Arriving in a Foreign Country & Re-Entry to the USA
Immigration: passport control

• Usually two categories of lines:
  – Ex: Local passport holders/foreign passport holders
  – Ex: US and EU passport holders/other passport holders

• If on a short study abroad program, do not say “study abroad,” say “tourist” as your reason for visiting since you are not enrolling as a student in the foreign university and to avoid confusing the agent

• If you have a student visa or an offer letter from a host institution, say ‘study abroad’
Customs

• This is where agents check that you are not bringing unwanted items into their country

• Unwanted/banned items typically include: Fresh fruit or other plants, animal products, illegal medications or drugs

• Usually you declare any items on your customs form (given on plane)
Foreign Currency

• Most foreign countries do not use the US dollar. Look up the currency in the country you will be visiting beforehand

• You will need local currency upon arrival
Options:
  – See if you can order some through your US bank a few weeks before departing
  – Bring US cash and change money upon arrival at airport kiosks (not open very late at night)
  – Withdraw local cash from an ATM at the airport using your US debit card – this is the most efficient option
Money Tips

• Tell your bank/credit card company you will be traveling abroad before you go, so that they do not block your account

• Do not carry too much money at once. Keep most cash in a safe place, like a hotel safe or locked locker at a hostel

• Carry “small” bills. In US currency, these are usually $20 or less. Large bills may come out of the ATM, so try to break them at your hotel or a big store as soon as possible

• Check fees from your bank, credit card, and local ATMs to help keep track of how much you “lose” each time you withdraw cash or use your card

• Use your foreign currency before you return to the US
  – typically, currency exchange places will not accept coins, so be sure to use all of those
Using your Phone Abroad

• Either turn off your cell service or keep your phone in Airplane Mode if you do not have (or do not want to use) an international plan
  – Some plans automatically kick into effect, and can begin accruing significant fees

• If you have an unlocked phone, you can buy a local SIM card & use it with your phone
  – This tends to be much cheaper than your home cell service carrier’s plans

• You can also purchase a prepaid phone (either before departure or in country)
  – If so, either leave your regular phone at home or make sure that it is in airplane mode at all times
Re-Entry into the USA

When you arrive in the US, you will go through US customs & immigration again

- This will be at the airport you FIRST arrive into in the US (ex. if you have a layover in New York before returning to Texas, you will go through customs & immigration in New York)
- You will have to pick up your luggage. After customs, you can give your checked suitcase to the booth called ‘Connected Flights’ that will check it through to your final destination