

El Camino College Study Abroad Program Student Profiles, 2008 – 2010

El Camino College has offered Study Abroad programs for nearly two decades to a variety of destinations. The purpose of this study is to provide a profile of students who attended recent short-term study abroad programs to determine a) the types of students who typically attend study abroad at ECC, and b) how well study abroad students perform academically relative to non-traveling students. Comparisons to national averages as well as the ECC student body will be included where available and appropriate. Terms and courses included in this analysis are listed in Appendix A.

Student Profile

A demographic profile was created for each country/program along with a combined summary. Depending on the destination, the characteristics of each group varied considerably. The following tables detail this variation. Summary distributions are compared to the entire ECC student body; the difference in representation between the study abroad program(s) and the ECC student body are found in the “SA-ECC” columns.

A total of 217 students participated in Study Abroad at ECC during the six terms of this study (Winter 2008 – Summer 2010). Ten students attended at least 2 trips; summary tables may show this small number of duplicates. Students are profiled in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, home location, high school of origin, educational status, GPA, units earned, and financial aid status.

Gender

Participants in recent study abroad trips were predominantly women (68%), consistent with the national average of about 66% (IIE, 2010). The percentage of women participating is 15 percentage points higher than the student body representation of 53%. Table 2 provides a gender breakout by program showing that some trips served more male students than average. The China trip showed the highest representation of men (49%).

TABLE 1. Overall Gender Composition of Study Abroad Participants (N = 217)

Gender	n	SA %	ECC %	SA – ECC %
Female	148	68%	53%	15%
Male	69	32%	47%	-15%

Note. SA indicates students who study abroad.

TABLE 2. Gender Profile by Country (N = 226)

Term	Country	Female	Male	Total	Female %	SA – ECC %
WI08	Ghana	9	2	11	82%	30%
SU08	Austria, Germany, Italy	22	8	30	73%	21%
SU08	Eastern Europe	24	10	34	71%	19%
WI09	Australia	15	7	22	68%	16%
WI09	Guadalajara, Mexico	13	2	15	87%	35%
SU09	China	18	17	35	51%	-1%
SU09	South Africa	13	8	21	62%	10%
WI10	Costa Rica	17	7	24	71%	19%
SU10	France	22	12	34	65%	13%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>153</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>226</i>		

Note. Data includes some duplication and excludes 1 unknown gender.

Race/Ethnicity

Study abroad participants were less likely on average to be African-American or Latino (Table 3). However, a few destinations were associated with higher participation rates for these two groups (Table 4). The trip to Ghana garnered a much higher rate of Black participants (27%) with China also serving a representative percentage (17%). Trips to Spanish-speaking countries (Costa Rica and Mexico) showed a much higher than average participation rate for Latino students (50% and 40%, respectively). Asian students were most likely to attend the trips to Eastern Europe, China, and Costa Rica (25%-26% of each group). Nationally, white students consist of 59% of all community college students (NCES, 2009) but make up 73% of community college study abroad participants (IIE, 2010).

TABLE 3. Overall Ethnicity Composition of Study Abroad Participants (N = 217)

Race/Ethnicity	n	SA %	ECC %	SA – ECC %
African American	15	7%	17%	-10%
American Indian/Alaskan	3	1%	0%	1%
Asian/Filipino	34	16%	17%	-1%
Latino	57	26%	35%	-8%
Pacific Islander	0	0%	1%	-1%
White Non-Hispanic	78	36%	19%	17%
Two or More Races	3	1%	2%	0%
Unknown/Undeclared	27	12%	10%	3%

TABLE 4. Ethnic Profile by Program (N = 226)

Term	Country	African American	American Indian	Asian	Latino	White	Two or More	Unknown/Undeclared
WI08	Ghana	27%	0%	0%	9%	18%	0%	45%
SU08	Aus., Germ., Italy	3%	3%	20%	20%	43%	0%	10%
SU08	Eastern Europe	3%	0%	26%	9%	51%	0%	11%
WI09	Australia	0%	0%	0%	32%	55%	0%	14%
WI09	Guadalajara, Mex	7%	0%	13%	40%	7%	0%	33%
SU09	China	17%	3%	26%	34%	11%	3%	6%
SU09	South Africa	5%	0%	5%	14%	62%	0%	14%
WI10	Costa Rica	4%	0%	25%	50%	13%	4%	4%
SU10	France	3%	3%	9%	26%	53%	3%	3%

Note. Data includes some duplication. Sums of percentages total 100% by country of destination.

