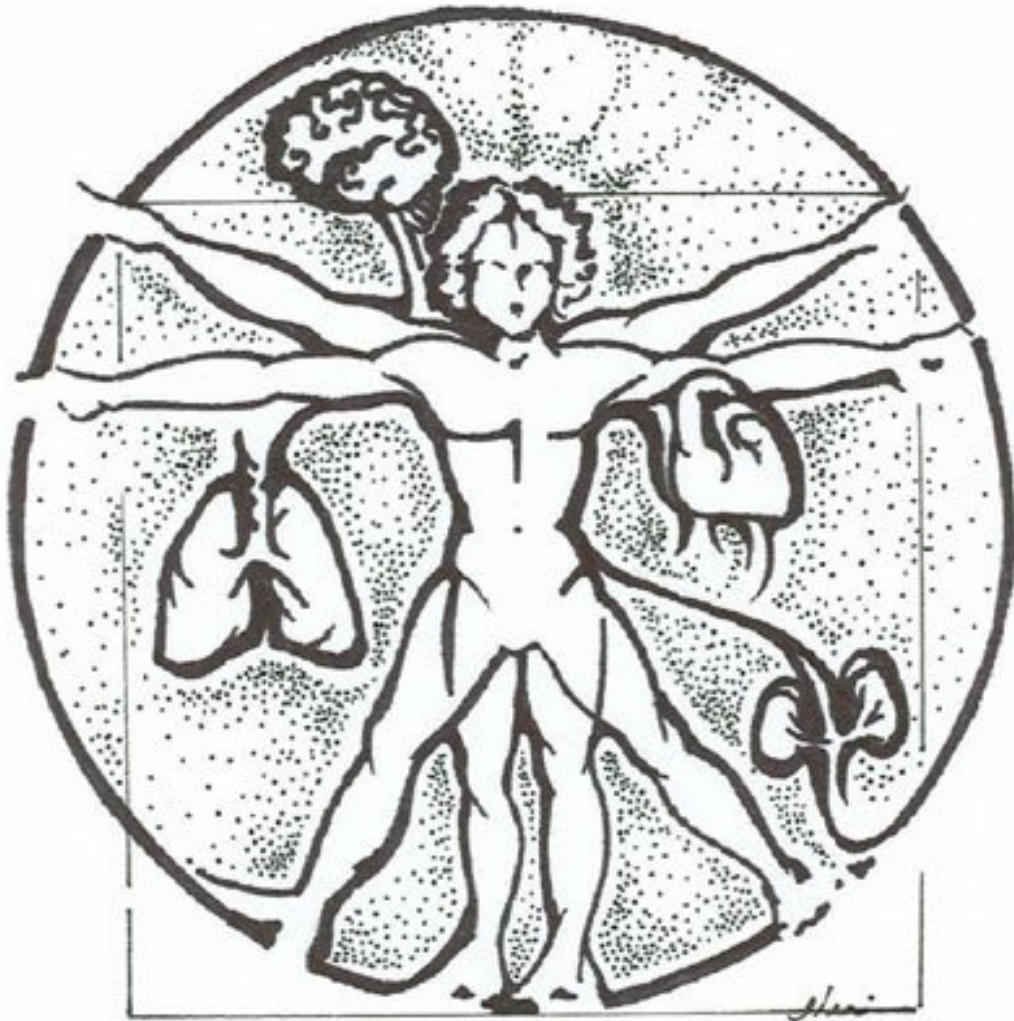


Welcome to Grenada

A Student's Guide for Students
1st Edition 2007-2008



<http://welcometogrenada.wordpress.com>

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Founders and Editors '06

Letter from the Editors

Dear students,

You should sign up early for the Prague selective because spaces fill up quickly. You should explore the Grenada beyond campus. Rent a car and drive to Grand Etang Lake or La Sagesse with your friends and a cooler, take a hike to Seven Sisters waterfall and jump the cliffs, head to Gouyave for Fish Fryday and relax. Keep that promise and learn to surf. Also, study.

St. George's University puts us in a strange position. Because each group of students arrives and leaves the island within 18 months, it is hard to establish traditions and feel a sense of history with previous classes. Each of us is left to pester those ahead for little morsels of advice and, whenever we put in the energy to make a change, it is hard to know if it took hold and left others better off.

"Welcome to Grenada" is an effort to fix some of this. We cannot make this a series of bar stories (though we do have some great ones). What we can do is gather together information to make your life as a student easier and remove some of the unexpected. Grenada can be a great place to live and learn medicine and there is no reason for you not to know this.

As you read this guide, please keep in mind that it is merely the opinions of two students, both from the United States. It is in no way a complete representation of life at SGU, nor is it intended to be. This guide is meant to inform, entertain, and relax you in preparation for what might be the best bet you ever made.

What follows comes from the efforts of students that love this school and want you to have every opportunity that they had. Somewhere between class, lab and library they took the time to make this resource for you. It is a living document for you to change and mold as your own. Take what you can, give what you can, and remember how easy your life is: wake up, learn things, sleep.

Congratulations on becoming a medical student and Welcome to Grenada.

Sincerely,

Christopher Kinsella
Jessica Kramer

Table of Contents

- What to Pack
- Arriving
- Where to live
- 1000 words
- Phone
- Money and Banking
- The Day to Day
- School Culture
- Island Culture
- Groceries
- Safety
- Sports
- Weather
- Second Opinions (Random Advice)
- Prague Selective
- PreMed
- First Term
 - Anatomy and Embryology
 - Biochemistry
 - Histology
 - Clinical Skills
- Second Term
 - Physiology
 - Neuroscience
 - Immunology
 - Parasitology
 - Genetics
- Third Term
 - Jurisprudence and Medical Ethics
 - Behavioral Science
 - Biostatistics and Public Health
- Fourth Term
 - Microbiology
 - Pathology
 - Medical Nutrition
 - Advanced Clinical Skills
- St. Vincent
 - Arriving
 - What to Ship
 - Books
 - La Soufriere (the volcano)
- Fifth and Six Terms
 - Pathophysiology
 - Pharmacology
 - Advanced Clinical Skills
 - Hospital Rotations
 - Hospital Placements
- In Closing
- Notes

What to Pack

I will only brush my teeth with Arm & Hammer toothpaste. I cannot stand anything else. So every time I fly down to the islands, I have all the toothpaste I will need for the term. A girl I knew would bring Downy drier sheets. The point is this: the shopping malls and grocery stores are sparkling clean and air-conditioned much like home but that does not mean that they are stocked the same. They will have everything you can think of needing but not necessarily your favorite brand. So if you are wedded to a certain brand of tampons or deodorant, bring enough for the term. Other than that, there is no need to worry. To the guy that brings 40 lbs. of Whey protein on the flight: we have a GNC-type store that has that. Do not waste the room and the weight. Also, you look like you work out.

You will wear shorts, shirts, and flip-flops every day. Have something nice to wear if you plan on asking someone on a date or celebrating at one of the fine restaurants. Every once in a while, there will be a banquet at the Governor's Mansion or physicians visiting from our clinical years, so have something nice to wear for those fancy people. You will never be asked to wear a jacket, but maybe a tie. The lecture halls are freezing, and though you are now living close to the Equator, you will be glad you brought a sweatshirt. Many people also have "lecture socks" that they slip on for just this occasion. Bring a few pairs of scrubs for Anatomy Lab (you can still wear sandals). We have a nice air-conditioned gym, basketball courts, and a soccer (football) field so bring some athletic gear and your 'A' game. Anything made of linen or cotton is always a smart purchase.

If you like to cook, you may want to bring a few kitchen utensils. All of the dorm rooms come equipped with a stovetop, a semi-full sized refrigerator, and microwaves are becoming standard. Take advantage and save some money. I recommend bringing a medium frying pan, a pot to boil water for pasta, and a good knife that can cut vegetables or cheese. You can buy most of this at the hardware store in Grenada but you will be paying three times what you would pay at Target. If you have the extra space in your bag, you could go that extra mile and pack a George Forman Grill. Grilled cheese made on a Foreman is the medical school *pièce de résistance*.

