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Scotland & England Study Abroad

Through the eyes of an artist: Exploring the arts, history, and culture in Scotland and England

Program Description

This abroad is an interdisciplinary approach to the arts and humanities. It includes courses in theatre, art, and history in which students engage deeply in experiential learning, making, and doing.

What does it mean to see through the eyes of an artist? This abroad approaches that question through an interdisciplinary study of art, history, literature, and performance, integrating the perspectives from these different ways of seeing, learning, and experiencing the world. We will look at Scottish and English visual and literary cultures from a historical and contemporary perspective. How have art and literature reflected, shaped, and expressed a culture over the centuries? Students will do primary historical research on topics from the English Renaissance to historical revolutions. The research will connect their learning in museums, historical sites, and the British Library to their own contemporary understanding and expression of culture. Students will develop a personal creative practice through visual art, acting, writing, and reflecting. We will also think through how artistic production relates to a specific place-- in this case Scotland and England-- and their unique histories and cultures.

An exciting aspect of this program is the deep study of a Shakespeare play as literature, visual art, and performance, culminating in a full theatre production of a play, performed and produced by the abroad group on campus. Students will be actors in the play, and they will have a hand in creating the visual aspects of the production, from costumes and props to set painting and graphic design.

This program is open to all students and all majors.



Study Abroad Office

Principia College

Elsah, IL 62028

T: 618.374.5214

T: 800.277.4648

ext 2831

www.principia.edu/abroads

Academics

A total of 16 semester hours credit will be earned on this abroad. Courses are subject to change.

Spring Semester 2026 (1 SH)

SPST 280: Orientation: Scotland and England

Instructors: Leah McFall and Chrissy Steele

SH: 1

Attribute: None

Offered only in association with Principia abroad programs, this course provides an interdisciplinary survey of contemporary issues in Scotland and England. 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 a different location.

Fall Semester 2026 (15 SH)

ARTS 251: The Language of Drawing

Instructor: Leah McFall

SH: 3

Attribute: GEA

An immersive study of on-location drawing practices and techniques where drawing becomes a tool for observation and recording of cultures, historical sites, and landscapes. Drawing will also be explored as a vehicle to communicate content. This course develops skills in composition, observation, facility with mixed-media, drawing terminology, critiquing and perspective.

HIST 260: Renaissance to Revolution

Instructor: Gretchen Starr-LeBeau

SH: 3

Attribute: GEH

This survey examines the events and changes in thought that shaped the European world and its global impact between the end of the Middle Ages about 1400 C.E. and the end of the 1700s. Major topics include the role of Scotland and England in the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, the scientific revolution, the growth of nation-states, and Europe's global expansion.

THEA 260: Theatre Topics: Interdisciplinary Arts Practice

Instructors: Leah McFall and Chrissy Steele

SH: 3

Attribute: None

Through exposure to a wide variety of creative work (visual, written, performative, architectural) at various professional and public venues (museums, theatres, art galleries, historical locations, on the street, out in nature, etc) in Scotland and England, students will deepen their understanding of each art form and begin to discover the connectivity between arts disciplines. Through making creative work and journaling, students explore their own creative interests and examine how personal identity and ideas can be expressed creatively.

THEA 360: Acting Shakespeare

Instructor: Chrissy Steele

SH: 3

Attribute: GEA

Students train in the fundamentals of acting classical text, including cultural and historical context of Shakespeare's plays, fundamentals of textual analysis, and performance. When offered as part of an abroad, it includes workshops/lectures from the Globe Theatre and Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, as well as the Principia classroom. The course culminates in scenes/full production of a Shakespeare play.

THEA 350: Theater Practicum Cast

Instructor: Chrissy Steele

SH: 3

Attribute: None

This course is the practical application in a mainstage production of classroom courses in theatre performance. Students develop character, analyze text, research cultural and historical background, and engage with an ensemble through a rehearsal process in preparation for performance.

Preliminary Itinerary

This abroad will have two components: in-country in Scotland and England and on-campus in Elsau.

