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### Study Abroad Office

Principia College

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[www.principia.edu/abroads](http://www.principia.edu/abroads)

# Malawi Study Abroad

## *Navigating Urban-Rural Divides*

### **Program Description**

Studying abroad in the “Warm Heart of Africa” is an exciting opportunity to grow personally and as a global citizen. You may have never considered visiting Malawi, but don’t sleep on this fascinating country! Malawi’s landscapes, including hills, forests, and Lake Malawi, are a beautiful backdrop in which to engage with a vibrant culture, expand your worldview, gain new appreciation for diverse ways of living and being in the world, and deepen your understanding of global issues.

Academically, you will explore the opportunities and challenges that come with rapid urbanization in one of the world’s most rural countries, and the economic, political, social, and cultural differences between rural and urban areas in a developing country context. Exploring these issues will take us to both urban and rural areas in several regions of this beautiful country. The group will meet with government and community leaders, do some field research with Malawian university students, and experience natural and wildlife attractions.

Studying abroad in Malawi is an experiential learning opportunity that will help you develop your intercultural skills, your empathy, your confidence, your independence, your adaptability, and will support your growth as a thoughtful and engaged global citizen.

This program is open to all students and all majors.



# Academics

A total of 8 semester hours of credit will be earned with this program: 3 SH during Spring 2026, 4 SH during Summer 2026, and 1 SH during Fall 2026. Final grades for all courses will be determined by the program faculty.

## Spring Semester 2026 (3 SH)

### **POLS 265: Contemporary Issues: Comparative Urban-Rural Politics**

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Andrews

SH: 3

Attribute: TBD

*Focuses on one or more current political issues. Designed to deepen the student's previous political studies. May focus on either domestic or international topics. The title will be extended to describe the current topic. May be taken more than once provided the topics differ. This course will focus on urban-rural divides in politics, with emphasis on comparing the United States and Malawi.*

## Summer Break 2026 (4 SH)

### **SPST 285: Country Studies: Malawi**

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Andrews

SH: 2

Attribute: None

*Offered only in association with Principia abroad programs, this course provides an interdisciplinary survey of contemporary issues in the destination country or countries. These issues may include geography, cultural history, politics, economics, religion, foreign relations, environment, the arts, etc. May be taken more than once if associated with different abroads.*

### **ECON 225: Special Topics: Economics of Urbanization**

Instructor: Dr. Matthew Cocks

SH: 2

Attribute: None

*This course focuses on urban economics within the developing context. Topics covered include urbanization trends, urban growth theory, patterns of development, development laws and policy, and critical issues in urban development.*

## Fall Semester 2026 (1 SH)

### **SPST 281: Reentry Seminar: Malawi**

Instructors: Dr. Sarah Andrews and Dr. Matthew Cocks

SH: 1

Attribute: None

*Taught on campus fall semester 2026, this required reentry seminar is an opportunity for students to articulate the personal and academic learning gained from their study abroad experience. Students share their growth and experiences through reflection and writing assignments, directly linked to the Study Abroad Office learning outcomes, of intercultural competence and multicultural professional development, and create a community presentation.*







## ***Preliminary Itinerary***

The program will run from approximately May 18 to June 15, 2026.

The study abroad will start in Lilongwe, Malawi's capital. In Lilongwe, we will get acclimated to Malawi and visit various political, cultural, historical stakeholders and sites based in the capital.

From Lilongwe, we will travel to Blantyre, a city in southern Malawi. We will visit important stakeholders and sites in Blantyre. Students will also conduct research analyzing various issues in Blantyre and surrounding rural communities.

After Blantyre, we will visit Zomba, the former colonial capital of Malawi. The group will then travel to Liwonde National Park, giving us the opportunity to see the animals that reside there and to explore issues related to tourism and conservation.

The program will end with a couple days for reflection and wrap-up at beautiful Lake Malawi.

## ***Program Staff***

This program is directed by Dr. Sarah Andrews and Dr. Matthew Cocks.

Dr. Sarah Andrews is Associate Professor of Political Science. She has spent three years living on the African continent, first as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Burkina Faso and then while conducting a year of field research for her dissertation in Burkina Faso and Malawi. Since spending five months in Malawi for research, she has since returned to Malawi many times. She also directed the Malawi Abroad in summer 2023. Dr. Andrews holds a BA from Principia College and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Virginia, with a regional focus on Africa.

Dr. Matthew Cocks is an Assistant Professor of Economics at Principia. Previous to joining the college he taught urban studies at two universities—Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University in Suzhou, China and the University of Birmingham, UK. His research has primarily focused on the transformation of cities over time and urban economic development strategies. Studying these topics has taken him to various countries around the world for field visits and conferences. Dr. Cocks holds a BA, MA, and Ph.D from the University of Liverpool, UK.

The Resident Counselor who will travel with the group will be announced at a later date.





