



SMITH COLLEGE

Office for International Study

SMITH COLLEGE JUNIOR YEAR IN GENEVA

STUDENT HANDBOOK, 2009-2010

Please remember that the Smith Center in Geneva is closed in July and during the first two weeks of August.

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TENTATIVE ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2009-10

Friday 21 August 2009: Arrival in Geneva

Orientation

Monday 24 August 2009: Orientation classes begin

Friday 11 September 2009: Orientation classes end

Fall Semester

Monday 14 September 2009: Fall classes begin at University of Geneva and the Smith Center

Friday 18 December 2009: Fall classes end

Saturday 19 December 2009 through
Sunday 31 January 2010: Winter vacation

Monday 1 February 2010 through
Friday 19 February 2010: Fall examination period

Spring Semester

Monday 22 February 2010: Spring classes begin at University of Geneva and the Smith Center

Friday 2 April 2010 through
Sunday 11 April 2010: Easter vacation (spring break)

Friday 4 June 2010: Spring classes end

Monday 7 June 2010 through
Friday 25 June 2010: Spring examination period

Do not make travel plans at the end of either semester until you have confirmed the dates of all your oral and written exams with your professors and with the Director. Last minute changes in exam schedules are frequent and, although the official exam period is from 1 to 19 February 2010, exams **may start as early as 4 January 2010** (instead of 1 February 2010). **You** are responsible for knowing about these changes and for being present at all your exams. **No exceptions are made to this program policy.**

Students can stay in their rooms until **13 June 2009** at the latest, unless a final exam is scheduled for after that date, in which case the student has to leave the residence hall no later than two days following the last exam. The Associate Director will assist students who hold summer internships in finding accommodations.

INTRODUCTION

This Student Handbook is intended to guide you as you make the first of many decisions that will shape the kind of experience you will have abroad. Please let the Director know if she can be of further assistance. The opportunity to make your year in Geneva a fulfilling one of academic learning, cultural enrichment, and personal growth is in **your** hands.

A commitment to a year studying away from the United States means increased personal responsibility for your own education and life. The Director is available to help you make informed choices about your academic and personal welfare. In Geneva, the Director will also serve as liaison between Smith College and the University of Geneva and related Swiss authorities. The Director's supervision of the Smith College Junior Year in Geneva extends to the end of the 2009-2010 academic year program in Geneva; neither Smith College nor the Director are responsible for Junior Year Abroad participants during academic year vacations, during the period between a student's last final exam of the winter semester and the official start of the summer semester, nor after a student's last examination at the end of the summer semester.

TRAVEL TO GENEVA

Transatlantic travel

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements to arrive in Geneva on **Friday, 21 August 2009** (preferably, if possible, before 6 PM, Geneva time).

You will proceed from the airport to the Smith College Center, located 16, Boulevard Georges-Favon (see below). The Director and the Associate Director will be at the Center to welcome you. You will immediately be able to get settled in your residence after you arrive at the Smith Center. The following afternoon, we will gather for a general meeting at the Smith Center followed by a group lunch in the old town.

Transportation from the airport

By Taxi

The simplest way to get from the airport to the Smith Center is by taxi. However, this is rather expensive, 40-50 Swiss francs. You can call for a taxi, 00-41-22-331-4133, or you can just catch a cab outside the airport.

By Bus

Information and public transport tickets are available at the Unireso information desk in the Arrivals Hall after you pass through Swiss Customs. Tickets can also be purchased from the ticket machines located at the bus stop and cost CHF 3 (small change required). The bus stop at the Arrivals level is next to the post office. Take the No. 10 bus (leaving every 10 min.) to the city centre. Get off at the stop called "Stand" and you'll see directly in front of you Boulevard Georges-Favon. Turn left off onto Georges-Favon, and continue about two blocks. The Smith Center is opposite the Synagogue. The building has 16 on the window; enter and go to the third floor to find the Smith Center.

By Train

The Airport railway station is located 300 meters from the airport Departure/Arrivals levels. Approximate fare from the airport to Geneva's Cornavin train station is CHF 5 and the travel time is

approximately seven minutes. From Cornavin, take either tram 16 (direction Moillesulaz) or tram 13 (direction Palettes) and get off at "Stand," and continue on foot about one block.

