

Study Abroad Connections

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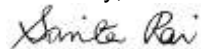
Message from the Director

Happy New Year! In this issue, two Summer 2014 participants share their experiences abroad in Hainan, China and Lille, France respectively. One common sentiment shared by both students is that one cannot fully learn language and culture through textbooks, photographs, videos or even the internet; one has to immerse oneself in it, and what better way than to live in-country?

In other related news, the Study Abroad Center is offering eight \$1,000 scholarship awards for Summer 2015 in Hainan, China. Please refer to our website www.studyabroad.org/news/1000-study-abroad-scholarship-opportunity/ for details.

Best wishes for a successful Spring 2015 semester.

Sincerely,



Sarita Rai

My Life-Changing Summer in Hainan

Michael Olevnik
Psychology & Political Science
Hainan, China, Summer 2014

My study abroad experience in Hainan, China happened to also be my first international experience overall, even after growing up in Detroit, Michigan, which is right next to the Canadian border. I remember how excited I was before going and how high my expectations were. Looking back on it now, it actually exceeded my expectations. However I will say that it was different from what I expected. I did some research, Googled some pictures, and watched some YouTube videos before going. I developed a view of what I was about to participate in. Now I realize how naïve I was. Hainan was a different world to me and that is not something that you can understand from the internet. It was also a different life. In Hawaii I am trying to balance work, school, bills, etc. In Hainan there was only one priority, and that was to learn Chinese. This allowed me the chance to go on adventures and do things that I would never do in Hawaii. I took risks, I got lost, I encountered situations unlike ones I have ever encountered before. There are a lot of things that were a first for me — new foods, new sights, new people, new experiences, etc. But I would say that any single one of them isn't extremely important; it is all the little things, even the ones you don't notice, that add up to how you've changed in the end. My two most valuable aspects overall would probably be the language skills and confidence I developed in Mandarin Chinese, and the understanding of China and its culture and people. Now these two aspects are still one of my biggest priorities today, and I have been waiting to go back to China ever since I got back to Hawaii.

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Spotlight On...

Caleb Peich
Mechanical Engineering
Lille, France, Summer 2014

Growing up in Hawaii, it is easy to feel somewhat displaced from the rest of the world, only seeing what's out there through a t.v. or computer screen. For me, the rest of the world has always been fascinatingly full of history, stories, and rich culture. In the summer between my freshman and sophomore year, I was able to live in the Dominican Republic for a month through an on campus RIO (Campus Crusade for Christ). It was a nerve-racking experience but an amazing one nonetheless, and it only fueled my desire to do more traveling. I always knew about our study abroad program and I initially wanted to go to a Spanish-speaking country because I have studied a lot of Spanish. However, for engineers there was no Spanish program, but there was a French one. After much deliberation, I decided that although it will be a new language, I wanted to go to France. I would study French for a year and learn all that I can. I would rather have taken the opportunity with a new language, than to have not taken the opportunity at all. Another important aspect that drew me to the engineering program in Lille, France was the fact that it also came with an internship. Interning in a foreign country is a scary opportunity, but I knew I could not pass it up.

During my long voyage to France, I told myself that my goal is to absorb as much as I can, learn all that I can, and to not be afraid to make a fool of myself. I knew that I would make many mistakes with the culture and the language while in France, but I remembered Einstein's quote, "A person starts to live when he can live outside of himself." And so, I decided that if I really wanted to grow from this experience, I would have to go beyond my comfort zone, take risks, and not be afraid to laugh at myself along the way. With that goal in mind, I took a lot of risks, and I had to laugh at myself a lot. I made many mistakes with the language and the people. One example was at the company I was interning for (Vallourec). It is very important in French-speaking countries to acknowledge everyone as you walk by them or as they come into your office. However, there are a lot of people in the office that I worked with and I would shake hands, smile, and say "bonjour" to all of them. A few times I would say bonjour to a person twice and the workers would look at me funny and jokingly tell me in French, "Are you drunk? We just said 'hi' 10 minutes ago!" I was pretty embarrassed, but I laughed it off and quickly learned everyone's faces. Another time I was hanging out with some French students and I was trying to say a compliment about the food. I directly translated the phrase, "It tastes good!" from English to French, however, they all started laughing at my Cookie Monster language because it would roughly translate to sound like, "It good flavor!" in English!