## Financial Aid & Responsibility

Students who will be eligible to receive financial aid for the 2026-2027 academic year will have their loans, scholarships, and grants automatically applied toward tuition, room, and board. Your PrinBill will also include the Study Abroad administrative fee (\$500). *\*See Study Abroad Grant for additional funding opportunity.*

Payments for past and current tuition, room, and board must be up-to-date, or a satisfactory payment schedule must be arranged with the Student Billing Representative, in order for a student to be allowed to participate in this program.

If accepted, students will be required to sign a financial commitment agreement stating that if they withdraw from this program, either voluntarily or involuntarily, after **Wednesday, November 19, 2025**, they agree to pay to Principia a penalty fee of the amount equal to the non-recoverable expenses incurred by their withdrawal plus Principia Abroad administrative fees. Even if all prepaid expenses are recovered, a minimum \$500 fee may be levied.

The program cost, less any applicable financial aid, will be billed to each participant's Principia account, and payment will be due by **April 15, 2026**. See [PrinBill Guide Payment Policy](#).

## Study Abroad Grant\*

Students who receive Principia need-based aid and postgrads are eligible for an additional Study Abroad Grant to help with expenses not covered by financial aid/scholarships. These costs may include flights, room and board, administrative fee, and opportunity costs. Preference is given to students who demonstrate financial need, are first-time study abroad participants, and have a minimum 3.0 GPA.



## Cost

The cost of this abroad program will be the same as tuition for 4 semester hours, \$425 a week for room and board (\$1,700 for this break program), airfare up to \$1,500, and a \$150 study abroad fee.

The following expenses will be **INCLUDED** in the program: tuition; all accommodations and meals (room and board) and transportation; academic instruction and lectures; admission to scheduled sites, museums, and cultural activities planned as part of the program; student travel insurance; and administrative fees.

Costs **NOT INCLUDED**: Domestic US and international airfares up to \$1,500; \$150 fee; personal expenses; optional activities not planned as part of the program; and any other expense not specifically noted as included in the cost of the program.

Please see the “*Financial Aid and Responsibility*” section to the left to see what is included in your PrinBill, how financial aid is applied, and when payment is due.

## Vaccination & Health Information

Uncertainties with international travel include the possibility of airlines, the U.S. government, foreign governments, and/or in-country partner program providers requiring COVID-19 or other vaccinations. Information or evidence about participants' status with regard to vaccinations may be required by these entities. Program participants may be subject to these requirements, and need to be aware of them. Failure to comply with these requirements may mean inability to travel or participate in the study abroad program.

In order to manage the uncertainties of international travel safely and effectively, the Study Abroad Office will collect required vaccination and other relevant health information from all participating program faculty, staff, and students.

For more information regarding health and safety for Principia Study Abroad programs, visit our website: [Health & Safety Resources](#)



# Applications

(see instructions on page 6 for more information)

Applications can be found directly from this link:

[bit.ly/studyabroad-app-F25](http://bit.ly/studyabroad-app-F25)

Completed applications must be submitted to the Principia Study Abroad Office no later than **5:00 pm** on **Wednesday of Week 4, September 17, 2025**.

*Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.*

## Program Selection

Selection will take place during fall semester, 2025. Each applicant will be interviewed by the program faculty and RC. Equal consideration will be given to all applications submitted by the application due date. See the [\*\*Study Abroad Student Selection & Eligibility Criteria\*\*](#) for additional student eligibility criteria.

The Principia Abroad Office will notify each applicant at the end of Week 8, fall semester 2025, regarding the decision on their application. Those eligible but not accepted in the initial selection process may be placed on a waiting list.

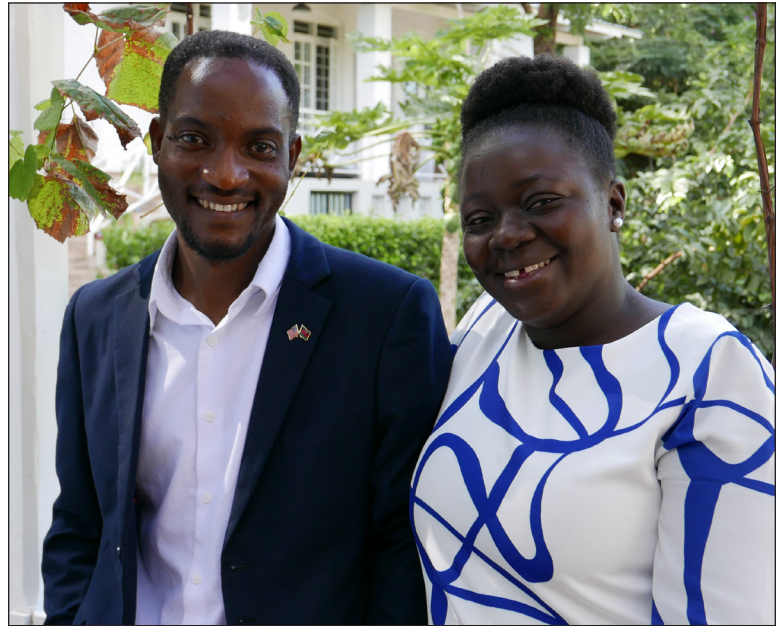
Participation in this program could be denied any accepted student whose grades put them on academic warning or academic probation. Students may also be removed from the program if not in good standing with regard to the Principia Conduct Standards or the [\*\*Study Abroad Student Code of Conduct\*\*](#).

