



GONZAGA UNIVERSITY FACULTY-LED STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

# Gonzaga-in-Benin



## Program Dates

Exact Dates To Be Confirmed

### ONLINE COURSE WORK

June - July 2012 (Tentative)

### IN-COUNTRY SERVICE/STUDY

July 28 - August 12, 2012 (Tentative)

## Program Highlights

- Open to all students regardless of major
- Complete foundation content online early in the summer &
- Travel to Benin the first two-weeks in August

## PHILOSOPHY 495 (3 credits)

### History, Culture, and Development in Benin, West Africa

This interdisciplinary course and study abroad experience provides a holistic study of the people, history, and culture of Benin. The course itself consists of a summer online readings course (in June and July) followed by group travel, with in-country service and study in Benin for two weeks in August. Course modules focus on the history of the Dahomey Kingdom, colonial and post-colonial history and politics of Dahomey and Benin, and study of contemporary culture and some challenges of development. The central philosophical goal of the course is a deep explanatory understanding of the culture and challenges of Benin. Using a philosophical and ecological approach, we learn from ethnographies of culture and religion, literature, and contemporary anthropology, political science, and development studies, as well as archeological and bio-geographic sources.

Our service at Songhai continues to include health education to intern workers at the center. In 2012 we add documentation and communication services to our work. Students will also have "language partners" to provide further opportunity for cultural exchange. From the Songhai Center we visit cultural sites which we have studied in the course, and work with our partners on specific development projects and topics.



While in-country we extend our learning and understand of these topics through ongoing service and development projects and through cultural interactions with our partners in Benin, which include non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Beninese who can speak to contemporary social issues and culture. Our primary partnership is with our host institution, the Songhai Center, a large and successful NGO for promoting development in West Africa through intensive farming and appropriate technology.



Gonzaga Study Abroad





## Course Overview

This course and study abroad experience offer a holistic study of the people, history, and culture of Benin. Through an online readings course (June and July of 2012), we focus our studies into three roughly equal units:

### 1. HISTORY AND POLITICS

In the first unit, we start with some brief studies of the human ecology of Africa and West Africa. From there we read about the 17th-19th century kingdom of Dahomey. We study both the involvement of European colonial powers in the slave trade and the colonial (1894-1960) and post-colonial political experience of Dahomey and Benin.

In-country experiences relevant to this unit: Visit to the Dahomey Royal Palace grounds and Museum, visit to Lake Ganvie, visit to Ouidah Historical museum and reconstructed Portuguese Slave trading fort, Point of No Return Monument, Ouidah.

### 2. CULTURE AND IDENTITY

The second unit focuses on culture and emphasizes literature, religion, and music. We sample literatures from the colonial encounter, Dahomean folk literature, and contemporary Benin and West African fiction and poetry. Our work on music may be somewhat incidental, but we will study some topics, such as the "talking drum," and the role of music in trance. Some appreciation of popular West African music will be included.

In-country experiences relevant to this unit: Through student language partnerships, student may gain access to cultural and tribal stories. We are looking for a demonstration and cultural interpretation of talking drums. Students will have access to Catholic and Protestant religious services, including Celeste. Informants on voodoo and representations of voodoo are readily available in Benin. We will go out for live music one evening and sample popular music from the market.

### 3. DEVELOPMENT & WELL-BEING

The third unit of the course is designed to help students understand some of the current issues in development studies, especially as they apply to Benin. Readings from development experts offer contrasting perspectives and provide background for case studies and documentation of development initiatives in Benin and West Africa.

In-country experiences relevant to this unit: Tour and study of Songhai model, service work on documentation of Songhai work and experiences of graduate interns. Service in health education to Songhai staff. Visit to Zoungbomey Palm Oil Project. Study and discussion of the Gonzaga-Songhai water filter project. Interact with staff of Central Africa Obata (CAO) about development work and their projects. Interactions with delegations staying at Songhai (such as delegates from the Nigerian Anpez Center).

### Program Cost

#### ESTIMATED PROGRAM COST:

**\$3,300, plus airfare\***

The program cost includes tuition for 3 credits.

\* exact cost depends on enrollment

#### DEPOSIT

Within two weeks of the date of acceptance, students are required to reserve their place on the program with a \$500 deposit that is applied to the cost of the program.

### Program Requirements

Gonzaga-in-Benin is open to all undergraduates who have completed at least freshman year and meet the admission requirements listed below:

- Minimum 2.5 GPA
- Two letters of academic recommendation
- Student Life and Academic clearance
- Prerequisite: Completion of Philosophy 301
- Committee selection

## When to Apply

**Review of applications will begin in December 1, 2011 and continue until March 1, 2012 or until class is filled.**

- The program is limited to 16 students.
- Early application is encouraged. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis up to the application deadline or until the program is filled.
- Operation of this program is subject to administrative approval and is dependent upon meeting the minimum enrollment.

## Application Procedure

1. Application form (download from website)
2. \$50 non-refundable application fee payable online
3. Two academic recommendations
4. Academic clearance online form
5. Student Life clearance online form
6. Return application to the Study Abroad office either in person (323 E Boone Ave) or by campus mail to AD Box 85.

## Passport

Be sure that your passport is valid for six months after the end of the study abroad program.

## For More Information

### DR. MARK ALFINO

**email** alfino@calvin.gonzaga.edu

**call** 509.313.6753

### DR. SUSAN NORWOOD

**email** norwood@gu.gonzaga.edu

**call** 509.313.6621

### GONZAGA UNIVERSITY STUDY ABROAD

**call** 509.315.3549

800.440.5391

**visit** www.GoAbroadZAGS.org

**email** studyabroad@gonzaga.edu

**mail** Gonzaga University, Study Abroad Center for Global Engagement  
502 E Boone Ave, Ad Box 85  
Spokane, WA 99258-0085