Age

Study abroad participants were slightly younger than the student body, with average and median ages of 27 and 21 compared to 26 and 22 for the ECC student body. Higher rates of participation were found among ages 19-24 and 50 and over (Table 5). Age varied by country destination, with Eastern Europe and South Africa attracting much older groups (Table 6). Australia, Austria/Germany/Italy, and China trips all attracted relatively younger groups of students. In most cases, age groups across the range were much more likely to be female (Table 7). No equivalent national data are available for participant age.

TABLE 5. Overall Age Composition of Study Abroad Participants (N = 221)

Age	n	SA %	ECC %	SA – ECC %
17 or under	2	1%	5%	-4%
18	25	11%	12%	-1%
19-20	74	33%	24%	9%
21-24	64	29%	24%	5%
25-29	18	8%	12%	-4%
30-39	4	2%	11%	-9%
40-49	9	4%	6%	-2%
50-64	18	8%	4%	4%
65+	6	3%	1%	2%
Unknown	1	0%	0%	0%

Note. Data includes some duplication.

TABLE 6. Average and Median Age of ECC Students by Country (N = 226)

Term	Country	N	Average Age	Median Age	SA—ECC
WI08	Ghana	11	28.0	22.0	0
SU08	Aus., Germ., Italy	30	21.5	20.0	-2
SU08	Eastern Europe	34	39.7	29.0	7
WI09	Australia	22	20.5	20.0	-2
WI09	Guadalajara, Mex	15	21.9	21.0	-1
SU09	China	35	21.5	20.0	-2
SU09	South Africa	21	35.9	28.0	6
WI10	Costa Rica	24	22.8	21.0	-1
SU10	France	34	27.7	22.0	0

Note. Data includes some duplication. ECC average and median ages are 26 and 22, respectively.

TABLE 7. Age Distribution by Gender (N = 217)

Age	Female		Male		Total
	N	% of Age Grp	N	% of Age Grp	N
17 or under	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	2
18	19	79.2%	5	20.8%	24
19-20	45	61.6%	28	38.4%	73
21-24	42	65.6%	22	34.4%	64
25-29	12	75.0%	4	25.0%	16
30-39	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	4
40-49	8	88.9%	1	11.1%	9
50-64	15	83.3%	3	16.7%	18
65+	3	50.0%	3	50.0%	6
Unknown					1

Home Location

Potential study abroad program participants can live in any location and need not be previously enrolled on campus. This section examines the home ZIP code of participants to determine how many students are local residents. About 78% of participants came from cities and ZIP codes within the ECC Service Area (7.5-mile radius around the campus). The top source cities were Gardena, Hawthorne, Redondo Beach, and Torrance. Table 8 highlights participation by District location and includes Gardena¹, showing that 65% of participants lived in the District or the neighboring city of Gardena. Over 30% came from the southern part of the district, while other parts of the District sent representative 17% and 21%. Most of the north district students came from Hawthorne. Gardena had the lowest percentage at 11%. Relative to the entire student body, study abroad participants are more likely to come from the southern and

¹ Although Gardena is not part of ECCCD, its proximity adjacent to the campus warrants inclusion in this table.

western parts of the district, although a significant number of participants came from all parts of the district. This pattern persists even if only younger students are included (data not shown).

TABLE 8. Participation by District Location (N = 156)

District Location	N	% Dist.*	ECC %	SA - ECC
Central (North Torrance/Lawndale)	23	17%	16%	1%
East (Gardena)	15	11%	14%	-3%
North (Hawthorne, Inglewood, Lennox, El Segundo)	28	21%	30%	-10%
South (South Torrance)	42	31%	22%	9%
West (Redondo Beach, Manhattan Beach)	27	20%	17%	3%
TOTAL	135	65%**	58%	7%

*Percentage of students in each region out of all participants from the District/Gardena.

**Percentage of students studying abroad who live with District/Gardena boundaries.

High School District of Origin

This study also examined the high school district from which participants originated. With high schools identified for half of the participants, the top “sending” high schools came from Torrance Unified, LAUSD, and Centinela Valley Union High School District. Participants were much more likely to come from the Torrance district than is represented by ECC’s younger student (only students aged 25 and under were included in this analysis).

