

UW Archaeology Field School in Swartkrans, South Africa - Summer 2018

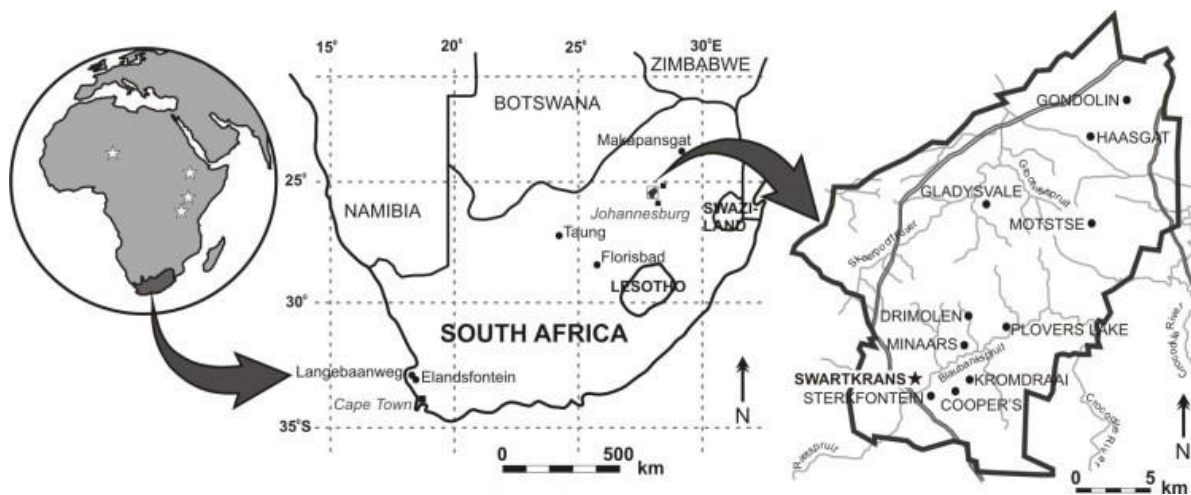
IAP Program Handbook

The UW Archaeology Field School at Swartkrans, South Africa program is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This IAP Program Handbook supplements the IAP Study Abroad Handbook and provides you with the most up-to-date information and advice available at the time of printing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

Questions about your program abroad (housing options, facilities abroad, etc.) as well as questions relating to academics (e.g. course credit and equivalents, registration deadlines, etc.) should be directed to International Academic Programs at UW-Madison.

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Contact Information

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UW-Madison Contact Information

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Emergency Contact Information

In case of an emergency, call the main IAP number **(608) 265-6329** between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the 24/7 IAP staff on call at **(608) 516-9440**.

Embassy Registration

All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-line with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country’s embassy or consulate.

US Consulate General-Johannesburg
1 Sandton Drive (opposite Sandton City Mall)
Johannesburg 2916
Tel: 011-27-11-290-3000 (from US)/011-290-3000 (from within South Africa)
Fax: (27-12) 431-5504/012-431-5504 (from within South Africa)
After Hours Emergency: 011-27-79-111-1684 (from US)/079-111-1684 (from within South Africa)

Program Dates

Arrival Day/First day of program: June 25, 2018
Program concludes/Departure day: July 25, 2018

*Please see “Travel and Arrival Information” for details on recommended arrival/departure times.

Preparation Before Leaving

Refer to the Pre-Departure Checklist in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for essential information.

Immigration Documents

Passport

A passport is needed to travel to South Africa. Apply immediately for a passport if you do not already have one. Passport information and application forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website (<http://travel.state.gov/passport>). If you already have your passport, make sure it will be valid for at least six months beyond the length of your stay abroad.

Visa

U.S. passport holders do not need visas for tourist visits of up to ninety days, but they must have onward or return air tickets and proof of sufficient funds to maintain themselves while in South Africa. Students should request a **tourist visa** when they arrive at the airport. Do not request a Student Visa, as that is for students who are enrolling in a South African university. You must ask for a tourist visa. Students can list the local address as: n'Gomo Safari Lodge, Rhino and Lion Reserve, 520 Kromdraai Rd., Kromdraai, Krugersdorp

Handling Money Abroad

The program will provide all meals, local transportation, and lodging. However, there will be regular opportunities for students to buy personal supplies, food, medicines and souvenirs, so please plan accordingly with regard to personal spending money. The cost sheet for your program provides an outline of the basic costs you can expect while in South Africa.