Binders are expensive on the island and worth the space in your luggage to bring a few. Multicolored highlighters are invaluable when reading biochemistry and hard to find on the island. I wish I had brought more. I also wish I had brought dry erase markers for the study rooms in the library. Bring a flash drive and a modest external hard drive. Students share all of their files and useful programs with each other via flash drives or iPods. That means entire seasons of *Nip/Tuck*, *Lost*, *24*, etc. Each term also has a MacDaddy program filled with old study resources like previous tests, tables, and summaries. These information juggernauts can reach 10 gigabytes; plan accordingly.

As for your course books, the school supplies you with them the first week you are here. They are stored at the base of campus and are heavy. I would recommend picking them up in an empty piece of wheeled-luggage. Opinion varies in the upper terms as to which textbooks are useful and which never left their shrink-wrap. Take advantage of your Footsteps Buddy and try to figure out which books will be most helpful for you. That said, there are some books that most people wish they had.

Unfortunately, the campus bookstore may not carry them or will sell out early. Check each Class Section for suggested books.

“Does ‘two suitcases totaling 70lbs’ mean two 70lb suitcases or does it mean two suitcases, the sum of which cannot exceed 70lbs in total?” I have to ask this every time I fly, and I get different answers every time. It would be a good idea to check with the airline before packing your bags. The weight limits are constantly changing, and it would not be fun to get to the airport and have to leave an entire suitcase full of essentials for your family to ship to you.

The last time I flew, I managed to sneak 155lbs onto the island. That is two suitcases at 50lbs each and a 40lb carry-on. I was also allowed a personal item that could weigh up to 15lbs. Should this happen to you, I suggest putting your computer and books into your backpack as a “personal item.” That easily covers 30lbs, freeing up more weight for your checked luggage. Play it cool, though. If they see you slumping under the weight, they will get suspicious and make you check the bag, which will cost you some money.

Arriving

It is GrenEHda, not GrenAHda. Pronouncing it correctly is a big deal. Grenada was described to me as a third world country before I came and this will not be your experience. Your time on campus will be indistinguishable from any university in the US; your dorm life will be no different from your undergraduate experience. Everyone uses the bus or drives a car. You will have your Subway, movie theaters, malls, grocery stores, hardware stores, school supplies, bars, and clubs. You probably will not be able to find the laundry detergent you like or fresh milk, but these are small things. Anyone who says you will be "roughing it" is lying to you.

That being said, a few people each year have a hard time adjusting. Some have dietary concerns (it is not hard to be a vegetarian; it is hard to be a vegan). Some get very homesick or cannot adjust to Grenada's culture. The pace here is very slow.

The very first mistake people make when traveling to Grenada is NOT taking a layover. Often times the airlines will overbook a connecting flight from Puerto Rico to Grenada and ask that passengers volunteer to take a later flight, often the next day. TAKE IT! You will be put up in a hotel, given miles for a flight in the future, and have a chance to enjoy another island carefree.

If you are flying to Grenada on a connection from Puerto Rico, you will probably spend your first night without your entire luggage. The reason is simple: you came to San Juan on a very big plane and left Puerto Rico on a tiny little plane with propellers. This is the type of plane where they ask the passengers to move to different seats to balance the weight (if that sentence makes you nervous, self-medicate before takeoff). A puddle-jumper like this cannot possibly hold everyone's luggage in one flight, so expect at least one piece to be a day late. Make sure that you have some toiletries and two changes of clothes in the luggage that never leaves your sight.

The airline will give you a number to call and you will have your luggage shortly. Try to come to the island early so you can take full advantage of Orientation week. It is

nice to have that time for settling in, to speak nothing of all of the trips around the island that are provided.

Grenada's weather has two settings: downpour and blindingly sunny, so come to the island wearing a rain jacket over a bathing suit. Grenada is likely hotter than you are used to. During those first few days, you will break a sweat from standing, lose weight, and drink water like breathing air. You will see students going to class wearing jeans and long sleeved shirts and wonder what is wrong with them. Just know that your body is getting used to the island; it takes about a month.

Where to Live

Unless you arrive very early, it is difficult to find a place to live off campus. You will not know which areas are safe, what prices are fair, and students in the higher terms have already snatched up the best apartments. You will probably end up with campus housing and that means True Blue.

The University is on the True Blue Campus. There are a number of dorms there: Superdorm #1, #2, #3, and #4. There is also upper-term housing in singles, doubles, four- and six-person suites. Your room will be very small, very cozy. It will also be very expensive. The pros to living on campus include waking up later, not having to use the bus as often, good security, and being around people every hour of the day. The cons are the price, the size, campus burnout, and being around people every hour of the day. It comes down to your personality.

When it comes time to find another place to live, you can either enter the Lottery on campus or look elsewhere. There are benefits to both. Some suggest moving off campus. You will be farther away so may need to rent a car and your security is window bars instead of guards, but even taking that into account it can be cheaper and nicer. You can find available apartments through word of mouth, the campus housing office, or a discussion board like SGU Post. You can live in True Blue and this tends to be expensive for what you are getting. The advantage is being within walking distance of campus. The advantage to living in Grand Anse is being in walking distance to every store you could need. Next to Grand Anse is Mont Toute, also a thriving area with several shops, however safety is questionable. Lance Aux Epines is the Manhattan of Grenada with its paved roads and beautiful homes. Housing can be expensive here, but not as expensive as campus and you get what you pay for.

The other option is entering the housing lottery and living on campus. Sure, it is more expensive, but you get to wake up every morning and roll out of bed into class. There is no energy involved, no waiting for the bus, no packing a lunch. You just pop your bagel in the toaster, grab your notebook and walk to class. You also do not have to remember to pay your rent or your electricity bill. We are medical students, and we need to focus on studying. Who has time to remember to pay rent?

1000 Words

It is amazing how a few photographs taken by students can add some perspective to the place. Go to Flickr.com and search for "SGU." It says something that the students love the school enough to put all of this together themselves. My favorite albums are shot by Josh and Felix (both available online). You can search for "SGU Blog" on Google (there are a few) for even more student perspective. More resources are listed at the online version of this guide.

Phone

No one gets a landline and you should not bring a cordless phone with you. That means you are buying a cell phone. Since you are now going to travel from the mainland to Grenada and St. Vincent's (and possibly Prague) you probably want a phone that can work in all areas. For this, you need to buy a Quad-Band GSM phone. Two main companies offer GSM service in the USA. AT&T and Cingular have now merged into one company, and the second company is T-Mobile. As far as I know, Verizon and Sprint will not work on the islands. So here's what you do:

- 1) buy a Quad-Band GSM phone from one of these companies
- 2) make sure that it is a pay-as-you-go phone with a SIM card
- 3) Google "unlock SIM" and pay for your phone to be unlocked

I'll explain all of that:

There are four major broadcasting systems used throughout the world. Therefore, a Quad-Band phone means that you will never have to buy a new phone for travel. The SIM card is a chip that contains your phone number and your contacts. Put another way, it does not matter from what phone you call: if you put your SIM card in any phone the person you are calling will see that it is you. So if you buy a SIM Quad-Band phone at home, you will have a SIM card with your home's area code. When you come to Grenada, you will buy another SIM card with a Grenadian number. At this point, you can simply switch the SIM cards while you are on one of the islands and then switch them back when you return home. Taping them into your passport is a nice way to keep track of them when not in use.

The reason you have to "unlock" your phone is so that your T-Mobile phone (for example) will operate with a Digicel SIM card from Grenada (for example). Pay-as-you-go means that if you want to talk for ten minutes, you buy ten minutes. If you talk over that, the phone simply cuts off (after a warning of course). This means that you cannot possibly suffer overage charges and you are not roped into a contract. And why do you have to pay to unlock your phone? Because T-mobile does not want you to buy there phone and then use it with an AT&T SIM card. T-mobile wants your money. Typically, these companies will unlock your phone for free if you have owned it for three months, but if you are reading this now that is a bit of late notice. So pay to have it unlocked from a separate code vendor (found online) and you should be set.