TABLE 9. Participation by High School District (N = 109)

High School District	N	%	ECC %	SA - ECC
Centinela Valley Union High*	11	10%	12%	-2%
El Segundo Unified	4	4%	1%	2%
Inglewood Unified	1	1%	3%	-2%
Los Angeles Unified (LAUSD)*	25	23%	29%	-6%
Lynwood Unified	1	1%	1%	0%
Manhattan Beach Unified	2	2%	3%	-1%
Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified	6	6%	5%	0%
Redondo Beach Unified	8	7%	6%	1%
Temple City Unified	1	1%	0%	1%
Torrance Unified	50	46%	25%	21%
Total of SA Participants Identified	109	50%	71%	-20%

*Centinela Valley includes Hawthorne, Lawndale & Leuzinger HS. Gardena HS is part of LAUSD.

Educational Status

The educational status of study abroad participants may indicate their current stage on a higher educational path. Students with a “College Degree” are typically older and returning for a second career or educational enrichment. “High school graduates (without college)” are often

traditionally-aged students or students arriving at college after a period of work, military service, or family care. “Not a high school grad” is more often a high school student specially admitted but may also include a minority of students seeking a GED.

Recent study abroad participants were slightly more likely to have college degrees and less likely to be without a high school diploma or equivalent (Table 10). Nearly 75% of participants were high school graduates without a college degree, about the same as the general student body.

TABLE 10. Participation by Education Level (N = 219)

Category	N	%	ECC %	SA - ECC
College Degree	36	16%	14%	3%
HS Grad w/o College	163	74%	75%	-1%
Not a HS Grad	8	4%	9%	-5%
Unknown	12	5%	2%	4%

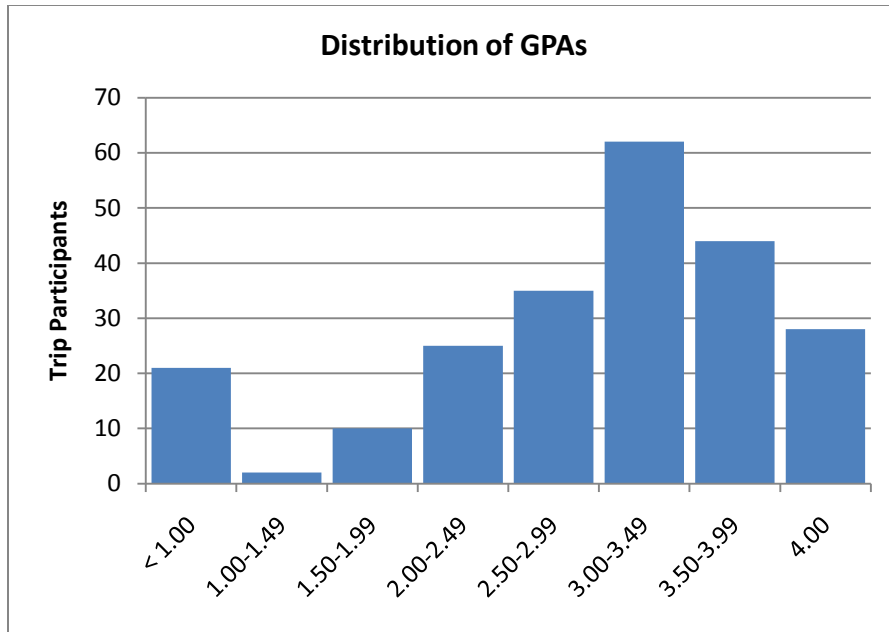
Note. Data includes some duplication.

Grade Point Average

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is an indicator of overall academic performance history. Among participants, highest GPAs were found on the trips to Australia, Eastern Europe, and France (Table 11). The GPAs for students on the China and Ghana trips may have been affected by the high number of withdrawals (discussed below), particularly for the low-unit students. The average college GPA for students during the travel terms included in this study was 2.28; the last column shows that participant GPAs were higher for nearly all the trips.

TABLE 11. Grade Point Average (GPA) by Country (N = 227)

Country	N	Avg GPA	Std Dev	SA – ECC
Australia	22	3.23	0.701	0.95
Austria, Germany, Italy	30	2.95	0.723	0.66
China	35	1.88	1.457	-0.40
Costa Rica	24	3.02	0.507	0.74
Eastern Europe	35	3.35	0.738	1.07
France	34	3.26	0.567	0.98
Ghana	11	2.45	1.054	0.17
Guadalajara, Mexico	15	2.89	0.874	0.61
South Africa	21	2.50	1.679	0.21
<i>Total</i>	227	2.86	1.086	0.58