Money can be exchanged at the airport or at banks. South African currency is the Rand (R). Withdrawing Rand from ATMs is the most convenient method of securing cash (you will need to know the general USD-Rand conversion rate). **Please notify all credit and debit card institutions that you will be using your card in South Africa.** It's also helpful to check with your banking institutions on any foreign transaction fees you may incur while using your card abroad, just so you are aware and can budget accordingly.

Current Dollar-Rand exchange rate is available here: <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>

Packing

Fieldwork is strenuous and conducted exposed to the elements. June and July are winter months in South Africa, but winter there is nothing like winter in Wisconsin. The nights at the Swartkrans camp are typically chilly (sometimes dipping to freezing), but by midday temperatures often make the mid to high 60's F (or higher). Days are dry and pleasant, but there is the potential for sunburn, so plan accordingly (a hat and sunscreen are advisable). Also, plan to dress in layers for the Swartkrans portion of the field school. For the few days in Mapungubwe you will experience much hotter weather, so shorts and T-shirts might be advisable.

The biggest piece of advice is to pack as lightly as possible, but still bring those items listed below that you deem essential. If students forget something, there is generally an opportunity to purchase the item while in South Africa. The program will make grocery shopping trips, where any additional items can be purchased (student should be sure to have sufficient spending money for this eventuality).

Students do **not** need excavation tools, and the program strongly advises students against bringing them (they just take up room and could lead to hassles from airport security). Water purifiers are **not** necessary. Do **not** bring dishes and silverware; the program supplies them.

Students do **not** need camping supplies. You will be sleeping in beds, except perhaps for one night at Makapansgat. There will be some sleeping pads and extra pillows available for that night, but you may want to bring your own. The beds in base camp and at Mapungubwe are supplied with sheets, blankets and pillows,

and tents have small heaters, but if you tend to run cold at night and/or are picky about pillows, you might want to bring a sleeping bag and pillow as well.

Recommended packing list for the program:

Course packet (pdfs of readings)
Laptop
Watch with alarm (optional)
Money
Writing utensils (Sharpie waterproof pen, ballpoint pen, pencil, eraser)
Notebook
Personal journal (optional)
Calculator
Rubber bands (optional)
Paper clips (optional)
Band-aids, Neosporin, aspirin
Medications (in original packaging and labeled)
Toiletries
Sunscreen
Insect repellent (optional)
Water bottle (**important!**)
Camera
Sleeping bag, pad, pillow (optional)
Hat
Towel (optional, towels supplied at base camp and in Mapungubwe, but not laundered daily)
Needle and thread (optional)
Extra glasses, glasses repair kit
Sunglasses (optional)
Comfortable outdoor shoes/boots
Clothing (mix of cool and hot weather)
Canvas work gloves (**important!**)
Cold weather hat and gloves
Flashlight, extra bulbs and batteries (**important!**)

Electronics

The camps are electrified. Most South African power systems are 220/230 V AC at 50 cycles per second. Plugs have three round pins, but are not the same as the UK system. Students are encouraged to purchase adaptors before departure. Further information is available here: <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/world-electricity-guide.html>.

Travel and Arrival Information

Students should fly into and depart from the **O.R. Tambo (Johannesburg) International Airport**. Official airport pick-up and drop-off dates are, respectively, June 25 and July 25. If students arrive on the field school's start date, June 25, the Program Leader, another staff member, or a professional transportation service will be there to pick you up and transport you to camp. Likewise, students will be dropped off for departure at the airport on July 25. Beyond those dates, students are responsible for their own transportation and lodging. **IMPORTANT: please submit your Flight Itinerary in your IAP MyStudyAbroad portal as soon as you purchase your flight so that we can arrange efficient pick-ups and drop-offs.**