Some students make use of internet phones as well. There are several programs that allow you to make phone calls over the internet for pennies a minute to anywhere in the world. Skype, Netphone, and PCPhone are popular programs and only require a headset with microphone.

Money and Banking

For the next few years you will be using Eastern Caribbean currency, or ECs. The conversion rate is easy and if you manage to keep the following table straight in your head, you will be able to gauge what is and is not a fair price. Everything is in US dollars because I am too lazy to provide conversion tables for all nations and, since I just finished talking about phones, I am worried you are asleep. For easy conversion into any other currency, there are many useful websites. Remember to cross-multiply and check your work.

\$1 = 2.67 EC

\$8 = 20 EC (roughly)

\$40 = 100 EC (roughly)

There are banks on the island and no need to ever use them. You can pull EC from your US account at any ATM on the island (including the one on campus) with a VISA/MasterCard debit card (sorry American Express and Discover). Some credit card companies charge a higher rate for foreign conversions, so check yours. The ATM charge is \$1.50 and the conversion rate is standard. If you have a refund check coming to you, I suggest having the school send it home and having family/friends deposit it. Do not forget to leave deposit slips back home. That being said, some people find it more convenient to open an account at a bank in Grenada. This allows you to eventually pay for things by check, and not have to worry about finding an ATM. However, you have to hold an account for *six months* before they give you a checkbook. There are several banks close to campus, including an RBTT bank in the Student's Center.

How much EC will you spend a day? Depends. EC is pretty, looks like Monopoly money and you will spend it as such. Breakfast of eggs and toast is 13 EC, lunch is around 17 EC, and dinner can be up to 25 EC. That comes to 55 EC/\$21 a day eating out every meal. It sounds expensive but few people can pull off three meals a day. Most have one full meal and fill the rest with coffee and snacks. You will find your own happy middle. Remember that if you cook and buy your own groceries, you will save quite a bit. You can find most snack foods, coffee, and even eggs in the store on campus for that late night impulse buy but you pay for the convenience in higher prices.

If you drink anything other than water, you are in for a shock. Name brands like Coke, Starbucks and Arizona drinks cost three to four times what they do in the states. That being said, some people still manage to spend a great deal of money on water. Bottled water is sold everywhere on the island and is more expensive than beer. Some students buy a bottle every day. Others (and I recommend doing this) buy one bottle and refill it at drinking fountains on campus. All of the water on campus is filtered; this is not the case elsewhere on the island. I for one have had the same bottle for a month now and may have saved as much as one hundred dollars. Cigarettes are no more expensive than you are used to, but you should quit anyway.

The Day to Day

As a First-termer, I got up every morning around 7am and checked the class schedule. Typically only two courses are taught a day with each getting two hours of lecture time. On some days, you will have Anatomy lab that can begin at 8am or 9am and lasts for three hours, or you have Histology lab at 8am or 10am that lasts for two hours. Lectures begin at 1pm each day and last until 5pm. You do not need to bring much to campus. I usually put my laptop, water bottle, two three-ring binders, and two textbooks into my backpack and grab the bus.

Eating on campus is not hard though students do complain about the selection. At the top of the hill (you will know it well) there are vendors selling fresh fruits and the Patels selling homemade Indian food. Halfway down campus is the Student's Center which has two restaurants (Glover's and Pearl's) along with a convenience store. At the base of campus is the Sugar Shack. You will not go hungry.

Time before and after lecture is often spent in the library. The library has wireless internet and so should your computer (the "Computing at SGU" section of the SGU website does a good job of preparing you). During peak hours, it can be difficult to get a strong connection. The wireless network extends throughout campus into the lecture halls (you can follow lectures online or check email during breaks), across to the bus stop and down to the Student Area (where the gym and restaurants are located), and into every single campus dorm room. Bring a few feet of Ethernet cable in case your room requires it or the wireless connection becomes weak. High-speed internet is available in off-campus apartments through a contract with Cable & Wireless.

School Culture

During your first two weeks here, you have carte blanche to introduce yourself to as many people as you wish. Your class will probably go out each night that first week and I recommend you go each time. The first week does not contain difficult material and you will not have another chance like it. After this grace period, the classes pick up a bit, people fall into routines and your opportunities to meet every member of your class will start to drop off.

SGU operates by four-month-long terms. This tricks you into thinking that each term is a year long and that people in second, third and fourth term are somehow separated from you. This is of course nonsense. The upper-termers will have advice for you on every class and most of it should be ignored. Instead, find a good DES tutor, give yourself a few weeks, and then start making judgments on how to handle your course load. Everyone should go to the Department of Educational Services (DES) office and look at all of their handouts on studying, test-taking strategies, and review sessions. It is a goldmine of helpful information.

SGU students study like they party: hard. Go to the Crab Races at The Owl every Monday night at Grand Anse beach. On Wednesday, everyone heads over to Stewart's (technically called the Dodgy Dock) for drinks and a live band. If you like to keep going until 4am, Banana's is the place for you. There are so many organizations on school that every weekend has at least one sponsored party at the Aquarium, Kudos, etc. These

parties are usually themed, and while that may sound cheesy to you now, do not be surprised to find yourself having the time of your life in full 80's attire rocking out to Madonna and Michael Jackson; it happens to everyone. Keep this in mind when you are packing because maybe you *should* bring your leotards and slap bracelets. Take advantage while you can. Before too long you will start looking forward to the weekend because it means no more classes and you have time to study; it happens to everyone.

Island Culture

English is the language spoken in Grenada. In the school guide, they describe it as having a "slightly lilting Caribbean accent". I disagree. This is like describing a Southern accent to someone from Scotland as being "slightly slower". It is not just slower, it *drawls*. Just as the Southern accent changes from Texas to Louisiana to Tennessee, the accent in Grenada varies by its rhythms and inflections, which can make it *really* hard to eavesdrop when you first arrive. Do not feel bad if you have to ask for things to be repeated; it is a normal part of learning to listen.

With some patience and a healthy sense of humor, you will handle the differences in Caribbean living in stride. First off, if you go to a restaurant and read the menu, do not kid yourself and think that what is on the menu is always available. Living on an island often means fresher fruits and vegetables but it also means that supplies may not arrive on time. A restaurant may make a great steak, but if the beef does not arrive that week then their hands are tied. So instead of getting frustrated, order something else with a smile.

Second, the Grenadian culture is big on courtesy and not greeting people is viewed as disrespectful. This politeness extends to every facet of life, including business. For example, if you are at a bar and order a drink, the bartender will make it for you. If you get all fussy about having to wait, this is like asking your friend for a ride and then throwing a fit when he stops to talk to someone on the way to the car. In Grenada, these courtesies extend to everyone, regardless if it is a favor from your best friend or a drink order for your server. This comes as a shock to many, but I think we could all benefit from a little more of it.

Third, the easy-going style of the islands is why people come here for relaxing vacations and you, my fellow medical students, will benefit from this environment during the stress that is medical school. This also means that things may not happen at three o'clock, but instead three o'clock-ish. For example, when my moped broke down, I found a guy that could fix it and we scheduled a time to meet. He was an hour late because he did not own a car and had trouble catching a ride that day. He wanted to do the job and he wanted to be on time, so what sense is there in getting mad about it? This might have thrown the rest of my day off, but I knew enough not to schedule deadlines within two hours of each other. Being in a hurry all the time is no way to handle stress and no way to live on an island. Try to remember that there is no hurry and life will be a lot easier on you.

Groceries

You do not have to grow your own. IGA “Real Value” supermarket is air-conditioned, white tiles, hanging signs over every row, the whole bit. It also has the advantage of being on the bus route and since everything in med school boils down to convenience, most people shop at IGA. Other options include Food Fair in Monte Tout and CK’s Super Value at the roundabout by the Texaco (yes, this is how directions are given in Grenada).