Arrival at the Smith Center

Pack the following items so that they are easily accessible at the airport and when you arrive at the Smith Center.

1. About CHF 50, in small bills, for incidental expenses and travel to the Smith Center. You can change money at the airport upon arrival.
2. One color photocopy of the page in your passport with your picture, birth date, etc.; and one color photocopy of the page in your passport containing your visa.
3. Six passport photos, all in the same pose, with a blank or light background, front view only. These pictures may be in black and white. Please write your name on the back of each photo with a ballpoint pen. Print your last name first, in CAPITAL LETTERS, then your first name in lower case letters, using no abbreviations or nicknames.

When you arrive at the Smith Center, you will receive general information on Geneva, cash for your first meals, your bus pass, cell phone and room keys. You will then proceed to your residence.

PACKING

Please do not burden yourself with excessive luggage. At most, you should bring two medium-sized suitcases, a small overnight bag, and a bag with your laptop computer if you are bring one. You must be able to carry everything by yourself on to the bus or train.

Pack important medications, basic toiletries, a small towel, and a change of clothing in your carry-on, in case your luggage gets lost en route to Geneva.

If you bring a laptop, you must carry it with you! Do not have it sent via the U.S. Post Office, FedEx, or any other such agency. Sending a laptop computer will inevitably lead to the payment of import fees that can reach the sum of \$1000. Include your start-up disks in your laptop case, just in case. Be sure to keep your laptop computer with you at all times, especially at security checkpoints.

Your luggage should be clearly labeled both inside and out. Make sure that you have all the tracking numbers of your luggage with you. If your luggage is lost upon arrival, give the airplane company the address and the phone number of the Smith Center in Geneva.

Items to bring with you

A laptop computer with WIFI ready and plug adaptor/converter, an alarm clock, **towel(s)** (please note that sheets, blankets, pillows, and beddings in general are provided by the student residencies, but not towels), iPod, etc. You can buy a hair dryer in Geneva for about \$20. Do not bring a large French-English dictionary. It is better to buy a good one in Geneva or use those in the Smith Center library. Guidebooks and information on European youth hostels are also available at the Center.

Shipping Items to Geneva

If you must ship things to Geneva, the U.S. Post Office provides a safe and comparatively inexpensive and easy way to have things sent to you from the USA. Most of the private air-freight companies that pick up items at home and send them to Europe may do so rapidly, but once your

packages arrive in Geneva you **may** have to pick them up **yourself** at the freight customs services at the airport—something that may cause major delays.

You can receive mail, including packages, at the Smith Center or at your residence. In either case, be sure that nothing arrives before the start of the program in late August. Any packages that arrive at the Smith Center **in July or the first two weeks of August**, when the office is closed, will be returned to you in the USA. Any mail sent to you at the Smith Center must be address with your name **followed by “Smith College”**, or else it will be returned to the sender by the post office or the shipping company.

Whatever method you choose for sending your belongings, be sure that they are labeled as used, personal effects for your own use ("effets personnels, usagés, aucune valeur marchande") to avoid paying substantial customs duties. Experience suggests that it may be best to declare only \$1 as the value of the contents of the box. If you insure the contents for more than this amount, Swiss customs authorities may impose a hefty tax.

MONEY

The comprehensive fee paid to Smith College includes:

- residence hall room rental from Friday, August 21, 2009 through Saturday, June 13, 2010, including all vacations
- board allowance for meals of CHF 31 per day, during orientation and when classes are in session
- all tuition fees, not including special fees for music or art classes
- use of a cell phone
- all group expenses (train, hotel, cultural events) during orientation and on other scheduled program excursions
- an allocation for cultural activities (theatre, dance, museums, films) on a reimbursement basis
- medical evacuation and repatriation insurance

Students must budget for the following additional costs: international airfare, books and course materials, the cost of phone calls (phones are provided by the program), required medical insurance, and of course, all personal costs such as toiletries, dining out and personal travel.