The Academic Program

Program Description

This four-week program offers students the opportunity to participate in a paleoanthropology field school at the famous fossil human locality of Swartkrans, South Africa. Swartkrans, a cave site approximately 20 miles from Johannesburg—the largest and most populous city in South Africa—is recognized as one of the world's most important archaeological and fossil localities for the study of human evolution. The site's geological deposits span millions of years and sample several important events in human evolution. The oldest finds at the site date between 2.0 and 1.0 million years old—a time period during which our immediate ancestor, *Homo erectus*, shared the landscape with the extinct ape-man species *Australopithecus (Paranthropus) robustus*. In addition to fossils of these species, Swartkrans also preserves an abundant archaeological record of their behavior in the form of stone and bone tools, as well as butchered animal bones. Most spectacularly, the site contains evidence of the earliest known use of fire by human ancestors, dated to about 1.0 million years old. More recent deposits at the site, dated about 110,000 years old, yield fossil and archaeological evidence of the earliest members of our own species, *Homo sapiens*.

Field school participants will learn about these fascinating ancestors through a hands-on course that includes instruction in archaeological survey, site mapping, excavation, recording, artifact and fossil analysis (human and animal), and laboratory techniques. Fieldwork is supplemented with occasional lectures, workshops and fossil locality tours with internationally recognized paleoanthropologists working at nearby sites.

The program is led by Dr. Travis Pickering, Professor of Anthropology at UW-Madison. Over his 20 years of working in South Africa, Professor Pickering has cultivated strong relationships with researchers in the area ensuring that students on this program will see original fossils and artifacts and receive site tours from the primary researchers in the field. Thus, the Swartkrans field school experience is a very comprehensive one that expands beyond the bounds of simply excavating for three weeks at one site.

Course Information

At the Swartkrans camp, students will attend lectures and seminars on relevant topics including faunal analysis, taphonomy, hominin fossils, and stone tools conducted by leading researchers in the field. Participants will also participate in excavation research under the guidance of the Program Leader and project staff. Extensive training will be provided in paleoanthropological excavation and laboratory analyses of fossils and stone tools. During the program, the group will take fieldtrips to the local sites of Kromdraai, Drimolen, Sterkfontein and possibly Makapansgat. In addition, we will visit museums and have three-day ecology tour and Iron Age archaeology excursion to the Mapungubwe site in Limpopo Province.

Upon successful completion of the program, students earn 6 credits of Anthropology 454 - Study Abroad: Topics in Biological Anthropology.

Grading

Grades in Anthropology 454 will be based on fieldwork, field notes, and seminar participation. The specific grading rubric will be in your syllabus for the program.

Pass/Fail/Drop/Audit

Please refer to the general IAP Study Abroad Handbook for academic policies.

Living Abroad

South Africa's population is estimated to be about 44 million. The climate of South Africa is mostly dry and sunny, lying just to the south of the Tropic of Capricorn. The major influence on the climate is the topography and the surrounding oceans. There are 11 official languages, but most people speak Isi-Zulu and/or English, as well as their mother tongue. The most widely spoken African languages are Isi-Zulu and Isi-Xhosa. Afrikaans was developed from the High Dutch of the 17th century. Afrikaaners (as the descendents of the Dutch are

named) abandoned the complicated grammar of the Dutch language and adopted vocabulary from French, English, indigenous African and even Asian languages.

South Africa offers a wide diversity of plant, animal and bird species. Climates range anywhere from Mediterranean (called Fynbos by South Africans) Climate to desert, grasslands, deciduous forest and alpine distributed throughout the country. The landscapes in South Africa are just as diverse as the people that live there.

Housing

During the program, you will be housed at the n’Goro Safari Lodge, in a permanent structure campsite, which is located within the gated confines of an animal reserve. The tented camp includes indoor plumbing, heaters, and hot water. Meals will be provided daily; students will take turns with camp “chores” such as helping with cooking and laundry. The camp contains a central lodge for lectures and communal meals. The Program Leader will have a telephone for emergency purposes at all times. Krugersdorp, a town about ten miles from the camp, has stores for groceries, personal items, and a clinic.

Student Conduct

Illegal drug use in South Africa is a serious offense punishable by prison time and will not be tolerated on the field school program. It is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Health

The Center for Disease Control recommends several inoculations for travelers to South Africa. For more complete and detailed information, go to the CDC website at: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/south-africa>. Also, check with your health care provider about recommended vaccinations. See your doctor at least 4–6 weeks before your program to allow time for the required series. There is no malaria in Johannesburg or at Swartkrans. There is a slight malaria risk in the Limpopo Province, where the course might take a three-day excursion, so students will want to consult with a health specialist to decide whether taking anti-malarial medications is appropriate for you.

