

RETURNEE OF THE MONTH

NOVEMBER 2018



ABOUT RACHEL MONTAVON

Program: SIT: Uganda: Kampala:

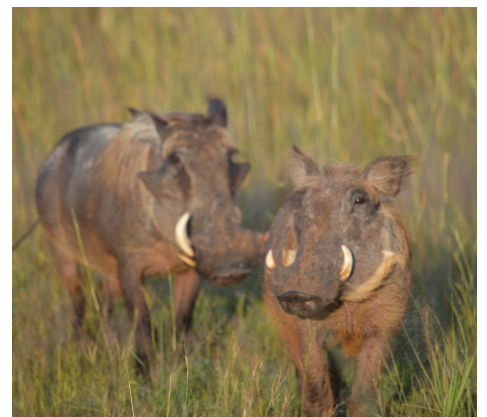
Development Studies

Duration: Fall 2017

Major: Economics & Religious
Studies

MOST INTERESTING CLASS & WHY?

The most interesting class I took was my research method and ethics class. Most of what we did for this class was mini research projects. For our main project, two students stayed together with a family in a rural village in the mountains on the Ugandan/ Kenyan boarder. We were able to decide what we wanted to research, and then had a week getting to walk through the village and conduct research. Because we were doing our research on agriculture in the region, we got to help collect, shuck, and process coffee beans. This class set us up to complete a 6-week internship or independent study and write reports about what we chose to do. None of the classes I took directly fed into either major. However, I want to go into developmental economics and the program I was on had a set developmental studies course load.



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HOW WAS EDUCATION ABROAD DIFFERENT THAN ANTICIPATED?



The days were a lot longer than I expected. Most mornings I'd be up by 6am and usually wouldn't get home from class till between 5-7pm. The majority of our classes were field trips and really encouraged hands on learning which is very different than the normal UVA lecture. I was slightly surprised by how easy it was for me to adjust and to be able to contact friends back home.

NUMBER ONE WAY THE EXPERIENCE CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR GROWTH



I became a lot more confident in myself; both in my academic ability and my belief in my capability to be able to succeed wherever I am.

FAVORITE LOCAL HANGOUT & WHY?

Local coffee shops. Coffee shops had really good food and coffee, wifi, and were pretty inexpensive.

MOST INTERESTING/DELICIOUS CUISINE TRIED

Rolex. Rolex is a street food that is a combination of a fried egg that usually contains cabbage, carrots, onions, and peppers rolled into a fresh chapatti (Uganda's version of a fried tortilla).

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MOST MEANINGFUL INTERACTION WITH A LOCAL

The first half of the semester, we stayed with a local family. On the first night, we were all given Ugandan names and became part of local clan and tribe. My family was awesome and I am still in touch with them today. Something else that was really fun was I got weekly marriage proposals and was offered 70 cows by one person (a 50 cow dowry was in the news paper).



ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

11/ 10 would recommend studying abroad. Get out of your comfort zone and really embrace a different culture and way of life. It not only makes you a better person, it prevents you from getting burned out at school. There aren't a lot of times in your life when you can take off 4 months and live a different life without really missing out on a lot at home or having responsibilities you have to drop. I 1000% recommend studying abroad.



KAMPALA IN 3 WORDS:

Busy

Marabou

Boda-bodas