Most students report they are able to live comfortably in Geneva on the stipend provided by cooking for themselves, but be aware that Geneva is an expensive city. Because personal tastes vary so widely, it is hard to estimate how much you might spend. Similarly, expenses for travel during vacations will also vary based on taste, destination, etc. Students are advised to spend carefully in their first months in Geneva, until they have a good sense of their own costs in Geneva. For planning travel expenses, extensive research is recommended. Less expensive transportation options include budget airlines or travel with organized Swiss student vacation groups.

Financial Aid from Smith: Students who normally receive work study funding in their financial aid package from Smith will be offered the option of accepting those funds as a loan during their year abroad.

ACCESSING FUNDS

ATM Cards: The easiest way to access funds from home is an ATM card. ATMs are plentiful in Geneva, but be sure to know your PIN number (not the letters) and to notify your bank before your departure, so that they know you will be making withdrawals from overseas. Banks usually provide the best exchange rate, though you may be assessed fees by both banks. You may wish to make fewer, large withdrawals instead of frequent, small withdrawals to save on bank fees.

Travelers' Checks: Traveler's checks may also be useful. They can be cashed at currency exchange offices (the Migros currency exchange office in the center of Geneva usually gives a better rate than the banks do) or at a bank. If you cash travelers' checks in the office of issuing companies (American Express, Thomas Cook, etc.) there is no commission, but these offices are not always conveniently located. However, travelers' checks are useful as a source of emergency or back-up funds and if you plan to travel in countries where ATM machines may not yet be widely available.

Credit Cards: A credit card is another good source of back-up funds. Few establishments take American Express cards, but MasterCard and Visa are more widely accepted. You should also notify your credit card company that you will be using it abroad. In an emergency, you could obtain a cash advance with a credit card (and a PIN) from a teller's window in a bank or from an ATM machine. However, this way of obtaining funds can be extremely expensive; interest is charged from the moment of withdrawal. Be sure you have a plan for paying your credit card bills.

Postal Office Accounts: Past students also recommend opening a Swiss Post Office savings account. You do not need money to open an account, and all deposits must be made in cash. This is useful for depositing your monthly stipend, or large cash withdrawals from your US bank account. Your funds can be accessed from any Swiss post office.

You may also wish to give financial power of attorney to a family member or close friend, to allow them to act on your behalf in financial matters. Inquire at your bank about their procedures. You may also wish to give someone your power of attorney to handle your Smith financial aid matters. Inquire with Smith Student Financial Services if you have questions.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

If you regularly take any kind of prescribed medicine, carry a prescription written in generic terms with you. If possible, take along a sufficient supply of such medications to cover your entire stay in Geneva. Take along a second pair of glasses or contact lenses and a copy of your prescription.

Visit your doctors and dentist for routine appointments before you go. If you have any specific health needs, bring with you a copy of your medical history and sign a release with your doctor or with health services at Smith College in case you need to have your records sent to your doctor in Geneva.

The Associate Director, Claire Ventura, maintains a list of doctors, both general practitioners and specialists, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, and dentists from whom students have received good care in the past. In general, Geneva health care is first-rate, but it is more expensive than in the United States. A visit with a general practitioner will cost about CHF 130; a visit with a specialist,

from CHF 130 to CHF 300. Gallagher -Koster will reimburse your medical expenses at 100% (with some limits). See the policy information for details.

INSURANCE

Smith student health insurance plan: Smith College policy requires that all program participants on the JYA programs enroll in the Smith College student health insurance plan. **No waiver is possible.** The fee for the health insurance plan is not included in the Smith comprehensive fee.

Program coverage is from August 15, 2009 to August 14, 2010. Policy document will be provided as soon as they are available.

Questions about health insurance may be directed to Student Financial Services, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063, telephone (413) 585-2539, fax (413) 585-2566, e-mail sfs@smith.edu

Travel Assistance, Medical Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance: This is provided at no cost to all participants on the Smith JYA program. Coverage is not valid when students are studying in his or her country of origin. Students will receive this information and wallet card in their pre-departure packets.