Weeks 1 - 2 – Edinburgh, Scotland

The program begins in-country in Scotland in mid-August. We explore the Edinburgh International Festival, historical sites, museums, and attend many cultural events. Housing is at an exciting hostel at the top of the Royal Mile in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle. There are some day trips out of Edinburgh to experience other parts of Scotland, including the historic village of Culross and Stirling Castle. During this time we begin our focus on an integrated study of history, arts, and culture, as well as initial preparation for the play.

Weeks 3 - 5 – London, England

Here we engage in experiential learning with Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, at cultural and historical sites, through research at the British Library, and getting to know the city. Housing is in a dormitory near the Thames River in easy walking distance and/or public transportation to all sites, restaurants, museums, and theatres. We spend a full day at the magnificent Hampton Court experiencing the history, culture, and art of the palace. We also take a day trip to the White Cliffs of Dover to explore the history, stories, and geography of this stunning location.

Weeks 6 - 7 – Stratford-upon-Avon, England

We continue on to Stratford-upon-Avon in the beautiful Cotswolds where we stay in local B&Bs and get to know the people of this historic town, as well as the surrounding small towns and beautiful landscapes. We have seminars and lectures from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, continue historical research at the Trust library, take workshops from theatre professionals, and attend plays at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. We take day trips to Hereford and Oxford and continue our artistic and historical exploration.

Weeks 8 - 14 – Principia Campus, Elsau, Illinois

After 7 ½ weeks in country, we return to Elsau. Housing on campus is as a group in one house. We continue coursework in art, history, and theatre, and dive into rehearsals for our production of a Shakespeare play. Everyone on the abroad participates in the play as an actor, as well as supporting technical, design, and dramaturgy (research and education) aspects of the production. The culminating work of the group is the public performances of the play, as well as sharing work from the Globe workshops, research, and artistic projects.

Program Staff

Each of the faculty connected with this abroad has traveled extensively in Scotland and/or England, and they have participated in previous abroad programs. Each has been teaching, advising/mentoring, and working with college-aged students at Principia for many years.

Chrissy Calkins Steele, Professor, has co-led five previous Principia abroad programs to England and the UK. She lived in Stratford-upon-Avon, England for three years with her family where she did a Masters degree in Shakespeare. At the College, she teaches theatre classes in acting, voice, and movement and directs productions.

Leah McFall, Professor, is a professional artist and costume and set designer with an MFA in textile arts and costume design. She teaches costuming and theatrical design courses at the College, and has traveled extensively in Scotland and England, including co-directing the 2022 UK Abroad.

Gretchen Starr-LeBeau, Professor, has traveled on several occasions to the British Isles. She has previously participated as a drop-in faculty for the Ireland Abroad and served as a faculty member in a summer study abroad program to Barcelona, Spain. She has taught European history, religious conflict and history, and comparative religion.

The program resident counselor attached to the abroad 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 **August 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 study abroad program will be the same as tuition, room, board, and fees for fall semester 2026, plus airfare (up to \$1,500), and a \$500 Study Abroad administrative 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; \$500 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

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

This program is open to all enrolled students in good academic and social standing, regardless of major.

Although not required, some previous course experience, or a deep interest in History, Art, and/or Theatre is encouraged. This abroad is for students who possess a dedication to the experiential learning process, an openness to creative exploration, flexibility, and conscientiousness toward building a sense of community.

We expect students to show a commitment to independent study as well as working as an ensemble to develop strength of character and support of the abroad community. Students must be interested in the arts and culture, though previous experience is not required.

Other fundamental criteria for selection include the student's responses to the essay questions on the application and dispositions demonstrated during the interview and daily life on campus. GPA will also be a consideration.

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
- 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 PO1 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
 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
 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 have you chosen to apply to the Scotland and England Abroad and how does it align with your academic interests?
 - b) This abroad has a strong focus on the arts. What interest, if any, do you have in the arts? What kind of creative expression do you enjoy and what is challenging for you?
 - c) When you experience personal and/or academic challenges how do you approach the process of working through them?
 - d) Describe how you work as part of a group and give some specific examples of groups you have worked with and how you have added to the group dynamic in a positive way.
 - e) Describe how you might deal with challenges that arise when traveling or working with a group.
 - f) Describe your faith practice, specifically 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 Mary Jane Hoff with any questions – maryjane.hoff@principia.edu or 618-374-5214 – or stop by School of Government, Suite 160 (SOG 160).