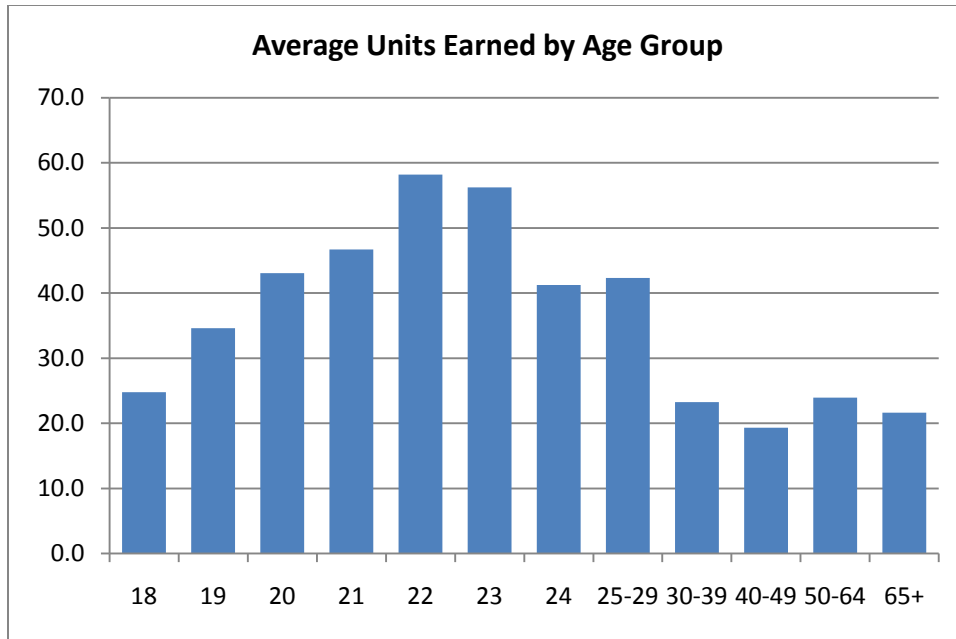
Units Earned at ECC

Total units earned indicates how long students have been associated with El Camino College. Table 12 indicates the average number of units earned by participants by country visited compared to all students enrolled at ECC during typical travel terms (summer/winter). In most cases, trip participants showed more units earned at ECC than the general student body, with the exception of China which had a small number of “excursion-only” participants who had zero units associated with ECC. In a separate analysis (not shown), younger participants aged 20-29 had banked about a semester’s worth of units more than the average ECC students, indicating that younger study abroad participants have long term goals of graduation and transfer.

TABLE 12. Average Units Earned by Country (N = 227)

Country	N	Units Earned	Std Dev	SA - ECC
Australia	22	36.7	17.534	8.1
Austria, Germany, Italy	30	49.6	22.203	21.0
China	35	22.6	23.594	-6.0
Costa Rica	24	41.8	28.943	13.2
Eastern Europe	35	32.9	30.381	4.2
France	34	51.3	31.147	22.6
Ghana	11	31.5	23.700	2.9
Guadalajara, Mexico	15	46.3	28.630	17.7
South Africa	21	32.7	35.450	4.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>227</i>	<i>38.4</i>	<i>28.708</i>	<i>9.7</i>

Note. Data includes some duplication.



Financial Aid

Study abroad opportunities may be perceived as limited to wealthy and middle-class students. A student’s financial aid status can be used to approximate economic class and income levels of study abroad participants and students at large. Table 13 shows the financial aid award status of recent participants along with a comparison to the ECC student body. In general, levels of financial support among participants are fairly similar to the student body, with nearly a third (32%) receiving a BOG fee waiver which typically indicates low-income status.

TABLE 13. Financial Aid Award Status of Participants (N = 219)

Financial Aid Award	N	%	ECC %	SA - ECC
BOG*	69	32%	34%	-2%
Other	3	1%	2%	-1%
<i>Total Receiving FA</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>-3%</i>
Did Not Receive FA	147	67%	64%	-3%

*Board of Governor’s Fee Waiver indicating low-income status.

Note. Data includes some duplication.

Academic Performance

Several academic performance measures were included in this study to determine if study abroad program participation may be associated with greater academic success and goal completion. Measures in the study include course completion (retention) and success, graduation, and transfer to 4-year institutions.

Course Completion and Success

In most cases, study abroad courses had much higher successful course completion (“success”) and retention. Many courses experienced 100% success and retention rates (Table 14). The last column provides a comparison of success rates.