Personal Insurance: Neither Smith College, nor the Junior Year Abroad Program in Geneva, nor the Director can accept responsibility for personal injury or for damage to, or loss of, personal property. If you want liability, property, or other personal insurance, please arrange coverage with your insurance agent before leaving the USA.

LIVING IN GENEVA

Housing

The benefits of study abroad come not only from the academic program but also from living in a European context and, in Geneva, by coming to know students from many countries.

Adapting to daily life abroad is not always easy; it requires a certain degree of diplomacy and self-discipline, as well as a sense of humor. You should not anticipate a smooth, predictable continuation of your life in the US; instead, you will need to make changes in habits and patterns of everyday living that may seem trying at first. If you meet these challenges with good grace and curiosity, the reward is invaluable insight into other ways of thinking and living in another culture.

In Geneva, students live in international student residence halls. The Director and Associate Director make every effort to accommodate your preferences, but, inevitably, they are not able to give all students their first choice. The more flexible you can be, the more likely it is that you will be happy with your living situation. See the housing form for a description of the various student housing options available. Student residence hall rooms are available during Christmas, Easter, and other vacations.

Dining

Most students find it most economical to cook for themselves. Each apartment has a kitchen with some cooking utensils and dishes, though you may want to purchase a few things. It's a good idea to

learn some French vocabulary for food items and shopping, before you leave home. And bring along your favorite stove-top recipes.

Telephones

In Geneva, you will receive a basic cell phone for the year, with a SIM card that you can refill as needed. Sending text messages is very inexpensive, and within Switzerland, you are charged only for outgoing calls. It is not recommended that you use your cell phone to call the US. Instead, purchase inexpensive international calling cards. There are no landlines in your room or apartment. There is a landline available for student use in the Smith Center. Students are asked to keep track of their usage and reimburse the program.

Internships

The Geneva program encourages students to participate in internships during their year abroad, and to profit from exposure to the professional work environment as a means of connecting academic interests to possible careers. Typically, students work one to two days a week during the academic year. Although the program cannot guarantee internships, most past participants who desired to do an internship were successful in doing so. The Director and the Associate Director, along with a former civil servant with many years experience working for an international organization in Geneva, actively assist students in finding an internship suited to their needs and interests.

Internships are not limited to international organizations. Students have also interned at art galleries, museums, local religious organizations, and elsewhere. In addition, for biology students, there is the possibility of doing a research internship at the botanical gardens.

The Smith Center

The Smith Center houses the office of the Associate Director and the Director, a classroom, a study space with computer equipment, a library, and a small kitchenette. Smith courses meet at the Center, and students often study in the Center between classes, or in the evenings. Students are also welcome to use the kitchenette to make tea or coffee. Students receive a key to the Smith Center and can use it at anytime.

Libraries

The Smith Center has a small lending library of about 2000 volumes, including an array of dictionaries and grammar books. There are also several libraries at the University of Geneva, as well as in the various institutes and international organizations. During the Orientation Session, you will receive a library card from the University of Geneva that gives you access to all the libraries in Geneva.

Computing Facilities in Geneva

The Smith Center has three PCs with internet access for student use, that are networked with a laser printer, a scanner, and laptop connections. Students residence halls are equipped with high speed internet connection. The city of Geneva has wireless as well, so a laptop computer that is WIFI enabled is very useful.

In addition, there are University Computer Centers (*salles d'informatique*) which are open during most of the week but not on Sundays. Laptop connections are also available in some university libraries. The United Nations Library also has a Computer Center with internet connection, but it is not available on weekends.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The Smith College Junior Year in Geneva offers you the opportunity to be an international student at the University of Geneva and its related graduate institutes. While Smith College maintains a Center in Geneva, the facilities of the Center are intended to help students bridge the gap between American and European social and academic cultures, not to simulate the environment of an American campus.

Be warned: the European system of university education is much different from that of the USA. To feel comfortable and be successful at the University of Geneva you will need to be self-sufficient, resourceful, motivated, and capable of living and studying independently. You will also need a good command of the French language, both oral and written.

The Language Pledge

By accepting the offer to study in Geneva under the auspices of Smith College, you have made a commitment to speak French at the Smith Center and during all group activities. Whatever your own attitude may be towards the pledge, you should honor those who wish to abide by it by abiding by it yourself.

