

My name is Ericka Patrice Evans and I studied in South Africa at University of Western Cape in 2008. I had been studying English at the doctoral level since 2007 when I decided to embark on my independent research study on the continent of Africa. I arrived in the Republic of South Africa on July 4, 2008 and departed from the country on December 31, 2008. I enrolled in three courses between English and Women's & Gender Studies: (1) Literary Theory B, (2) Politics of Traversal, and (3) Trends in Feminist Ideologies. Classroom instruction was valuable for me, which guided me in thinking of South African literature and trends in critical thought. There, I produced my most guiding work of my studies in English, and I have a commitment to make a life of African critical thought and literature.

On July 14, 2008 I took the Robben Island Tour from Victoria & Albert Wharf on the ferry called Sikhululekile or "we are free" in the Xhosa language. At Robben Island I learned about revolutionary Xhosa and Zulu uprisings and the men who led the movements to overturn apartheid in South Africa. During my time at Robben Island I toured the prison grounds and saw historic artifacts from the fight for freedom. In my eyes, the Republic of South Africa is a beautiful country that provides cultural awareness for me as a curious African American. My professors were very interesting and came from different backgrounds, which enhanced my learning experience.

I was afraid to move about South Africa in the very beginning. The taxis and the townships were two things that I was afraid to experience, but my friends quickly got me past those fears. I visited three townships while I was there: Nyanga, Langa, and Khayelitsha. Likewise, I spent some time in a squatter camp in the Eastern Cape.

Though semester long study abroad is not usual for graduate study at University of Missouri, the study enhanced my research goals and scholarship far more than I saw upon departure from the United States. I have been changed by my life in South Africa, and I know that I will return to settle down.

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