TABLE 14. Course Enrollments, Success, and Retention (Grades = 406)

Term	Course	N	Success	Retention	Success Difference*
WI08 (Ghana)**	ECON-5	10	20%	50%	*
	HDEV-5	5	60%	100%	*
SU08 (Aus., Germ., Italy)	ART-2	24	67%	96%	-11%
	ART-3	22	64%	95%	*
	GEOL-1	22	82%	100%	-7%
	GEOL-3	24	75%	92%	*
SU08 (Eastern Europe)	GEOG-1	14	86%	100%	14%
	GEOG-2	18	94%	100%	*
	GEOG-20ABCD	22	100%	100%	*
WI09 (Australia)	HIST-4	22	100%	100%	*
	POLI-2	22	100%	100%	*
WI09 (Mexico)	ART-7	12	100%	100%	*
	SPAN-1	12	100%	100%	7%
	SPAN-24	5	100%	100%	*
SU09 (China)**	ENGL-1C	14	57%	57%	-17%
	ENGL-25A	5	40%	60%	*
	HIST-14A	13	69%	77%	*
	HIST-37	17	65%	76%	*
SU09 (S. Africa)	GEOG-1	11	100%	100%	46%
	GEOG-5	18	100%	100%	17%
WI10 (Costa Rica)	ENGL-1C	15	100%	100%	13%
	SPAN-21AB	8	100%	100%	*
	SPAN-22AB	4	100%	100%	*
SU10 (France)	ARCH-100	6	67%	83%	*
	ARCH-104	17	82%	88%	*
	FREN-21AB	18	89%	89%	*
	FREN-24	25	96%	100%	*

*The last column represents the study abroad course success rate minus the equivalent course taught in the same term at ECC. Starred courses had no comparable class at ECC that term.

**Courses during both the China and Ghana trips experienced lower enrollment counts and course retention due to a high number of drops both before and after the program started. This may be due to students dropping out after the excursion portion of the China trip, and conflicts with the part-time instructor during the Ghana trip.

Degrees and Certificates Earned

Receiving an Associate’s degree or certificate is an important milestone for younger students, even for those who are intending to transfer to another institution. Annual degrees and certificates were tracked for students in the most recent cohort (09-10 trips) to determine the rate at which study abroad participants earn awards. Only students under the age of 25 were

tracked with a comparison to all younger students enrolled during the same year. Young study abroad participants earn ECC awards at a much higher rate than all ECC students of similar age, with 11% of participants receiving awards in the same year they studied abroad compared to 3% of other younger students (Table 15).

TABLE 15. Degrees Awarded (Students under 25, 2009-10 Awards Only, N = 114)

Award	N	%	ECC %	SA - ECC
Degrees	11	10%	3%	7%
Certificates	2	2%	1%	1%
Total Awards	13	11%	3%	8%

Transfer

Transfer to a four-year institution is a common educational goal for community college students. This section approximates the transfer rate and common destination institutions for participants of recent study abroad programs. Overall, 68 students out of the 217 (31%) transferred or were enrolled at a university in 2010-11. This percentage rises to 37% when only students under 25 years of age are included in the rate, much higher than the three-year College transfer rate of 10%-14%². Table 16 provides the number of transfers to 4-year institutions by country for younger study abroad participants. The highest approximated transfer rates were associated with trips to Eastern Europe, Guadalajara, and Costa Rica—all with over 50% transfer rates. Table 17 details the most popular destination institutions for this younger age group.

TABLE 16. Participants Enrolled at 4-Year Institutions in 2010-11 (Students under 25, N = 167)

Term	Country	N	Transferred	% of N
WI08	Ghana	7	1	14%
SU08	Aus., Germ., Italy	28	11	39%
SU08	Eastern Europe	13	7	54%
WI09	Australia	20	6	30%
WI09	Guadalajara, Mex	13	7	54%
SU09	China	31	11	35%
SU09	South Africa	10	4	40%
WI10	Costa Rica	19	11	58%
SU10	France	26	4	15%

² Note: Different methodologies were used to calculate each rate but would likely not explain the entire gap.

TABLE 17. Top Receiving Institutions in 2010-11 (Students under 25, N = 167)

Institution Name	N
University of California-Los Angeles	14
California State University-Dominguez Hills	13
University of California-Irvine	4
California State University-Los Angeles	3
University of Southern California	2
University of California-Santa Barbara	2
Loyola Marymount University	2
University of California-Santa Cruz	2
California State University-Fullerton	2
University of California-San Diego	2

Conclusion/Recommendations

The aims of this study were to develop a profile of study abroad students at ECC and to track their academic performance. The profile showed that students attending the average trip were more than two thirds female and more likely to be White than any other race or ethnic group. However, individual trips revealed much higher participation among African Americans, Asians, and Latinos for some destinations. Disproportionate attendance by age was found among 19-24 year olds and those aged 50 and over, with some trips serving demonstrably younger or older student populations.