ORIENTATION IN GENEVA August 24 – September 11, 2009

The Orientation Session is a highly intensive session, with classes and other events five days a week. You must be prepared from the beginning to immerse yourself in these three-week courses.

All students will take classes in French oral and written expression. Students will also choose between a course on Swiss and Geneva history and a course on Francophone Swiss literature. All orientation classes include brief quizzes, short papers, exercises, and exams. During the orientation, there will be also cultural excursions, discussions, and visits in Geneva and the surrounding area. These excursions, discussions, and visits are part of the academic program and attendance is mandatory. Students earn 2 credits for satisfactory completion of the orientation program.

Informational sessions on the particularities of the Swiss university system, cultural life in Geneva, and internships will be organized by the Director and the Associate Director during the three-week orientation in Geneva.

Also during orientation, the Director will meet individually with students to discuss orientation classes, academic-year classes, issues regarding university life in Geneva, and any other concerns you might have during your early weeks in Geneva.

There will be no official vacation break between the end of the orientation and the beginning of the regular academic year.

ACADEMIC YEAR IN GENEVA

Fall Semester: 14 September – 19 February

Spring Semester: 22 February – 25 June

Normal Course Load

Students normally earn 16 Smith credits each semester in Geneva. Students are required to take French language at the Smith Center each semester (4 credits), and the fall History of International Organizations courses (4 credits). In the spring, students may elect to take the Internship Practicum course. In each semester, the remainder of the course load is made up of 2 to 6 courses (depending on the credit weight for each course) at the University or in one of the Institutes (for a combined total of 8-12 Smith credits).

SMITH COURSES

French Language

These courses, taught by native French speakers, provide a continuous language support throughout the year to the students and are tailored to meet the language needs of the students in the group. These courses also help exempt Smith JYA students from the rigorous language screening that all other non-native French speakers are submitted to by the University of Geneva.

Fall semester: In the first semester all students must take the “*Expression orale*” and “*Expression écrite*” courses at the Smith Center. Together, these courses meet for a total of three hours per week and are the equivalent of French 300 at Smith College. 4 credits.

Spring semester: French courses offered in the spring semester may vary. In the past they have included Stylistics, Theatre and Diction, Translation, Culture in Geneva, and Composition. Again, these courses are tailored to meet the language needs of the students in the group.

4 credits

History of International Organizations and Cooperation

This course is taught in English and in French in the fall semester. It examines the origins of international organizations and provides insight into the ways in which cooperation, or lack thereof, within the framework of international organizations, has had an impact on a large scale over the course of the European history in the 20th century. The international aspect of Geneva and why this Swiss city became the home of the most important international organizations and NGOs is also discussed. The course is composed of a series of lectures, guest lectures, readings, discussion meetings with a T.A., and site visits to prominent organizations in Geneva.

Fall, 4 credits

Practicum in International Organizations

Students may elect to complete this spring semester independent study course in conjunction with an internship. Students choose a research topic related to the organization where they are interning, and meet regularly with an instructor who is a specialist that area. Students produce a 20-page research paper at the end of the term.

Spring, 4 credits

UNIVERSITY COURSES

University of Geneva

The University of Geneva is a French-speaking university and program participants enroll in regular courses. All program participants are enrolled at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences of the University of Geneva, and can take courses and seminars in the other faculties, and at institutes and schools including the *Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement* (IHEID), the *Institut Européen de l'Université de Genève*, the *Ecole de traduction et interprétation*, and the *Ecole de langue et civilisation françaises*. Some courses and seminars are taught in English at the associated institutes.

Please note the following:

- Not all seminars and courses are open to Smith program participants.
- Smith program participants may enroll only in non-laboratory science courses, due to a shortage of lab space at the University.
- Smith program participants may enroll in foreign language literature courses, but Smith College does not grant credit for beginning study of a foreign language abroad.
- Smith program participants normally enroll in no more than one graduate course per semester.
- Smith program participants normally enroll in no more than one course taught in English per semester.

