



PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Office of International Programs and Services

Tel: 914.251.6032

E-mail: study.abroad@purchase.edu

FOR COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AND APPLICATIONS VISIT

purchase.abroadoffice.net/shortterm.html

ACADEMIC CONTENT

Christopher Robbins

christopher.robbins@purchase.edu

Assistant Professor of Art+Design (Sculpture/ 3D)

COVER PHOTO BY

Christopher Robbins

PHOTOS BY

Christopher Robbins and Bio Noel



Purchase College

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

International Programs and Services
Student Services Bldg., Room 212

Purchase College
State University of New York
735 Anderson Hill Road
Purchase, NY 10577



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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

BENIN WEST AFRICA

WINTER PROGRAM

Blacksmithing and Build your own Forge!





PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Purchase College, SUNY conducts a three-week winter program in Benin, West Africa. Students will work with a variety of West African artisans to build their own, functional forge out of readily available materials (mud, sticks, and animal hide), and will learn how to use this forge to fashion their own tools and sculptures. They will also participate in a number of cultural and historical workshops and field trips to give them a well-rounded understanding of the historical and cultural context of West Africa. Students spend winter holidays at home in the US, and then head to Africa to celebrate the New Year and begin their workshops!

LOCATION

The program is located in Toucountouna, in the heart of the Atacora mountains in Northwestern Benin, a region of natural beauty known for its waterfalls, mountain-ranges, baobab-trees, "tata somba" mud huts, and traditional ceremonies.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students will live together with a large host family within a group of houses. Breakfast and dinner are taken with the host family. Toucountouna is located in a rural village that only recently received electricity and running water, so students should expect to adapt to a different level of comfort than in the USA, with no Internet, and limited access to electricity for charging devices.

CLASSES & ACTIVITIES

The course offers four credits earned over 3 weeks in January. Benin is a French-speaking country, so although no experience in either blacksmithing or French is required for this course, this will be a unique opportunity for students to build their own forge, learn how to use it for West African blacksmithing, and develop language skills through an intense immersion experience. Students will be living in rural West Africa, eating meals cooked over a fire, on a mud-brick oven, quite often working without electricity or running water. They will work with a variety

of Artisans, and visit sites of historic and cultural importance, including the "Slave's Gate" of Ouidah, in Benin, the port through which countless slaves coming to the U.S. passed. They will learn the reality of Voudoun or animistic religions still blossoming alongside Christianity and Islam in West Africa, outside the Hollywood hype of "Voodoo" dolls and fetishism.

COST

Please refer to the Benin program website (purchase.abroadoffice.net/shortterm.html) for program costs. All costs are subject to change. A non-refundable deposit is due within two weeks of acceptance. Students should plan to bring additional spending money for some meals, as well as for miscellaneous personal expenses. International health insurance is required and available through SUNY.

APPLICATION

A complete application includes:

1. Online application via purchase.abroadoffice.net/shortterm.html
2. Recommendation Letter or Confidential Reference Form (may be mailed separately)
3. Personal Statement
4. Official Transcripts (*Non-Purchase College students*)
Unofficial Transcripts (*Purchase College students*)

DEADLINE: October 1st

Submit all materials via email as an attachment to the Office of International Programs and Services, study.abroad@purchase.edu.