Although participants were more likely to come from Torrance, Redondo Beach and Hawthorne, all areas of the district and Gardena were well represented with the exception of the north part of the district (Inglewood/Lennox, excluding Hawthorne). Similar results were found when high school of origin was examined. In terms of educational level, study abroad participants were similar to other students and were nearly as likely to be low-income and receiving financial aid.

While available academic performance comparisons are limited in this report, the findings suggest that participants are more likely to experience higher academic outcomes than other students. Students are often more successful in their classes and more likely to receive an Associate degree or transfer to a 4-year institution. Since control groups were not employed in this study, only general conclusions should be drawn at this time.

Due to the persistent underrepresentation of some ethnic groups, it was encouraging to see higher rates of participation among African American and Latino students for certain countries. Program planners should consider the expansion of destinations that appear to be more favorable to African American and Latino students. More balanced participation should also broaden the participation across the district, as well. Another encouraging sign is that

participants are almost as likely to be low income as the student body, suggesting that students are being attracted to the program despite financial constraints. The low level of male participation should be studied further to gain insights on this finding common to most study abroad programs.

References

- Institute of International Education. (2010). "Special Reports: Community Colleges, 2004/05-2008/09." *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved on May 16 from <http://www.iie.org/opendoors>.
- National Center for Educational Statistics (2009). Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Fall Enrollment in Colleges and Universities" surveys, 1976 and 1980; and 1990 through 2008 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Fall Enrollment Survey" (IPEDS-EF:90), and Spring 2001 through Spring 2009. Retrieved on May 19, 2011 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_227.asp

Appendix A

Term	Section	Course	Subject	Course Title	Country
WI08	2128	ECON-5	Economics	Fundamentals of Economics	Ghana
WI08	2228	HDEV-5	Human Dev.	Career Planning	Ghana
SU08	1071	GEOG-1	Geography	Physical Elements	Eastern Europe
SU08	1075	GEOG-2	Geography	Cultural Geography	Eastern Europe
SU08	1080	GEOG-20A-D	Geography	Geography Field Studies	Eastern Europe
SU08	1083	GEOL-1	Geology 1	Physical Geology	Austria, Germ, Italy
SU08	1085	GEOL-3	Geology 3	Physical Geology Lab	Austria, Germ, Italy
SU08	5023	ART-2	Art History 2	Hist West:prehist-Gothic	Austria, Germ, Italy
SU08	5024	ART-3	Art History 3	Hist West:Proren-19 Cent	Austria, Germ, Italy
WI09	2227	HIST-4	History	Hist Modern Civilization	Australia
WI09	2617	POLI-2	Political Sci.	Intro to Comparative Politics	Australia
WI09	6915	SPAN-1	Spanish	Elementary Spanish I	Guadalajara, Mex
WI09	6925	SPAN-24	Spanish	Intro Span/Lat Amer Lang	Guadalajara, Mex
WI09	5006	ART-7	Art	Art Hist Mex/Central/S Amer.	Guadalajara, Mex
SU09	2372	HIST-37	History	History of World Religions	China
SU09	2360	HIST-14A	History	Hist Asian Civilizations	China
SU09	6430	ENGL-1C	English	Critical Thinking/Comp	China
SU09	6580	ENGL-25A	English	Creatv Wrtng:intro Fict	China
SU09	1073	GEOG-1	Geography	Physical Elements	South Africa
SU09	1075	GEOG-5	Geography	World Regional Geography	South Africa
WI10	6535	ENGL-1C	English	Critical Thinking/Comp	Costa Rica
WI10	6913	SPAN-3	Spanish	Intermediate Spanish I	Costa Rica
WI10	6921	SPAN-21AB	Spanish	Beg Convrstnl Spanish	Costa Rica
WI10	6922	SPAN-22AB	Spanish	Inter Convrstnl Spanish	Costa Rica
SU10	6724	FREN-24	French	Intro French/Francophne Cult	France
SU10	6721	FREN-21AB	French	Beg Conversational French	France
SU10	7050	ARCH-100	Architecture	Orientation to Architecture	France
SU10	7052	ARCH-104	Architecture	Hist. of Western Architecture	France