The tricks: Food Fair and CK’s are cheaper and you can buy in BULK. IGA has a much larger selection but you pay for the convenience and the AC with higher prices. IGA also has fresh produce, a deli, and the best shopping is Saturday mornings because the supply trucks unload on Friday night. It is an island, so things can be scarce. Milk and cheese will sometimes be unavailable. Veggie burgers are plentiful.

Safety

You cannot enter campus without passing the security booth. If you do not have an SGU ID card, you will be pulled from the bus (or told to turn around in your car) and sent home. Security guards are ever-present, protecting you from illegally parked cars and general truancy. While it can all be annoying, it is better than the alternative and you should know that campus is a very safe place. So many security guards make for a convincing deterrent to crime. It follows that people living on campus enjoy this security and pay rent that is higher than what you could find elsewhere on the island. Some people are willing to accept a little less for a cheaper place, and apartments with locked doors, barred windows and vigilant Landlords can be found throughout the island.

There is, of course, crime. This does not make Grenada any more special than NY or NJ, though students would do well to remember some safe habits. Do not walk alone at night. You would not do that at home, do not do it in Grenada. Walk with a group of people or take a cab. Try to avoid poorly lit places (when possible) and stick to familiar areas. If something does happen, report it to the Dean of Students office and the school will use its power to help. Also, do not be a moron. If you leave your laptop unattended in the Library for hours on end, someone might steal it. This goes for laundry left for hours, anything *left for hours*.

Sports

SGU has a healthy intramural sports program. Basketball and Football (soccer to some) are the major sports (bring cleats and guards, balls are provided). Hockey is also big (played on the basketball courts, sticks, and nets provided). Rounding out the selection, we have Ultimate Frisbee, Dance Classes, Yoga, and Dodgeball. I have yet to see a single person play tennis (I have not even seen courts) or cricket.

To the runners out there, do not worry: there is plenty of space to run. When classes end at 5pm, many students meet up to go for a jog. It is a great way to clear your head after class. The most popular run is to the Texaco and back. Try to run on the sidewalk as much as possible as the cars are not always in the mood to avoid you. The

cars may honk. Do not be offended; they are not being rude. Unlike elsewhere in the world, horns are used in Grenada before driving into a blind corner, when passing another car, and to say, "Thank you, sir, for letting me into traffic. I appreciate that." There is an art to their quick-horn double-tap and I am officially off topic. Just smile and wave to the cars.

Weather

The wet season is very wet and runs from August to December. It can rain for days on end. If you bring an umbrella, make sure it is the type that opens to form a complete sphere around you, because the rain falls sideways. Honestly, go to a camping store and get a waterproof cover for your backpack, a light waterproof jacket, and a shamie. You will be the envy of everyone. Another thing to consider is the mosquitoes. The breeding ground for mosquitoes is standing water, and there will be a lot of it. Invest in a mesh tent for your bed and screens for your windows (only applicable if living off campus). Want to know a fun trick? Instead of a mesh net, get a standing oscillating fan. If you go to sleep with it by your head, the mosquitos are sucked into the back of it and murdered; serves them right for preying on you. You get to wake up the next morning with a pile of them on the ground. Good times.

There is little rain in the dry season which runs from January until June. It is the best time to be on the island and enjoy everything that it has to offer. Go to the beach, learn to kite surf, bring your surfboard, or rent a jet ski. Head to the capital and learn how to haggle in the market. Most of all, remember to get a tan so that people believe you when you say that you go to school on a tropical island.

Prague Selective

Go to Prague! As a January student, I went after my first term and knew nothing. Enjoyed the hell out of it. If you start in January and wait until the end of 4th term (2nd year) to go, you will be squeezing the dates a little close together. I recommend as a freshman. If you are an August student, you get one crack at it: after 2nd term. This is probably the perfect time to go. You should try to sign up the second you land on the island as spaces fill up quickly.

Get your friends together and rent a cheap apartment or stay in a 4-bed hostel suite. You chose your own level of grit. If you are a vegetarian, eat a face. If you are a recovering alcoholic, relapse. Prague is beer and meat and beautiful people and you should not miss any of it. Before you head over, go online and buy the DK Publishing Top 10 Eyewitness Guide to Prague. I lived by this book and it did not disappoint. Useful Czech phrases in the back. Also, do not ever call it "Czechoslovakia." The Czech Republic and Slovakia are quite separate now.

The set up of your selective is simple: Once a week you meet as a class with Dr. Stransky (the person throwing this party) above Club N11. Besides being a big deal in Prague, he said one of my favorite things: "In life, it's good to be best, but it's better to be first." He owns the club N11 and will host a part there early into the selective. As I remember, the first day you meet Dr. Stransky and learn about your rotations in the

program. Wear professional clothes. For guys, this means shirt and tie. Do not be the guy with tennis shoes, an untucked shirt, and a poorly knotted tie. Ladies, wear comfortable shoes and a nice dress or skirt. Once you have your assignment, you meet in front of the N11 club with a bunch of other students, and someone working for Dr. Stransky takes your group onto the metro system for your destination. Remember it, because you will have to do it yourself every day after. Your destination will change every week, so you will repeat this process every Monday morning. Some people start rotations at 8:00am, some at 9:30. Everyone checks out by 5:00.

Each rotation at each hospital is different. For example, my Neuro rotation consisted of locking us in a room and letting a tape play (half the time), talking with Czech medical students so that they could practice their English (1/4th the time) and seeing a bunch of interesting cases for the rest of it. If you understand 1 and 1/2 syndrome and the workings of nystagmus, you are golden. My Cardio rotation consisted of putting on a heavy-ass vest and standing in the room while the doctors snaked line up everyone's femoral artery into the heart. We watched all of it on angiogram. It was great, except for the vest and the revolving door nature of it all. My Orthopedic surgery rotation was my favorite. The doctors and nurses do not care what you do, so long as you do not hurt anybody. You change into their scrubs and gowns (their locker room) and just pick a surgery. Axilla surgery in room 1, hip replacement in room 2, and so on. I went to see a hip replacement and got blood all over me, which was AWESOME! Loved that rotation. At the end of the week, you meet up above N11 with Dr. Stransky, see a patient, and talk about the week. Wash Rinse Repeat.

You are in Europe, the center of it, so you will want to travel. I know people that made it out of Prague to go to Germany, Italy, what have you. It is hard though. You have to be at the hospitals on Monday and Friday. Once you factor in the time of transit to and from another country, you are really cutting things close to say nothing of a slow train or a broken one. To get the credit for the class, you have to have perfect attendance. That said, some of the doctors will sign your sheet for the week regardless of your attendance and I do not know of anyone that did the selective and did not get credit. So who knows? Travel at your own peril I guess.

The weather in Prague swings. Bringing nothing but summer clothes with something nice for the hospital is not going to cut it. Bring a sweater, a jacket, something. Also, it rains in Prague. Do not be that wet guy without a raincoat. Speaking of clothing, you should probably buy the greatest pair of shoes on the planet before getting on that plane. Everyone wonders why the people in Europe are so skinny. Not me. They walk everywhere, never stopping, always walking. So if you buy a pair of shoes that pinches your toe or drags on your heel ever so slightly, that'll be a gapping hole bleeding through your socks by the end of the third day. And since you are walking everywhere all the time, it will NEVER have a chance to heal. So just avoid that whole mess and buy yourself something nice.

The nightlife is great. Try to avoid the comfort of your two favorite clubs every night and see as much as you can. Joe's Cafe was a great one, and no trip to Prague can possibly be complete without a few trips to the Duplex. Enjoy the dancers and the air horn.