## Eligibility and Prerequisites

The program director seeks students who have a sincere interest in issues impacting developing countries and are self-motivated learners who can adapt successfully to different learning environments.

Preference will also be given to students with a 2.0 GPA or higher. This program is open to all enrolled students in good academic and social standing. Applications are welcomed from students majoring in any discipline.

Students must meet the [\*\*Study Abroad Student Selection & Eligibility Criteria\*\*](#) to apply for and remain on this program.



# Study Abroad Application Instructions

- Applications can be found on the Study Abroad website: [Application Process](#), or directly from this link: [bit.ly/studyabroad-app-F25](http://bit.ly/studyabroad-app-F25)
- To authenticate the Google Form application submission, you **must use your Principia email** address.
- **DUE DATE:** Your study abroad application, as well as the online signature forms from your resident counselor and academic advisor, **MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 5:00 pm on Wednesday, Sept. 17 (Week 4)**. *No late applications will be accepted!*
- The application has **9 sections**, and you must complete each section before moving to the next.
  1. **Personal Information:** The first section includes basic **personal information** including P01 number, date of birth, citizenship, email, phone number, address, emergency contact(s), declared/expected major and minor, and expected graduation date.
  2. **References:** The second section includes **listing two references**, their emails and phone numbers. One is your personal/character reference and the other is for group learning.
  3. **Academic Advisor Meeting:** The third section confirms that you **met with your academic advisor** to discuss this study abroad program and that it does not conflict with any graduation requirements. You will send your academic advisor this signature page to confirm the meeting: [bit.ly/studyabroad-advisor-signature](http://bit.ly/studyabroad-advisor-signature)
  4. **Resident Counselor Meeting:** The next section confirms that you **met with your resident counselor** to discuss your ability to demonstrate emotional maturity, personal responsibility, and commitment to adapt to different living and learning conditions. You will send your RC the signature form to confirm this meeting: [bit.ly/studyabroad-rc-signature](http://bit.ly/studyabroad-rc-signature)
  5. **Additional Questions:** The next section includes **additional questions** including previous international travel and previous abroads for which you have applied and been accepted or not accepted.
  6. **Essay Questions:**
    - a) Why are you interested in participating in this particular abroad program?
    - b) During the program, you will spend a lot of time working, living, and interacting with individuals who are different from you in various ways (both Malawians and fellow abroad participants). What qualities do you think are the most important for successfully working across differences and why? How well do you think you demonstrate these qualities? Please provide examples.
    - c) By virtue of immersing yourself in a new and different culture and context, you are likely to find yourself outside of your comfort zone at times during the program. Please discuss an experience or situation when you were outside your comfort zone and how you handled it.
    - d) Travel in general, and travel in a context like Malawi in particular, often demands patience and flexibility in order to avoid frustration. There are likely to be situations in which you find that logic, timing, etc. operate differently than you are accustomed to. Do you have an example of how you have adapted your mentality or behavior to the needs of the situation you were in?
    - e) Getting the most out of this program educationally will require you to take responsibility for your own learning and to be willing to try new things. Please discuss your willingness to be a self-motivated and adventurous learner.
    - f) Describe your faith practice, in specific regard to how you envision it being relevant to participating in this study abroad program.

*The last three sections include signing off on your understanding of the following topics:*

7. **Financial Responsibility** – including commitment and withdrawal deadlines. *\*If applying for Study Abroad Grant, additional questions will be asked in this section to explain specific funding need.*
  8. **Academic & Social Responsibility** – including that you have read the [Study Abroad Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Study Abroad Student Selection & Eligibility Criteria](#).
  9. **Statement of Expectations** – including abiding by the standards set forth in the previous documents, Principia's standards, additional standards stipulated by the program faculty or international laws and custom, and expectation that you will fully participate in all aspects of the program.
- Again, the application and two online signature forms must be received by **5:00 pm on Wednesday, Sept. 17 (Week 4)**. Please be in touch with Study Abroad Program Manager Allison Terry with any questions – [allison.terry@principia.edu](mailto:allison.terry@principia.edu) or 618-374-5215 – or stop by School of Government, Suite 160 (SOG 160).