Program: University of Cape Town Exchange, Fall

Lenai’s Majors: Psychology; Legal Studies

Academic Life: I took three classes while I was in Cape Town: Philosophy of Race; Social Psychology and Intergroup Relations; and Foreign Policy Analysis. Overall, my classes were challenging but also very interesting and engaging. Interacting with students from various African countries who are going down the same career path was invaluable to my academic and professional experience.

Housing: I lived in a house with five other international students from America, Norway, Denmark, and Mexico. We lived in Rondebosch, about a 25-minute walk from campus, and a 7-minute walk to the Jammie stop (the free bus to UCT).

Home Away from Home: Cape Town is a huge place, but it came to feel really small. I became accustomed to getting around, I had cafes I would regularly study at, restaurants I visited, and favorite taxi drivers who I would call if I needed a ride. Most of all, the people I met there made it feel like home, and made it so hard to leave.

Difference and Identity: The poverty was something which struck me the most. I was used to seeing homeless people on campus in Wisconsin, but the amount of homelessness in Cape Town was something I never really got used to. I grew up in a lower-middle class family, and it didn’t take me long to realize that in South Africa, I was viewed as rich. There is no middle class in South Africa. People are either poor or rich.

Tips for Future Students: When you get there, interact with as many people as you possibly can. It’s easy to stay within a group of Americans because it feels comfortable, but I met so many people from different parts of the world who are really close friends now.

“The only bad part about going to Cape Town was having to leave it.”

Lenai at the top of Table Mountain, overlooking Cape Town.