

The Israel trip is especially important because it's a very valuable opportunity to safely go to the Middle East and dip your toes into the culture, and as for the class, you gain so much perspective about a situation that will never be properly portrayed in the media. Additionally, it is extremely important to acknowledge that not everyone uses the same logic, and that the problems that Israel faces cannot be addressed by the logic that Western politicians and reporters would like to apply to them. The Israel trip is unique in that not only is it an incredibly valuable opportunity to learn about politics in a setting that is radically different from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, but it is an ongoing history lesson in one of the most religiously and politically significant countries in the world, and for many, it is a pilgrimage. **Holly A. (Anthropology)**

I have been to a lot different places, but this one has truly been the most rewarding one so far. I think it is important for students to study abroad because your perception changes so much when you see things from the other side. I could not have picked a better trip than this one. **Mary D. (Global Studies)**

Away from the American media, and American stereotyping of the Middle East, you view Israel in a completely different light, and despite the American misconceptions of Israel, you are able to truly see the beauty of a remarkable country, which would otherwise remain unknown to you. **Nathaly C. (Anthropology)**

Students should study abroad because it broadens their understanding of other cultures, allows them to see from different perspectives, and develops an appreciation for their own culture and nation. The trip to Israel is especially important because, as Americans, we are constantly bombarded with misleading news about the Middle East, and it's important to see the truth of the situation firsthand and dispel these false notions. In addition, Jerusalem is the epicenter for the three primary monotheistic religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Most places in the world can be understood through one or more of these religions; thus, a visit to Jerusalem offers a deeper understanding of many other nations and peoples, not only Israel. **Cheyenne P. (Spanish)**

This was an amazing trip, and I was completely surprised at the sheer volume of knowledge and experiences that can be gained in ten days. I would recommend it to anyone because it really is an interdisciplinary experience. I can see it being applicable to a huge variety of majors and it was an extremely valuable opportunity for me. **Rhi Brown (Education)**

I would highly recommend studying abroad to every student. Traveling is a wonderful, eye-opening experience, and it will never be more affordable or convenient as right now. I could write an essay over why they should choose this trip specifically, but I will try to be succinct. The history and information is astounding. You actually get to sit in a Roman theatre! You touch columns and structures built thousands of years ago. One can imagine and understand the trade routes, conflicts, and civilizations that surround and fill the country. It makes the Bible (or Koran, I suppose) come to life in a way I would not have believed. I

learned so much as a believer, but also as a person. Where else would I get a chance to barter a boy vendor on some harem pants in two different currencies at once? I had so much fun, and it was very meaningful. I made lots of new friends, and even a proposal to stay for all the camels I wanted. My own misconceptions (many of which I had no inkling) were quickly corrected, and I am only now, talking with people from home afterwards, realizing how pervasive these misconceptions are throughout society. This was an extremely valuable, fun learning experience, and I cannot wait to help correct these misconceptions and further educate society.

**Elizabeth C. (Music Industry)**

Although studying abroad anywhere is wonderful, I think that traveling to Israel is one of the best opportunities that we can have. Israel has abundantly more to offer everyone whether it be related to faith, politics, history, art, or even math than most other countries around the world. I am an accounting major and this was one of the richest experiences of my life. Because Israel is a melting pot of a society, it allows you to be much more aware of the world around you and respectful and appreciative of the way others view their homes. **Jessica L. (Accounting)**

I believe travel for travel's sake is important for individual growth, and anyone who wants to be a citizen on a global level needs to study abroad. Choosing to go to Israel is, at least, one of the less common choices for travel. It is at best the most important country an American student could choose to visit. Israel has an ancient cultural and artistic history, and today is in a political position that citizens of a democratic country should be invested in. As Americans, we should recognize that we are Israel's ally in an area where it is surrounded by hostility and take an active interest and role in its developments. This is especially important because we choose to follow and criticize it through the media, and I at least did not think critically enough about global responses to Israel's actions before signing up for this trip. Ancient Greeks were skeptical that anyone could live in the British Isles, believing that their northern latitude made them too cold for human inhabitants. The people that spread these opinions, of course, had never been to these countries. They were only looking at maps and making judgments based almost entirely on extrapolation and with no field experience. It pains me to wonder how true this is for modern news anchors. That kind of armchair exploration, like our armchair political opinions, can easily be solved by going to the place and learning about it firsthand. Going to Israel is vital to being able to speak about it intelligently. It is also a lot of fun. **Nicole W. (Graphic Design)**

The experiences one has while studying abroad are unlike anything else. Students learn so much about themselves, their thought processes, and the world around them with first hand experience. Israel was particularly unique because it has so much to teach. The trip caters to students of all different interests and academic fields. I pushed myself to try new things that I otherwise would have never done, and I got to see something first hand that most people only see on the news. It completely changed my perspective and gave me a better understanding of the Middle East; two years ago I would have never guessed that I would travel to that

part of the world and feel as safe and engaged as I did. There was not a single uneventful day in Israel. As an International Relations major, I don't think there is a better place to visit to solidify the array concepts and ideas we learn about in our coursework. **Tandra M. (International Relations)**

Studying abroad changes you and grows you in ways you don't even realize. It makes you more independent, more well rounded, personally and professionally, and it makes you better prepared to be a global citizen, not just a U.S. citizen. I've studied abroad in several countries during my time at MTSU, but no single trip has moved me quite like my visit to Israel. The country, her people, her history and culture, they all left an indelible mark that will forever shape how I view foreign policy, the media, and even my faith. For so many reasons, reasons that I saw with my own two eyes, Israel shouldn't exist. But it does. And the fact that the country flourishes can only be understood by visiting this amazing place. **Whitney F. (International Relations)**

Every Student should study abroad regardless of the price because it is a one in a lifetime experience. For me, studying abroad opened my eyes to the rest of the world and stirred a desire to go out and explore it. Studying abroad gives you an entirely new perspective on the world, one that not even the greatest professor can provide. In my case, studying abroad took me out of my comfort zone a place that I believe every college student should venture occasionally because this is where I often learn and appreciate things the most. I would recommend the study abroad trip to Israel to anyone who is studying/has interest in international relations, religion studies, or history. The class may be billed as a Political Science class but it is so much more! Despite the academic reasons, Israel is an amazing, beautiful country and you spend most of the trip exploring it! From beautiful beaches, to the Western Wall this trip was an adventure of a lifetime. **Zach L. (International Relations)**