All in all, I hope you really enjoy Prague. Their subway system is larger than anything I have ever seen, and you will have a great time getting lost even though there

are only three subway lines. Every set of directions you will ever give will be in terms of Tesco. It will take you a week to discover Andel. You will buy a bottle of water, take one sip and spit it out, and forever after ask for "Voda, neperlive." (Voh-dah, nay-per-leh-veh) Make sure you are friends with someone who takes many pictures; you would be surprised how quickly you forget how great it was.

Second Opinions

1. If you are buying a computer for school, make sure that it is light, portable and has a long-lasting battery. If you are thinking about getting a tablet computer, know that the best advantage is taking notes in OneNote. Instead of having binders and binders, you have a file on your computer. Whenever you want to add something, erase something, or include pictures with your notes, you can. This means never having to lug your notes from previous classes with you and never having to worry about spilling water on the Krebs cycle.
2. Do not get a car your first term. Your first term will be spent in campus housing or in the library and lab losing your mind. The bus schedule is more than adequate. A car is a luxury at \$450 a month!
3. Sometimes the buses can get crowded. I suggest you say goodbye to personal space.
4. I have yet to use a single battery.
5. The Grenadian bus/taxi system is incredible. Affectionately referred to as "Reggae buses", these Red (and sometimes white) taxis scream around the streets of Grenada. The bus stops are obvious. The taxi will stop, the sliding door will open and you will ask, "St. George (the capital, not campus)? Grand Anse? Lance Aux E'pines?" Even though the route is on the windshield, they will answer. Climb in. The rate jumps every year or so, but you pay a flat fee (3EC) to travel anywhere on the route. You may have Tetris flashbacks finding a place to sit (it gets crowded). When it is time for you to get off the bus, use your knuckles to tap on the metal frame. The driver cannot hear you screaming, "Please! This is my stop!" He *can* hear the metal "knock". You pay the porter once you are out of the bus.
6. Take the Medical Spanish selective. If you have any kind of Spanish background (even if it is just Spanish 101) sign up for medical Spanish. The course meets twice a week during lunch hour and is time well spent. You will learn a great deal of medical vocabulary and have the opportunity to test your mettle in several patient interviews (en Español, of course). It will definitely come in handy if you plan to do your clinical rotations anywhere in the US. Or Spain.

PreMed

The pre-med program at SGU is a unique opportunity. You will be taking courses that are part of the medical school curriculum, the majority of which are taught by the same professors and tested by exams similar to what you will see in the medical school. The program is structured to introduce you to the intensity of study necessary for you to later excel. I went through this program and found it very effective. Not only are you

eased in gently, one toe at a time, but also when you begin the First Term you will find everyone else trying to recover from the shock of jumping in all at once. Medical jargon is its own language barrier and you will find yourself more familiar with the terms and material. When you reach Medical School and the majority of your classmates have never heard of the twelve Cranial Nerves, you will be able to teach them the slightly off-color mnemonic you learned from the Head of the Anatomy Department while you were in his PreMed class. It is nice to have a little leg up on everyone every once in a while.

Academically, the program is solid. When you get to First Term, you will have seen enough of the material before that you can bypass the panic of “what is that?!” and go straight to the panic of “You want me to memorize *all* of them?” PreMed is great preparation, but it is no substitute. The courses give you a taste of things to come, some general familiarity with the material, and just enough clinical applications to pique your interests. However, they do not go into as much detail, nor are they as clinically focused as what awaits you. Do not worry about being bored in First Term; you will be studying at the edge of your ability.

Academic benefits aside, there are extracurricular benefits with the program. The nice thing about doing a semester of PreMed is the extra time to adjust to Caribbean life. One of the hardest things that some med students here face is the adjustment to new surroundings while juggling four challenging First Term courses. As a PreMed student, you will have gotten all of that out of the way and will be under less stress. The PreMed courses are challenging, but you will not be studying at *the edge of your ability*.

The structure of the PreMed program is different from that of the medical school and you will not have the same schedule every day. Tuesdays and Thursdays differ from Mondays and Wednesdays and your Fridays are usually free. I urge you to take advantage of this free day. Explore the island of Grenada and take advantage of all the University has to offer. You will have the opportunity to join student organizations that are relevant to medicine (Surgery, Emergency, AMSA). I highly recommend you take part in as many things as possible and learn your way around the island. This will be a huge benefit as you transition into the First Term medical school class.

As far as books go, everything is available in the library. As a rule, the course companions are comprehensive for the testable material and your textbook may end up as a “doorstop of knowledge” or “paperweight of knowing.” Save your money and simply reference the library books whenever you need that little extra clarification.

For the Anatomy course, the companion that you get at the beginning of the term is more than sufficient. You will never need to use a textbook, however, if you like pictures, you can check Netter out of the library for a few hours. You will sleep with Netter under your pillow in First term, so it may be helpful to become familiar with it early. For Biochemistry, you may need a textbook for reference but the recommended PreMed text is not the same as the First Term text, so do not spend the money. You can buy the first term text right away, or just reference it from the Library as need be. There are plenty of copies, so that should not be a concern.

The PreMed Genetics course may cause some frustrations while you are taking it, but you will be thankful for the experience when you take it again in medical school, as the material covered is the same. The Professor will provide you with a list of learning objectives for the course. If you follow these with a textbook open for clarification, it will eliminate your frustrations, and you will breath a sigh of relief when you see the

exams. This course comes with a class project. Make sure that you meet with the professor about your project at least once before you submit it so that she can tell you where she *would have* taken off points and where you *still can* improve it. Or skip it and shoot yourself in the foot.

That was the sugar; now for the spice. You know the guy at NASA that helps the astronauts put on the suit but does not get to *go* into space? PreMed feels like that sometimes. It is great that you get to take part in the lectures, student organizations, and health fairs with the med students but it reminds you that they are *doing* what you want to do. I would sometimes find myself sitting in the library, bitter about the fact that I was studying the same human anatomy as the med students but mine did not count. That is normal. I did not let the frustrations of staying on the ground get in the way of the big picture and neither should you. You are going to be a Doctor. Your PreMed term(s) will quickly pass and not only will you get through the program; you will be a better med student for it. Enjoy this program because it will enhance your Grenada experience.

First Term

ANATOMY and EMBRYO (8cr)

If there is any course that signifies medical school to the undergrad, it is Human Anatomy. After this, you should know every bone in the body, every muscle that moves them, and every nerve that orders them around. And I am kidding. You will cover a fair bit of it, know some interesting clinical presentations, and be able to explain to your friends back home what "fight or flight" is all about. And is that not the goal? To sound impressive?

This course has changed a bit since I took it. Instead of having every student slave away in the lab cleaning fat for a grade, the department now pro-sects (a professional dissection) every structure of interest and then takes you through ID, relationships to neighboring structures, and pop quiz. I think you get to dissect the first day on a space that is impossible to screw up too bad: the superficial back. Of course, this did not stop me from cutting all the way to the ribs on that day; an announcement was made to the class that I was an idiot.

If you have taken the course already and want to freshen up or are taking it for the first time and want a heads up, [this site](#) is great. It shows the dissection of the entire human body in easy-to-download QuickTime movies. The [University of Michigan](#) hosts a great anatomy website. Several classes have lived and died by their [practice quizzes](#). Get a wrong answer: it tells you why you are wrong. Most students click all the wrong answers anyway just to see what they might be missing. And for those of you with the free time to dream of overachieving, they have [surgical videos](#) as well.

Now for the books. The school gives you the combined oil paintings of [Frank H. Netter](#), may he rest in peace, and a Clinical Anatomy book. Both are very useful. I carried Netter around in my backpack everyday. For a book with a more gross approach to anatomy, the [Color Atlas of Anatomy](#) by Rothen is clutch. Some students go so far as to buy [Clemente's](#) but between you and me: that is overkill. For those out there who like [coloring books](#), they have those too. How do you condense all of this information in time for the test? The anatomy BRS by Chung has been used by many students for many years and the [Rapid Review Anatomy](#) is also well-written. The school bookstore may not carry these review books, so the smart money is on buying them before you arrive.