You should check with a travel health specialist as soon as possible to inquire about recommended vaccinations and prescriptions. It is very important that you consult with a healthcare provider well-versed in travel medicine or travel clinic to plan for your time abroad. University Health Services (UHS) has a travel clinic that provides health services for those planning foreign travel, including vaccines and immunizations. Information about the travel clinic and how to make an appointment can be found online: <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/medical/travel/>. The UHS travel clinic does book out in advance, and some immunizations must be done at particular times. Please make an appointment as soon as possible with the UHS travel clinic.

If you are not covered by UHS care, please consult with your insurance company to see what clinics or healthcare providers with travel medicine specialties are covered. There are a number of travel clinics in Madison including Dean/SSM Health: <https://www.ssmhealth.com/infectious-disease/travel-medicine> and UW Health <http://www.uwhealth.org/travel-vaccinations/locations-and-maps/10381>

Your CISI medical insurance should cover any health emergencies in South Africa, but you should bring a full supply of any over-the-counter or prescription medications and supplements that you need. Your prescription medications and supplements should be in their original pharmacy containers, bearing the pharmacy label with your name (not anyone else's name). Bring a copy of your prescription in case you need to request more in South Africa.

The program will have fully stocked first-aid kits, but it is a good idea to bring a personal supply of aspirin, allergy medicine, band-aids, antibiotic cream, etc. If you are allergic to bee stings, foods, or plants, we strongly recommend that you ask your doctor about an epi-pen in case of an allergic reaction. If you wear glasses or contacts, bring a spare pair.

Fieldwork is strenuous and conducted exposed to the elements. Please inform IAP of any health conditions by completing your Health and Wellness Form in your MySA portal (and keeping it updated if there are changes). This information will be kept strictly confidential, but is important in the event of an emergency.

Weather

June and July are winter months in South Africa, but winter there is nothing like winter in Wisconsin. The nights at the Swartkrans camp are typically chilly, but by midday temperatures often make the mid to high 60°s F. Days are dry and pleasant, but there is the potential for sunburn, so plan accordingly (a hat and sunscreen are advisable). Also plan to dress in layers for the Swartkrans portion of the field school. For the few days in Limpopo you will experience much hotter weather, so shorts and t-shirts are possible.

Communication

When making calls, mind time zone differences (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock). To make a call to the United States, dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the United States country code (1) followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number, or dial + area code and the number. To call internationally from the United States, dial "011", the country code, city access code (if necessary) and the phone number. Country and city codes can be found online: www.howtocallabroad.com. Some of above steps can vary if you are using a calling card. Set realistic expectations for your family on your connectivity abroad.

There are several phone company kiosks at the airport from which students can purchase international and domestic phone cards (WorldCall cards, for instance, come in a number of different denominations [e.g., R50, R100, etc.] and work on most payphones; they can be used to call either internationally or domestically). Students can also rent a mobile phone that works in South Africa. You will have intermittent access to a payphone, but internet access is very irregular. The program staff's cell phones are for communication between them and for emergencies and will not be available for students to make overseas calls.

Safety

Personal vigilance is key to remaining safe in South Africa. South Africa is experiencing rapid political, social and economic change, and does have an undesirable incidence of crime, particularly petty theft. You will hear about safety in your pre-departure orientation.

General Rules and Suggestions about Safety in South Africa:

- Tourists are common targets of pickpockets. Be aware of your backpacks and cameras, especially on crowded buses.
- Keep valuables in a locked place. Do not carry large sums of money, wear expensive jewelry, or obviously display valuable items (cameras, i-pods, laptops, etc.) when you walk on the street.
- Do not carry your passport with you on a daily basis. A photocopy of the front page should be adequate.
- Avoid leaving belongings in a parked car.
- Use common sense just as you would in any other big city. Do not walk alone at night, go with other students, and take the taxi service recommended by the program. Avoid trains, buses and minibus taxis at night, and never use them at night alone.
- Go into a shop or ask security personnel for directions. Do not stop strangers in the street.

