

# Study Abroad Connections

## Message from the Director

Dear UHM Faculty and Students,

Welcome and a Happy 2019! With the start of the new semester and year, we bring to you recent student perspectives and reflections from London, England and Kōbe, Japan.

Enjoy and Aloha!

Sincerely,



Sarita Rai

Director, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Study Abroad Center

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## A Story of Studying Abroad as a First-Generation Traveler:

**Kimberly Bonilla, Marketing Major**  
**Program: London, United Kingdom, Fall 2018**

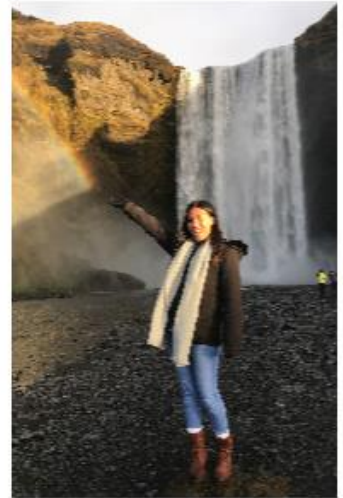
As a first-generation to travel throughout Europe, it gave me the ability to learn and understand the different cultures I was exposed to from the past three months. Having the experience to travel to 8 different countries in just 3 months gave me the opportunity to step outside of my culture, which is an aspect that I will carry on throughout my life.

My top favorite sights to see/things to do in London include eating out at Chinatown, Camden Market, London Eye, Tower Bridge, and shopping in Central London. While in London, a couple of my friends and I would plan to eat out at different restaurants, mostly at Chinatown and Camden Market. Both places offer the most delicious food ever and I am truly missing both places. London Eye and Tower Bridge were amazing! I couldn't take my eyes off of each one and I am beyond thankful that I was able to finally see each one in person. Although it was expensive to shop around London, I definitely enjoyed shopping and got souvenirs for my family and friends.

One of the best highlights of my study abroad experience is that I got to visit seven different countries and they are, France, Iceland, Portugal, Spain, Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden. Each country definitely has its own beauty, but my personal favorite two countries that I've been to would be Iceland and Spain. Both were beyond beautiful and gave me the best experiences ever that went beyond my expectations. I am looking forward to visiting those countries again in the near future!

For the past 3 months, I've made lots of unforgettable and fun memories with friends I have met along the way that I'll forever cherish in my life. I never thought I'd be able to get through study abroad because at first, I was terrified about what could possibly go wrong. However, it's all about taking the risks and believing in yourself.

Studying abroad has definitely given me so many valuable lessons that I will forever carry on with me. I am beyond thankful and blessed to be able to do study abroad in London this past semester (Fall 2018). Overall, being able to study abroad is a once in a lifetime opportunity that you should take advantage of when you can. It is such an incredible experience that will leave a mark in your life forever. Remember to take every opportunity you have and learn from each lesson you gain.



## Life Abroad: Timeless Memories

**Sean Barnes, Creative Media Major**  
**Program: Kōbe, Japan, Spring 2018**

### **What was your goal/objective for studying abroad in general, and in Kobe, Japan?**

So my goal for studying abroad was actually not to learn a secondary language ultimately. I believe that taking time abroad in a foreign country allows one to really explore themselves. Luckily I found such an experience in Japan, and I am so thankful for it. Before I travelled to study in Kōbe for the program, I was such a mess. But after studying abroad and having my eyes opened, I learned more about me as well as what existed around me. It's an experience in life I'll never forget.

### **Did you experience culture shock? How did the SAC pre-departure Orientation sessions help prepare you for your semester abroad in Kōbe, Japan?**

For me personally, I think I had the worst culture shock out of anyone in our program for the whole year! BUT, I think looking back on it now, it was ultimately because of myself. I was so hesitant to change or to even improve my language skills that I was just so flustered. My host family spoke almost exclusively Japanese which was a nightmare to me when I first arrived. Later in the program this proved to be such a blessing that I am thankful to have had. Soon, I began to change. I began to allow myself to fail, because you can only learn from your failures. The big key is allowing yourself to fail, and being so resistant to this at the time is what really set me up to be so vulnerable to extreme culture shock. Also, I had a terrible attitude of comparing myself to other program students there, which really hindered my progress the first month or two. So just be sure to really focus on you and your progress instead of those around you.

### **What was the most memorable experience you had in Kōbe, Japan?**

It's kind of hard to nail down a most memorable moment, as there were countless! I guess if I could generalize my most memorable moment, it would be experiencing life in a foreign country along with other international students, but also with the Japanese themselves. It just really allowed for an organic and truly life-changing environment that I had never experienced before. From night walks and talks to karaoke every other day, experiencing life in a foreign country whilst forging new friendships that will last a lifetime is something I'll never trade for anything else. Almost every other night in Japan I said to myself, "This is a night I'll never forget." I cannot tell you how much I treasure these memories and these people.