Embryology operates from a single textbook and a course companion. Some students complain that the course companion is hard to follow, poorly written, and outdated. Others say they study nothing but the companion. In addition to the course textbook, the Embryology BRS book does a fair job of making the course manageable. Once again, the school bookstore may not carry this title, and I would suggest bringing it with you to the island.

Strategy for covering all of this material? No idea. The first week or two of classes is light, giving you every opportunity to study like an idiot and learn everything incorrectly. It happens; do not sweat it. Another thing you will probably do is attend too many DES sessions (tutored by students that are four months ahead of you), artificially boosting the confidence of said tutors until you cut back and find your rhythm. Best advice I received was to 1) draw everything and 2) study with people smarter than you.

BIOCHEMISTRY (6cr)

To date, the biochemistry department gives lecture handouts to the class two to three days before each specific lecture. These handouts reflect the stress and focus that each professor will give to the material. To fill in any gaps and round out your understanding, two textbooks are given. Lippincott's Illustrated Biochemistry is an excellent textbook that closely follows the scope of the class. The other text, Mark's Basic Medical Biochemistry, aims to tie everything that you will learn into clinical vignettes with patients like Al Martini the alcoholic.

You will kick yourself if you do not also purchase the Biochemistry BRS book. It is written by (get this) Dr. Mark's wife: Dr. Mark. She goes through her husband's text, pulls the pertinent illustrations, and puts all of the information into a bare-bones linear style that makes learning the material laughably simple. Because of this, you could make the case that you do not need the full Marks text if you are going to buy the BRS book. Once again, the school bookstore does not always carry this title, so I suggest bringing it to the island.

HISTOLOGY (4cr)

The Histology faculty has the best companion of all of your classes. It is so comprehensive as to be considered its own textbook. You will also have access to a free program called HistoTime. HistoTime consists of short histology lessons followed by hundreds of slides to help you recognize each specific tissue type. This program along with the companion is all that you need to do well in the course and walk away with an understanding of histology. That said, some students found the two textbooks required

for the class (Color Atlas of Histology by Gartner and Basic Histology by Junqueira) to be helpful. The Library computers also carry a program called Histo Quiz Bank. The questions in this program are very close to the detail and difficulty of those you will answer on the midterm and final.

CLINICAL SKILLS (2cr)

With a group of students, you will sit in a room as an actress enters and it is up to you to uncover her story. There are sometimes nine people to a group and each of you will take a turn sitting in front of the “patient” asking questions. If you want to become good at this and comfortable asking about someone’s sex life and last menstrual period, make sure you are the first person up to bat. If you do your job well, you will become much better at relating to strangers and if you wait until the end for your turn, you will have little left to ask and will be rewarded with awkward silence.

The actors and actresses are very good and I will admit to having been fooled more than once. “I really hope that woman does better. It must be so hard to have debilitating arthritis like that.” Then you see her in the library three days later on a keyboard, smiling and you feel like a chump. Happens to everyone. This course is great practice for Advanced Clinical Skills beginning in the Fourth term and ending in the Sixth. You may even see the same “patients” again. They do not tell you about it until a year later, but if you want to feel much more comfortable in these setting armed with the right questions in the right order, pick up Dr. Rooney’s book, CS Essentials: A complete guide to the USMLE CS.

Second Term

Ah, second term. The time-consuming Anatomy and Histo labs are over leaving you with Neuro groups and much more free time. You are finally learning about how the body works. In Neuroscience and Physiology, the discussion boards on Angel are lively with the professors answering questions on a daily basis. You will understand why amputees feel “Phantom limb” pain, why poison ivy causes a rash days later (instead of right away), and you will touch on the mysteries of the EKG. These are heady, heady times.

PHYSIOLOGY (5cr)

Physio is a very well run course with exciting teachers. The handouts for each series of lectures are incredibly well written and could be bound together to form a great textbook. If you spend your time with them and go over their objectives, your time will be well spent. Physio hinges on perspective and analogy for much of your understanding and it sometimes helps to have a different take on the material. The Physio BRS book falls short for some while Costanzo’s Physio Book is more complete (and serves as the Physio text at several medical schools). The course text, Borne and Boulpaep is a tome and far beyond your needs. Finally, the Physiology Pre-Test book is great for difficult questions with thorough explanations.

NEUROSCIENCE (5cr)

Imagine learning gross anatomy from MRI slices and not being able to put your hands around the liver or heart and you will begin to understand what learning Neuroanatomy is like. This is 3-D thinking with 2-D images of structures you have never seen and the learning curve is steep in the beginning. The library has plastic models of the human brain for you to play with and your Neuro groups will help a little. You can also find pictures of the fornix and thalami in the opening plates of your Netter Atlas. Other than this, your Neuro Atlas has bread-loaf sections through every structure in the brain and can be an enormous help if you spend enough time with it. The recommended textbook is not worth buying.

Once you are comfortable with the anatomy, the fun things begin. You will learn why a stroke in the left brain produces symptoms on the right, why your hand pulls away from a burning stove before you actually “feel” the pain, and why the room still spins after you have stood up from a spinning chair. You will learn about addiction and sleep cycles and lazy eyes. Neuro clinical cases are taught before each exam by visiting neurologists and the science starts to feel like medicine as you begin to diagnose things correctly.

IMMUNOLOGY (2cr)

Building an understanding of Immuno is like building an arch: none of it makes sense until it all makes sense. Prepare to be frustrated as you memorize facts without understanding how everything fits together. Your professor (Dr. Stanley) will tell you that the first test is strictly one of memorization and she is not lying. No thinking is required, just memorization. From this point on, things will begin to assemble and you will be rewarded with your arch.

The required textbook follows the course and is written by Dr. Stanley. Students are divided over its usefulness and expense. It might be worth your time to read some of the reviews of this book at Amazon.com. Regardless if you decide to buy this textbook, you should buy an Immuno text to supplement the notes. My personal favorite is Cellular and Molecular Immunology by Abbas and everyone agrees that the Micro/Immuno BRS is a staple on any bookshelf.

If you leave the course still uncomfortable with material, you should not worry. Like all things in medical school, you will be exposed to this material again in Micro and in Pathology and these are the classes where many of the concepts start to cement.

PARASITOLOGY (1cr)

This is a great class. It is three weeks long, worth one credit, but a lot of fun. You should go to class not only because it will help you learn the material and do well on the exam, but also because you will see slides of some pretty interesting creatures that you would never see otherwise. Some will intrigue you, some will make you cringe, and some will be the topic of conversation for days. This Parasitology course is one of the advantages of going to an International medical school. We get to be taught a course that many US med schools do not even teach and we get to learn from one of the leading authorities in the World. If you are at all interested in international health, tap into this resource.

You do not need the book. All you need are the handouts that are given in class. They are well organized with sections divided by headings such as “This Wormy World.” The MacDaddy contains summary slides on every disease you will learn in the course and the creatures that cause them. And please, after all is said and done, do *not* call it “elephanTITIS.” Your elephant is not inflamed. It is “elephanTIASIS.” Thank you.

GENETICS (1cr)

I wish we could offer something useful, but this course has changed every term. Think of it as a one credit adventure. No book is necessary. Maybe.

Third Term

JURISPRUDENCE and MEDICAL ETHICS (1cr)

All you need to do is go to lecture for Jurisprudence. If you pay attention to the professor, you will not need to buy the book. He tells stories and witty anecdotes to make you remember the cases and rules of law and medicine. The goal of this course is to help you understand your legal role as a caregiver, your responsibilities to the patient and to your colleagues, and that you will eventually be sued.

Ethics is less of an ethics course than it is a history lesson. You will learn the history of different ethical theories and be tested on them. You will feel like you are back in high school, memorizing dates and theories. And you will be tested on them.

