

Online travelogues: A passport to study-abroad

By Leah Silvieus, '07

Back in the day, parents of Whitworth students studying abroad relied on phone calls and postcards sent from far-off lands to learn of their children's well-being and whereabouts. Thanks to the advent of web technology, during Jan Term 2005 Whitworth Chaplain Terry McGonigal, a leader of the Central America study program, visited a Nicaraguan Internet café every day to access Whitworth's new online student travelogues, where he followed the adventures of his son Brandan, '05, who was taking part in the Australia study program.

Students participating in four 2005 study-abroad programs shot digital photos, chronicled their experiences, and e-mailed their text and photos to the Whitworth web team, which posted the information online. The travelogues showcase a mosaic of journal entries, photos and anecdotes representing study programs spanning Europe, South and Central America, and Australia.

The online travelogues are part of a Whitworth initiative to strengthen international-education opportunities that help prepare graduates to be world citizens. The college also plans to increase its study-abroad and teaching programs, and to develop international partnerships to provide enhanced educational experiences.

Excerpts from Whitworth's online travelogues follow. To view all of the students' online journals, visit www.whitworth.edu/offcampusstudies. ☺

Also, read insightful and whimsical reflections on the Australia trip by Trisa Usrey, spouse and longtime traveling companion of Whitworth's School of Global Commerce & Management dean, at www.whitworth.edu/whitworthtoday. ☺

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In Rome, when the intensely graffiti-painted subway trains pull into the station, the ensuing onslaught of humanity is reminiscent of the final scenes of the movie Titanic: too many people, not enough room. The cramped cars are occasionally enlivened by live music (my favorite moment was when an accordionist, hearing our American accents, busted into a moving rendition of My Heart Will Go On from...the Titanic soundtrack. How apropos).
— Anthony
Rome, Florence & Berlin

Important French Phrases to Know
Je ne comprends pas and Je suis Américaine – I don't understand and I am American. These two phrases can be used interchangeably. I recommend using them not as excuses, but rather as a point from which to practice/cultivate your French skills. People here are generally very patient and excited to help you learn whether through gestures or "Franglish," and it is my experience that these encounters are amusing as well as educational.
Qu'est-ce que c'est? – What is this? I use this phrase most often at the dinner table. So far I have eaten a variety of fish, octopus, chicken and beef, all of which were excellent, but I do know students who have dined on goat and horse. Be advised: Sometimes it is better to be blissfully unaware.
— Ashley
Guadeloupe

I'm sitting in the Botticelli Room at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. I like Botticelli but have never been completely wowed by *Spring*, or *The Birth of Venus*. I understand why they are considered masterpieces, but they never really drew me in the way they do other people. Botticelli's *Annunciation*, however, had a personal quality to it that I missed before. Maybe it is the mastery of depth, or the beauty of the lines and balance that make me like it so much.
— Megan
Rome, Florence & Berlin

A few days ago we journeyed to what the French call a "trou," which is really a large hole in the ground leading down to the sea. The trou we visited was used to punish slaves centuries ago. As I walked over the rugged trail forged through the volcanic rock that makes up the coast, I was struck with how horrific it would be to make that trek knowing that I was walking to my death. It gave me some perspective on my comfortable American life.
— Phil
Guadeloupe



adventures



From left, students take salsa dancing lessons from a Ste. Anne policeman, in Guadeloupe; also in Guadeloupe, Le Trou du Souffleur (the Hole of Suffering) where, in the 18th and 19th centuries, slaves were thrown to their deaths; Jenille Kromm, '05, holds a koala in Australia.

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Next came a site visit that I will not soon forget. We went to a chicken-processing plant. We all entered this site with a little bewilderment as to what lay ahead for us. Soon after arriving we were brought into a room where we all had to put on over our clothes white pants, white over-shirt, a reflective vest, heavy rubber boots, hairnets and earplugs. The tour was eye-opening as we were shown how the chickens are cleaned, cut, stored and put through other processes. So far this trip has exceeded any previous expectations, and I am excited to see what lies ahead.

— Emily
Australia

This trip so far has torn my heart, taught me to question, challenged my faith, strengthened my hope, wracked my brain, slowed me down, revealed my responsibility, and provided me the will to find a way to change it all.

— Molly
Central America

I have loved visiting all these businesses and viewing so many different business practices. I did notice that all of these organizations have something in common: Each employee has a very strong sense of commitment to uphold his or her personal morals and those of the company. Australians are very conscious of the impact their actions have on the community, and they all strive to do the best for those around them. It truly is a great place to visit!

— Lara
Australia

The people we call “poor,” “oppressed,” “other,” or “our neighbors” are not a nameless mass as most of us perceive them to be. I’ve seen their faces. They’ve taught me how I can follow Christ without letting my culture or my “needs” get in the way. I used to think that I was closing the gap between my beliefs and my actions, but I was wrong. Now that I’ve seen the problems in my life and in the lives of others, and that these problems can be fixed, there is no excuse left not to change my life.

— Mike
Central America



From far left, Molly Bruner, '07, with her host family in Honduras; business students, along with School of Global Commerce & Management Dean Kyle Usrey, second from left, near the Sydney Opera House, in Australia; students and Political Studies Professor Michael Le Roy, '89, center left, collect garbage at the beach as a service project in Punta Mona, Costa Rica; Fort Napoléon, built during the first decade of the 19th century to protect Guadeloupe from English attack.