Because the various academic catalogues of the University of Geneva are not finalized before the beginning of the year, you will need to wait until arrival in Geneva to set up your final course program in consultation with the program Director. It is important to discuss a tentative course program with your major academic adviser at your home institution before your departure. (For that, you may consult last year's course catalogues, available at the university website, www.unige.ch)

Examinations

Most courses at the University of Geneva and its associated Institutes are semester-long, with exams held in January/February and in June. Other courses are year-long. If you are enrolled in a year-long course, Smith College will ask your professor to provide a grade at the end of the fall semester, based on tests, reading reports, papers, class discussions, or other work that you may have done. Regular University examinations, conducted by the professors who teach the courses, are often oral exams of varying length; they are given in the language of the course. They may cover any subject touched upon during the course.

Do not make travel plans for the end of either semester until you have confirmed the dates of all your oral and written exams with your professors and with the Director. Last minute changes in exam schedules are frequent; you are responsible for knowing about these changes and for being present at all your exams. No exceptions are made to this program policy.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Credit

Students in the Smith Junior Year in Geneva program fulfill their requirements by satisfactorily completing their work in courses and seminars at the University of Geneva and its related institutes

for a total of 32 credits, plus two credits for the orientation. In exceptional cases, and only with the permission of both the Director and the Associate Dean for International Study, students may earn more credits for a year in the Geneva program.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes and exams as scheduled and may be excused from class only by permission of the Director. Classes are held Monday through Friday. Unless there are group excursions planned, students are generally free to travel on Saturdays and Sundays. Students may not begin official vacations early or extend them beyond the end date.

Grades

Grades earned in Geneva will be recorded on Smith College transcripts as regular Smith College grades, and they will count toward calculation of the GPA, Latin Honors, and Phi Beta Kappa membership. For the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading option, please consult the Smith College Catalogue (p. 48-49). (Other colleges and universities may treat study abroad grades differently. Please consult with your home institution.)

The Swiss university system grades on a scale of 1-6, which converts to Smith grades as follows:

<u>Swiss grade</u>	<u>Smith grade</u>	<u>Swiss grade</u>	<u>Smith grade</u>
6 - 5.50	A	3.50 - 3.25	C
5.25 - 5	A-	3	C-
4.75	B+	2.75	D+
4.50 - 4.25	B	2.50	D
4	B-	2.25	D-
3.75	C+	Below 2.25	E

Smith Policies: All Smith College policies published in the Smith Bulletin apply unless otherwise stated in this handbook.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

The Smith College Honor Code is in effect in Geneva. The Smith College community at home and abroad maintains that any evasion of the spirit of the Academic Honor System is a violation of the Academic Honor Code.

In essence, the Honor Code means that students are intellectually honest. Students may seek the advice of a professor regarding written work and ask the assistance of native speakers about **specific grammatical problems**. The work submitted must, however, be the student’s own work and may not be written, translated, revised, or rewritten by anyone else. Students are strongly advised to follow the format suggested by each faculty member when quoting from secondary sources.

Some examples of specific infractions of the Honor Code particularly relevant to JYA include:

- submission of the same paper by more than one students or for more than one course without the specific prior approval of the Director and the professors and/or tutors involved;

- unauthorized or unacknowledged use of outside sources, including information from websites, computer disks, secondary materials, or another student's materials;
- unauthorized giving or receiving of information during any type of quiz or examination;
- failure to sign out library materials, removing reserve or reference materials from the Smith Center library or other libraries, marking or otherwise defacing library materials, taking out library materials for persons who are not members of the Junior Year program;
- use of language translations or published notes in the preparation of coursework without the specific permission of the instructor. Unless otherwise indicated, works assigned in a specific language may not be read in translation.

A student who is in doubt concerning a practice should consult with the Director.