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE (3cr)

One of your friends has Histrionic disorder, another has social phobia, and all medical students have a splash of OCD. These are the gems that wait in Behavioral Science. The lecture handouts do a good job of covering the material and (in keeping with the theme) we do not recommend buying the books. Several hours of class are spent watching patient interviews to illustrate the disorders, and you will be able to recognize a Schizophrenic from a Schizotypal from a Schizoid. Everyone will suddenly become very self-conscious of their own quirks and worry that everyone is trying to judge them (which is its own disorder). If you skip class, the videos are available at the Library but like watching any movie, it is more fun when you are with an audience.

BIostatISTICS and PUBLIC HEALTH (2cr)

As a future physician, you will have to be able to look at published papers and separate the wheat from the chaff. These courses will be your bedrock. In Epidemiology, you will learn about all of the different research methods and why treatment should be guided by random double-blinded studies as opposed to case studies. In Biostatistics, you will learn the method behind the median so that you will be able to critically evaluate new research well into your bright shining future. The note handouts for each course are well done with medically relevant examples. Biostatistics usually needs a booster and the High Yield Statistics book helped many students with the material (it has a great summary in the back). Both courses stress concepts over specifics, which is nice.

Fourth Term

Good luck with 4th term. Lot of work, lot of fun, lot of time in the library. These courses are going to overlap a great deal, mainly with infectious agents, immunology, and diagnostic procedures.

MICRO (5cr)

The department does an excellent job on some sections and horrible on others. You really need another resource to handle and structure the information. I used the First Aid for USMLE step 1 book and the Micro/Immuno BRS. I highly recommend each. I did not buy the Micro text. Too much information. Several times in the notes, a reference will be made to a table or figure in this book. When it came time to prepare for the tests, I just checked it out of the library, found the figures and moved on. Save your money.

PATH (13cr)

Path is challenging because of the alien teaching style (group lab work) and the volume. Topics in Path are broken into Modules. You will have six before the first exam, four before the second, and the rest for the final. Each module consists of around 30 slides that are descriptive of different pathologies. Among your group, you will split up these slides, go to the library to prepare a presentation on whatever you were assigned, and then present to the group. For the first half hour of every lab, you are free to say as many wrong things as you want, but then the tutors descend. Once present, they will listen like hawks for the first piece of stupid to fall from your mouth, and they will then punish you for saying it by asking you questions that you cannot answer and slowing down the group (your fault). Then, since no one could answer correctly, your tutor will explain the problem to you. Do not get hostile towards the tutor; it is only because you screwed up that they had to fix it. That said, some tutors will insert comments here and there and hijack the lab. If this is not the way your group wants to work, all you have to do is say so and the tutor will stop. They are there to help you, I promise.

So if the members of your group take their responsibilities seriously and do not try to fake their way through an answer, things will run smoothly and you will cover your slides in the time allotted. If not, then there is going to be some disappointment and hostility when a pattern emerges. You will have to come in on days off to finish when you could be studying. For this reason, I beg you to pick a Path group full of people that you think will **DO THE WORK**. If one of your best friends is lazy, then she needs to be in a group with her kind. Do not feel bad about any of this: the less work they do, the more work you do, the harder path is for everyone. Groups on top of their game are having fun. Be that group.

The biggest problem that hits the Path student is Volume. **VOLUME**. There are going to be three and four and five good sources for information, and if you try to pull the best from each to make your notes then you can kiss the rest of your life goodbye. With all that volume comes the mistake of thinking that it is all important. It is not. For example, when researching *C. neoformans*, you could either write a book or you could write, "Small cell, thick capsule, India ink, AIDS meningitis." When the test comes, it is

hard to memorize 300 books. One-liners are just easier for this kind of volume. I am sure you will find your own happy middle.

As for books, the Path manual with black and white pictures is available in color .pdf on Angel. I never used the path manual that I bought and instead worked from my computer. Therefore, I would not buy it a second time around. However, many people used it to write down their notes in lab, and then would annotate with the lecture handouts. The great advantage of this is that ALL THEIR INFORMATION WAS IN ONE SPOT. Having three different books open along with dr.google can be a bit overwhelming, especially when it comes time to study.

Make sure you get the MacDaddy. It has audio files (Sokumbi's Reviews). Indispensable. It also has every lecture slide completed in PowerPoint format from previous terms, so you can get an idea of what you are supposed to be doing that first week. It is also the great equalizer if you are confused by something your tutor said.

Robbins Pathologic Basis of Disease: amazing text. Pocket Robbins: also amazing. Bought both, used both every day. I also bought the Pathology BRS, but never had the time to look at it. I suggest learning everything straight from Robbins and supplementing that with the lecture notes. You can also buy the Robbins Review of Pathology question book, though WebPath (see links) covers this well.

Now for the websites.

[Pathguy](#): Path professor famous for his easy explanations. Architecture of the sight is a little odd. (www.pathguy.com)

[WebPath](#): Website with quizzes, timed quizzes, quizzes with slides, path case of the week. Amazing preparation for the tests. It has all the questions from Robbins Review of Pathology, so you do not have to buy it.

[eMedicine](#): Went to this website almost every damn day.

NUTRITION (2cr)

Nutrition is a strange class. Some terms have a midterm and a final while others have just the final. One term they will use the book heavily and the next term everything will be straight from the notes. The class feels like “soft science” for the most part and is frustrating for students used to the hard facts of Path. Nutrition could probably benefit from being turned into another Path module and taught from Robbins. So good luck, I guess.

ADVANCED CLINICAL SKILLS

Yup, you get to hang out with your Path group one more time. All in all my favorite course of the term. I bought Pocket Bates' and a stethoscope. The PD kit was a little too expensive for my tastes and I was not won over by the tourniquet and tongue depressors. What use I will ever have for a BP cuff, well, I may never know. Of course, if everyone decided to not buy the kit then we would all be screwed since I did rely on at least two people in my group of six to have it. My vote is that the CS program should supply the kit for labs and tests themselves. End rant.

The PowerPoints on angel are good review and a video is shown at the beginning of every lab. Channel your inner-trained monkey and you will get through it. When you

are examining your classmates make sure you go with confidence. The tutors can smell your fear and uncertainty. Remember that half of your CS grade comes from Saint Vincent's, so it is not the end of the world if you have to come unprepared every day in order to stay current in Path/Micro.

St. Vincent

ARRIVING

Before you arrive, you need to have everything settled. This means getting your friends together to rent a house or an apartment, sending one of them over to St. Vincent on a plane (\$160, 30 minutes), talking to Landlords and Car Rental places, and handing over a deposit. Third term with its easier schedule should give you plenty of time to accomplish this and will make the time leading up to your final term in the islands much less stressful. The laziest way (which I recommend) is to keep in touch with someone in the term ahead of you, have them send you pictures and contact information, and then just take over their home and vehicle when it is time.

WHAT TO SHIP

The day after you take your Pathology final in Fourth Term, SGA will organize a day or two when you can conveniently ship the essentials to St. Vincent. Keep in mind that anything you ship there has to get home somehow. The things you will definitely need are few. St. Vincent is a simpler term, and the things you could not live without in Grenada will not be missed once you get caught up in the busy schedule of St. Vincent.

The grocery stores in St. Vincent have a fewer toiletries than the IGA in Grenada, so you may want to go to the trouble of shipping your half used pack of q-tips instead of just throwing them out. While I am on the subject, some things are better in St. Vincent and some things will make you long for the "selection" at IGA. The amount of available produce in St. Vincent is much better than Grenada. It is not like Grenada where you pray for tomatoes to be available at the Grocery store. In St. Vincent, fruits and vegetables are plentiful and inexpensive.

BOOKS

Let me preface this by saying the Library on the St. Vincent campus is very complete. Space wise, it is not very large, in fact most would call it tiny at best. If you enjoy studying on the lap of the person next to you, you will find it very cozy. However, what it lacks in room, it makes up for in content. The book collection is extensive and you can check out books for a full week. They have Robbins, all the BRS books, First Aid for the USMLE, and enough copies of Netter for each student to plaster their walls with his artwork. The point being you do not need to ship any books to St. Vincent. The ones that you will need to reference are readily available from the library.

