllabi, reading lists, and exams, as these will help when petitioning for major or Breadth requirements. Faculty and Undergraduate Advisors will review the petitions and give final approval on coursework.

I'm interested! What are the next steps?

Ethnic Studies students interested in study abroad through BSA should first research program options on the BSA website: studyabroad.berkeley.edu, then meet with an Ethnic Studies advisor to discuss departmental regulations and the academic planning process. Application information and BSA advising are available at the Berkeley Study Abroad office, 160 Stephens Hall.