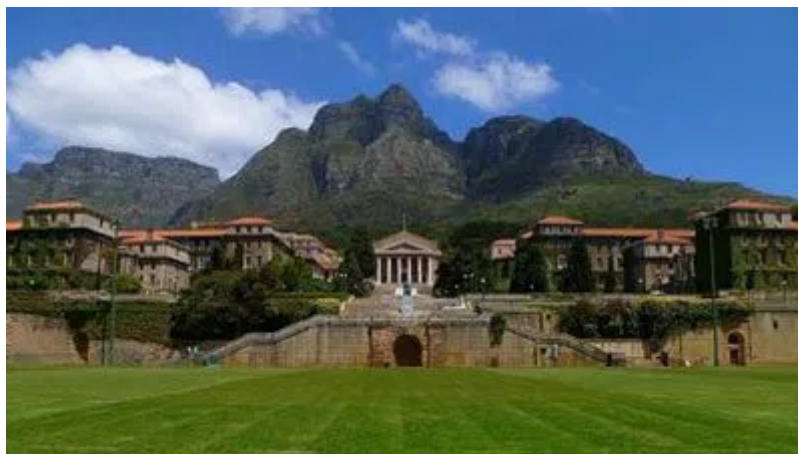


## LSE-UCT July School – an opportunity to marry theory with the realities of Africa

*The second LSE-UCT July School starts today in Cape Town, South Africa. LSE's Mairi Tejani is attending the July School and in this post, she describes her anticipation of a fortnight in a special African city.*

Over the next two weeks, I will be on the slopes of Devil's Peak at the University of Cape Town attending the second **LSE-UCT July School**. Part of the LSE African Initiative, this school brings together 100+ students, professionals and graduates from 44 countries across the globe. Having just completed my BSc in Economics at LSE, I am looking forward to engaging with the heavyweight combination of Professors Mark Alleyne, Anthony Black (both UCT) and Leonce Ndikumana (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) in my chosen course, *Economic Challenges for African Development*.



The UCT campus is on the slopes of the Devil's Peak mountain

With classes starting at 9am and finishing at 4:30pm everyday plus a 2000-word essay due at the end of the first week, the July School is set to be intense. Nevertheless, I do intend to make sure that my studies go beyond the classroom. Being in South Africa provides the perfect forum to marry theory with the realities of what is happening on the ground in Africa. Granted, the South African economy is an exception. As the second largest economy on Africa, an “upper-middle income economy” (as termed by the World Bank) and home to 11 official languages – my experiences South Africa cannot be a true representative of the 54 nations in the continent. Nonetheless, being in Africa always brings me a sense of calm. A sense of belonging. An air of optimism. I cannot think of a better location for the LSE-UCT July School.

South Africa is a beautiful country. In the 48 hours I have been here, this much is apparent. The 15 hour flight was made somewhat less painful by the friendly South African lady sitting beside me and those I have met so far have been welcoming to say the least. Thus far, my only reservation lies with the Nando's Peri Peri Chicken – I prefer the London equivalent!

I go into the LSE-UCT July School with no expectations. Currently my experiences and thoughts on South Africa can be likened to a blank canvas – I hope to return to London in two weeks with a colourful and vibrant picture of both Cape Town, South Africa and UCT.

