Program: University of Cape Town Exchange, Spring

Tim’s Major: Biology

Academic Life: The University of Cape Town (UCT) offered me a diverse and rigorous educational experience. I took two classes at the university while simultaneously taking a 3 credit research class at UW-Madison. The classes expanded my view of the world, for they sought to integrate course material into a South African context.

Home Away from Home: I lived in a house with one other American (from Michigan), a Canadian, three Norwegians, and an English roommate. All of them were great, and we all got along, kind of like a giant international family. I had the privilege of befriending many locals, and moreover, was able to demonstrate my talents in a way that I had not expected. Through learning local recipes and cooking for many people, I recognized that my culinary skills completely developed from the country’s spices and herbs. Also, after spending a few weeks at UCT, I began to accept it as my home school.

First Impressions: I was amazed to step into 85 degree paradise. The people too were warm, and everyone I met that first day was incredibly friendly and helpful. Cape Town’s beauty also struck me. Although you can see good images depicting the natural and cosmopolitan splendor of the city, it was not until I stepped on to Cape Town soil that I truly appreciated the beauty.

Field Research Abroad: The perspective you gain will place more tools in your box. My fieldwork project sought to see how South Africans used religion to speak to contemporary issues such as medicine and community building. Prior to coming to Cape Town, I did not understand how xenophobia could affect not only foreigners, but domestic citizens as well. Working in areas outside of the USA really shows you how reality can completely take a different form for others.

Surf’s up from South Africa!

Tim catching some waves in his free time.

“I went from telling people I was an exchange student from America, to an undergraduate at UCT.”