Johannesburg

Johannesburg can be a dangerous city, but you can minimize its dangers with some simple precautions that will allow you can get out and enjoy the city. The basic dos and don'ts are:

- **Never walk around the streets after dark and try to stay in a group during the day.**
- **Do not visit the following parts of the city: Hillbrow, Yeoville, Jeppestown, downtown Johannesburg, Berea.** Only visit Newtown in a group and stay on the main roads.

- **Do not carry exposed valuables, like cameras and money belts.** Keep tourist maps and books concealed when possible.
- **Do not use combi-taxis or micro-buses.**
- **Use a metered taxi.** Rose's Taxi service is reputable (Phone: 011-403 0000/9625 and 083-255 0933/0934)

Things to see in Johannesburg include:

Apartheid Museum

Open: Tuesday – Saturday, 09:00 – 17:00

<http://www.apartheidmuseum.org/>

Soweto and Johannesburg City Tours (through The Ritz Backpackers)

Open: By appointment, tours run daily at 8:30AM and 1:30PM

<http://www.backpackers-ritz.co.za/afritours/day.php>

Johannesburg Zoo

Open: Every day, 8:30 – 17:30

<http://www.jhbzoo.org.za/>

Rosebank Mall (good place for souvenirs)

Open: Sunday, 9:00 – 17:00

<http://www.rosebankmall.co.za/>

Constitution Hill

Open: Monday to Friday, 9:00 - 17:00

Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays 10:00-15:00

<http://www.constitutionhill.org.za/site/>

Museum Africa

Open: Tuesday – Sunday, 9:00 – 17:00

<https://www.sa-venues.com/attractionsga/museum-africa.htm>

Websites of Interest

Swartkrans Research Project

<http://swartkrans.org/>

UNESCO World Heritage Site

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/915>

U.S. State Department:

<http://www.travel.state.gov>

Centers for Disease Control:

<http://www.cdc.gov>

Lonely Planet

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

JourneyWoman

<http://www.journeywoman.com>

...and many others listed in your MyStudyAbroad portal.

Returned Student Perspectives: Practical Tips

Everything is very cheap in South Africa! Look up the current exchange rate before you go. I was able to get by the whole time with \$200 in cash.

Bring cash, but not too much, and save it for the African Market.

You have to ask for the receipt (check) and that they won't bring it unless you ask. Also, people don't close the doors completely in the bathroom. Be patient as there are lots of differences from home.

Returned Student Perspectives: Overall Experience

The program was specifically tailored to applying the concepts from the classroom into a real-world environment. The program perfectly met my expectations from the learning objectives laid out.

The best part about this program was getting to be a part of the scientific process and hearing the debate about species or dates or behaviors firsthand. I want to be a professor and this trip gave me a new appreciation for the importance of peer review in research.

I will definitely look out for more opportunities like this, as I didn't even know UW offered such incredible exclusive experiences. It also sparked in me a newfound love for the work done in an excavation and will definitely push me to pursue a similar such experience as a job in the near or distant future.

I learned so much more in this single month than I had in any anthropology class prior. Digging hands-on like an actual anthropologist would every day taught me so much of what it means to research in my field and how the study of humankind is developed and how the truth is found.

This was an incredibly academically rewarding experience that taught me a lot about anthropology and field work. The program instructor was very passionate and knowledgeable in the field and very easy to talk to and was always open to questions and discussion. I also really enjoyed the opportunity to meet with experts in the field and listen to lectures and ask questions. Lastly, I liked the small group dynamic that allowed us to have meaningful discussion that included everyone. This also allowed everyone to get to know each other and create strong friendships.

I think that if you are definitely interested in going into paleoanthropology, this is the perfect trip for you. But if you're not, but this trip sounds interesting, it is still worth going to because you will learn so much and meet amazing people.

Incredible team--Travis Pickering, Andrea Heile, and Matt Caruana--taught us so much and treated us as equals and friends. They were always available and eager to help us grow and learn. There was a perfect balance between excavations and excursions, allowing us to experience all that the country had to offer an anthropology student while still getting the experience of a dig site the actual anthropologist would. Overall, almost every aspect was a strength. I never thought I would be able to experience everything I read in a textbook in person, and I did. Couldn't have asked for more.