### What did you appreciate most about this study abroad experience?

Before studying abroad in Japan, I had studied Japanese in university for around 2 years. But, I can honestly say that I did not really have a good reason to study it. I just took it as a language requirement. But, when I was offered to study abroad in Japan, I thought to myself, "This is the perfect time to really study the language." And I was right. Now, it may be different for everyone, but studying abroad in the native country really allowed me to appreciate Japanese in a way I would argue you can't unless you live there and truly immerse yourself in the culture. While there are MANY different things I can appreciate from studying abroad, I think the most impactful to me was being able to grow as a human being. And I grew immensely in no better place for myself than in Japan.

### What did you learn about yourself from this experience?

I learned so many new things about what makes me tick thanks to studying abroad. This is something I cannot recommend enough about studying abroad. You just find yourself. In a way (at least I) you cannot while back home. It's just such a huge experience that you can't sum it up in this little paragraph. And you also discover new things you will learn to love that you never would have known otherwise! There is such a nice bit of mystery to studying abroad. At least for me there was. It was my first time in this country so everything was a new experience for me.

### How has this semester abroad in Kōbe, Japan changed you, your career choice, etc.?

Oh MAN, this is a good point. Studying in Japan just made me so happy. As for career choice, (my current major is Animation) I definitely want to minor now in Japanese. It's such a beautiful language that I'll always love hearing and listening to, as well as doing my best to speak it! If possible, I would like to teach English in Japan or even find work in Hawaii! I had a part time job whilst in Japan teaching English and it was such a great experience. But more importantly than all this, studying abroad in Japan changed my life. Permanently. I'll never be how I used to be before I went to Japan. And you know what? That's a good thing! I've improved myself in so many ways, as well as discovering more about myself there than I ever could have back home! Being in another country just allows you to take a step back from yourself and look at the world from more than one perspective. I'm all the more happier and overall a better me thanks to this once in a lifetime opportunity to study abroad.

### What advice would you give to prospective students interested in studying abroad, and particularly in Kobe, Japan?

Honestly, the only advice I have to give you is something I had to learn myself the hard way over there. And that is to be open, to those around you, but more importantly to yourself. Allow yourself to accept failures and to change and overcome. I was just so closed off when I first arrived that I didn't allow myself the chance to even improve. Now you may not have this problem when you travel abroad, but it always helps to remember this. It is essential to truly enjoying your experience 100%.



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Dare to  
Discover,  
Dare to  
Learn, and  
Dare to  
Understand

## Spring 2019 Calendar at a Glance

**Study Abroad Fair**  
**Wednesday, Jan. 23**  
9:00am - 2:00pm  
Campus Center Mall

**Informational Meetings**  
**(Summer 2018)**  
**Jan. 24 - Feb. 8**  
*Dates are tentative.*  
*Check website for details*

**Summer 2019**  
**Application Deadline**  
**Friday, Feb. 15**

**Informational Meetings**  
**(AY Japan 2019-20)**  
**Mid-February**  
*Check website for details*

**AY Japan 2019-20**  
**Application Deadline**  
**Friday, Mar. 1**

**Informational Meetings**  
**(Fall 2019)**  
**March**  
*Check website for details*

**Fall 2019 Application**  
**Deadline**  
**Monday, Apr. 1**

**Pre-Departure Orientation**  
**Meetings (Summer, AY**  
**Japan, Fall)**  
**April – early May**  
*Check website for details*

## Meet the next Resident Directors

### Summer 2019

#### **Mendoza, Argentina**

Barbara Bruno, Hawai'i Institute of Geophysics and Planetology  
*barb@hawaii.edu*

#### **Annecy, France**

Ann Auman, School of Communications  
*auman@hawaii.edu*

#### **Lille, France**

Jeffrey Tripp, American Studies  
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#### **Paris, France**

Jonathan Goldberg Hiller, Political Science  
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#### **Berlin, Germany**

Jinan Banna, Human Nutrition, Food, and Animal Sciences  
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#### **Dublin, Ireland**

Jason Higa, Anatomy, Biochemistry & Physiology  
*jkenjih@hawaii.edu*

#### **Florence, Italy**

Vernadette Gonzalez, American Studies  
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#### **Kōbe, Japan**

Roderick Labrador, Ethnic Studies  
*labrador@hawaii.edu*

#### **Seville, Spain**

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