However, if you are not a library person, or if you need to highlight every sentence you read, you may want to consider bringing your Robbins and your Physio book of choice. I often need to reference my Costanzo book in order to remember the physiology behind a particular Pathophys topic. You do not need to bring your Big Bates. You most likely will never look at it, and if you get the urge to read up on the

proper way to conduct an abdominal exam, the library has tons of copies for your reference.

La SOUFRIERE

The class, under the direction of Hans Baer, makes a trip to St. Vincent's volcano. It is a three-mile hike up to the lip, through three grueling stages including "Stairway to Heaven." On the way, you will see a river carved by lava flow, shacks, and huge bamboo chutes. However, the rewards are on the lip and this is where people make mistakes. Most people spend the 45 minutes hiking up, look into the lip, catch their breath, and eat some peanut butter before heading back down. If you instead hike around the lip (bring a machete) you will find a lake for swimming, the marijuana fields, and enjoy scenery that most people glaze past. For the intrepid, there is a rope ladder for descending into the crater. Do not just go for the afternoon; make a day of it.

Fifth and Six Terms

This is a good term. Everything is simpler: smaller campus, two places to eat (it seems every island has its version of "The Ladies"), one lecture hall. The seats are more comfortable but it is harder to nap in them. The library is very small and if you made use of the one in Grenada, then you are about to appreciate what a fantastic facility that was all along. The technology here is a better with every single lecture available online with audio synched to the slide progression. If you regularly miss the lectures (8am to noon, everyday) they will save you. Some lectures stick to the notes, some wander around, but it has always been that way. This is the end of second year, you are all seasoned medical students, and nothing is going to surprise you. Congratulations, you are almost done.

Some caveats. This really is a harder term. Whereas in Path you might cover two full topics in three weeks, you will now cover three whole topics in two weeks. Twice a week you will spend three hours downtown in a hospital, once a week you will have a Pharmacology small group for an hour, and once every other week you will have a three hour Clinical Skills session. You had things eating up your afternoons in Fourth term, but not in the same way. Whereas before you were getting constant review of the material in Path Lab, now it is simply less time all around. To fit all of the material into the term, things get much tighter. You will not have a "grace week" in Path leading up to an exam the next Monday. You will not have an easy week leading up to the Micro test that same Friday. You will not have any 'review' days at all, and the term can feel relentless. Relax with a sailing trip.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY (14cr)

Boy, are you in for a treat. This course covers twenty-seven different lecture topics ranging from Cardiology to Urology, comprising 14 credits for 223 hours of lecture. Fun stuff. The great thing is that this course is taught by specialists: a radiologist with lecture about radiology, a surgeon about surgery, and so on. There are three exams, each worth the same amount, but the last exam covers much less material (so there is a chance to finish strong). Pathophys is not Path or Phys. In Path, everything that was going to go wrong pretty much did and you were left to memorize buzzwords. In Physiology, you were an idiot trying to understand the magic of breathing. PathoPhys is

much more clinical and could have been named “What do you do with a patient’s chart?” In other words, if you learned Path and Phys, we can assume you know a lot already and can skip the easy stuff. You will be given stacks of notes for Renal, Cardio, etc. There is no need to buy a surgery textbook for the surgery lectures, or the Atlas of Diagnostic Imaging for the radiology lectures, and so on. I recommend...

First Aid for the USMLE. The new version is organ-based as opposed to systems-based. Bring whichever you have for review.

Merck Manual. Wow. Description, signs and symptoms, pathology, diagnosis, treatment, prognosis. And all of it is well written. I am thinking about reviewing for the USMLE with First Aid, Merck, and a toothbrush.

Pocket Robbins as a reference only.

PHARMACOLOGY (6cr)

Pharm is to Pathophys as Micro was to Path: disproportionately difficult for the credits. Most students spend 85% of their study time with this 5 credit class. The beginning is tough because you are learning a new language. The course itself is a review of Neuro, Physio, Micro, Parasitology, Path and Biochem...so that you can understand the drug’s actions in the first place. You also end up understanding how Prozac, Digoxin and other drugs work which, lets face it, helps us all sound a little bit more like doctors. Never mind that if you were asked to prescribe any of them, you would kill someone. Get some practice before the tests at [Tulane’s pharmacology website](#) (the pharm version of WebPath). As a little aside: Hans Baer will email you every single day for silly little things. He means well. You will learn to love him. Onto the books...

Golan’s the Pathophysiological Basis of Drug Therapy. Well-written book that, in each drug section, gives a review of the Phys, Path, and Biochem before going into the drug actions. There are patients-vignettes at the beginning of each chapter (less cartoonish than Al Martini), little blue boxes that discuss the most current research, and usually a paragraph or two about the history of a drug’s discovery. I am won over by this book. There are no review questions at the end of each chapter which is a minus if you like that.

Lippincott’s Pharmacology. If you liked their Biochem book then you will probably like this book as well. Everything is simplified (so it is easy to study from and memorize), there are a few review questions at the end of each chapter, and the pictures are funny. Some sections in this book (pharmacokinetics and antimicrobials) are not as strong as others are and had me looking in Golan for straight answers. While this book is an easy read and helped me get into some difficult sections, I would not recommend it as a stand-alone.

Katzung’s Pharmacology. As the required text, there is little that is talked about in class that this book does not cover. The graphs from this book are used in class, in the notes, and in the First Aid book. It seems to be the standard-bearer. It has all the detail you

could ever want, and this makes it a difficult read. There are several review questions at the back of each chapter.

Lange Pharmacology Flash cards- Some students find these helpful as a way to learn the drugs. If you are an index card person who found the Netter flash cards helpful, you may enjoy these as well. They are good because they have the relevant information about each drug along with a clinical vignette.

ADVANCED CLINICAL SKILLS (4cr)

More of the same. Every other week your group will listen to an hour lecture about the Abdomen, Chest, etc. These lectures are a nice supplement to the hospital rotations to help stay current. Your grade and attendance in St. Vincent is worth 25% of your overall grade, your performance in Fourth term is worth 50%, and the OSCE is worth 25%.

The OSCE is the culmination of your being. Did you learn anything in Clinical Skills over the past two years? Do you know how to inspect the abdomen, read and interpret an ECG, write a prescription? Well neither did I! The clinical tutors in St. Vincent's will break you off into groups and give you a handout for the whole thing. It serves as a script, which is appropriate, because the OSCE is about acting like a doctor. Set up is basic with seven stations. Four stations are for patient interviews (two of which include an exam) and three stations are for the EKG, X-Ray interpretation, and Prescription writing. You are given ten minutes at each station, which is plenty of time, except in the patient interviews where three minutes is blocked for feedback. It may not sound like a lot of fun, but people leave this test beaming and everyone is left to wonder, "Why wasn't Clinical Skills always this much fun?"

HOSPITAL ROTATIONS

Twice a week you will be in the hospital. You need a stethoscope, two pairs of scrubs, one person in your group to bring a PD kit, a white lab coat, some doctor clothing for underneath the white lab coat, and maybe the Pocket Bates. You will be pimped from time to time where the physician will ask you to report the patient's history, offer differentials, and explain the physics behind an under-water sealed drain for a chest tube (true story). The goal of this course is for you to leave the island capable of taking a patient history by yourself, carrying out a general and systems-based physical exam, reporting your findings while offering differential diagnoses, and not embarrassing the school. One book is helpful for all of this: CS Essentials: A complete guide to the USMLE CS by Jennifer Rooney. For the nuts and bolts of what questions to ask in which order and how to report to a physician, I found this book very helpful. Overall, you will go to the hospital twenty-two times in fourteen different specialties, you will see surgeries and autopsies, maybe watch a birth, and learn to suture. The experience is what you make of it.

HOSPITAL PLACEMENTS

Every term the students become all hot and bothered over their hospitals. They wonder which hospital is better for research, for surgery, and so on. If you talk to anyone in the clinical years, they will say that, "None of it matters. Every hospital is the same."