Procedures for reporting suspected infractions of the Honor Code are the same as on the campus in Northampton, except that the suspected infraction should be reported to the Director of the program, who will report any violations to the Dean of the College. The Smith College community maintains that any disregard or violation of the spirit of the Academic Honor System is a violation of the Academic Honor Code. The preceding regulations, requirements, and the Academic Honor Code apply to **all students** on the Smith College Junior Year Program.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

International Student Identity Card

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) provides some discounts on travel and admission to museums and other sights. You can apply in person at any STA Travel office. There is a STA Travel office at 44 Main Street in Amherst (across from the Town Hall). To obtain a card, go to STA Travel (call 413-256-1261) with a passport photo (or you can have your picture taken there) and your student ID (the cost for the card is \$22). ISIC cards are also available at the Center for International Studies (CIS), located at 25 New South St. in Northampton.

Eurailpass

The student Eurail Youthpass (for persons under 25 years of age) is recommended for extended travel and **must** be purchased in the USA. It is for unlimited mileage, second class, and at present costs about \$500 for fifteen days of travel during a period of two months. A friend or family member may buy the pass in the United States and mail it to you in Switzerland once you know your travel plans. For further information on Eurail Youthpasses, check out this website, www.eurorailways.com

Preparing Yourself

Start right now: Speak French with your friends. Don't be afraid to make mistakes! If you concentrate on communicating now, you can get it right later. Meanwhile, you will be more at ease and confident. Your ability to enjoy the full scope of life in Geneva will depend in large part on your ability to express your ideas and your personality in French.

Expose yourself to as much French as possible, both now and throughout the summer. Read French or Swiss novels, newspapers and magazines; listen to French music; go to French movies or rent French videos, visit websites in French.

Check out the following websites:

www.letemps.ch (one of the best French-Swiss newspapers)

www.tribunedegeneve.com (a local Geneva newspaper)

www.lemonde.fr (French equivalent to the NY Times)

Let your summer readings contribute to your knowledge of Europe and also of your own country, about which you will be asked many questions in the "ambassadorial" role you will be playing as an American student abroad. Here is a list of few recent books on Switzerland and Geneva in order to better understand the culture and the history of your future environment:

--Georges Andrey, *L'Histoire de la Suisse pour les Nuls*. Editions Générales First, 2007.

--Jean-Jacques Bouquet, *Histoire de la Suisse*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, «Que sais-je?» 2007.

--Mavis Cuinard [a Mount Holyoke Alumna], *Petit Guide de la Suisse Insolite. Made in Switzerland*. Geneva: Metropolis, 2007.

--Vincent Golay et Mix & Remix, *Institutions Politiques Suisses*. Editions LEP, 2006.

--Cyril Jost, Vincent Kucholl, Mix & Remix, *Economie Suisse*. Editions LEP, 2007.

--Joëlle Kuntz, *L'Histoire de la Suisse en un Clin d'œil*. Editions Zoé, 2007.

--Bertrand Lévy, *Le Voyage à Genève*. Geneva: Metropolis, 1994.

--Bertrand Lévy, *Le Goût de Genève*. Paris: Mercure de France, 2006.

--Grégoire Nappey, Mix & Remix, *Histoire Suisse*. Editions LEP: 2007.

--Rosa Regas, *Genève, Portrait de Ville par une Méditerranéenne*. Geneva: Metropolis, 1997.

Prepare yourself mentally for a year of exploration, adjustment, and insights learned through (at times, difficult) experience. Practice keeping an open mind; go prepared to explore another environment. You are going to Geneva primarily to study, but your rewards will have less to do with credits and grades (which are tangible and important now) than they will with cultural enrichment and personal growth (which are intangible and important for life).

The opportunity to spend a year abroad is the opportunity to explore another culture. Look around, listen, think, and ward off the spell of received opinion. Try to put your own habits and preferences (for food and for everything else) into perspective. If you think you are going to be able to transport to Switzerland your own comfortable world, and if that is what you want to do, then you may be disappointed and unhappy. If you know that you want to discover new ways of living and learning, then you will be fulfilled.

Please ask your parents to read this handbook, and leave a copy with them at home; bring another copy with you when you come to Switzerland. If your parents wish to visit you in Switzerland, you may want to suggest to them not to come during the first two months of the program when you will be very busy with orientation and the beginning of the academic year.

Have a wonderful year in Geneva! And remember that the Director and the Associate Director will always be there to help you out, to give you advice and suggestions, and to be sure that you are taking advantage of all the assets of Geneva.