Another example of a mistake with the language was when I was trying to ask my friend a question about blackberries - we were learning about fruits in my French class. In French, the word for blackberry is la mûre (lah mehure) and the word for love is l'amour (lah-moore). So I turned to my female French friend and started my question with "Estelle, la mûre..." but I said it too quickly so to her it sounded like, "Estelle, l'amour..." which has the connotation of "Estelle, my love!" This was also in front of many of my friends, and we all had a good laugh with that one. I was definitely embarrassed! There are many other stories to tell about my many mistakes, and how I got lost in almost every city I visited (not used to not having Google Maps at all times), but the more I put myself out there, the more I grew emotionally. My speaking abilities increased exponentially and I learned a lot about new cultures because with a lot of errors, comes a lot of lessons learned.

For my internship, I was assigned to a French mechanical engineering student named Florian. We ended up becoming really close friends by the end of the trip and it was really hard to say goodbye. During the internship I was working for a manufacturing company that made all different types of pipes. The goal for Florian and me was to analyze the efficiency of the current pipe-making process, and see where it could be improved. We also had to see which line of production we could cut out if we changed certain processes around. It took about two weeks for me to actually figure out what was going on because Florian would speak to me in broken English and I'd speak to him in broken French, and things would easily get lost in translation. To have a normal conversation in French is not too difficult, but to have a conversation that needs the nuances of technical engineering jargon is much more difficult. There were times when our patience was running thin, but we figured out a way to communicate and get our work done. It was really fascinating to observe how another culture works, and I appreciated how efficient everyone was. Work time was used for work, and when people would talk to each other, it was about work related matters. Lunch was an hour long, and everyday I would have a

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baguette sandwich with Florian as we'd talk about politics, culture, work, and girls. I definitely learned a lot through that experience. I learned about how to adapt to a new environment quickly and the importance of connecting with people even across cultures.

Due to the prime location of Lille, France I was able to travel to so many different world-famous cities. Almost every weekend I would travel to a new city. I visited London, Paris, Brussels, Bruges, Grenoble, Lyon and even flew down to Rome. I saw things that I only know about from my history textbook. The most breath-taking place for me was the Vatican and Vatican Museum. The awe-inspiring, neck-breaking, holy structures and statues I saw were beyond words. In Hawaii, we have a lot of amazing natural beauty; however in Europe, they had a lot of great historical and artistic beauty. I don't think one is more beautiful than the other, but they are just different types of beauty, and Europe exposed me to a beauty I had never seen.

It was an amazing trip full of laughter, embarrassment followed by more laughter, and adventure followed by stress and then more laughter. While living in France, school felt so far away not just physically but emotionally as well. The hair-pulling stress of my final exams became some faded memory, and the thought of trying to get an engineering degree became less of a fixation in my mind. I don't mean to say that school became less important; I only mean to say that my world became bigger. My concept of life blew up like a puffer fish under attack and suddenly the grand worries from back home became footnotes to my life journey, which is something I miss, because since returning home, reality has set in and it's back to the books.

I saw a lot of great cities and landmarks, but I didn't buy a souvenir for myself. I knew that no keychain, bumper sticker, or pair of knock-off sunglasses could encapsulate my trip, because the most impactful parts of my two months in France did not come from the places I visited, but from the people I met. In French the word 'souvenir' means, "to remember," which is why the friends I made, the traveling I did with others, and the laughs we shared over wine and cheese are the true souvenirs I took home with me. To any student studying abroad, I would encourage you to be willing to take a step beyond your comfort zone, not in a foolish or flippant way, but with a desire for adventure. If you look for adventure and you look to honestly learn about a new world, you will find an endless amount of opportunity to do so and your life will never be the same.





Study Abroad Center
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
1890 East West Road
Moore Hall, Room 115
Honolulu, HI 96822

Phone 808 956 5143
Fax 808 956 9319

Web studyabroad.org
uhmstudyabroad
uhmstudyabroad

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

Meet the Resident Directors

... and the exciting courses they are offering on-site!

Summer 2015

Mendoza, Argentina
Kyle Van Duser duser@hawaii.edu
First Year Programs

Hainan, China
Monica Ghosh monicag@hawaii.edu
Hamilton Library

Annecy, France
Daniel Rubinoff rubinoff@hawaii.edu
Plant and Environment Protection Services

Lille, France
Anthony Kuh kuh@hawaii.edu
Electrical Engineering

Paris, France
C. Manu Kaiama ckaiama@hawaii.edu
School of Accountancy/ Kamakakuokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies
HWST 490 (W): Global Perspectives on Territorial Acquisition: Economic and Cultural Effects

Berlin, Germany
Andy Reilly areilly@hawaii.edu
Fashion and Design Merchandising
APDM 496 (O): Field Study in FDM - Fashion in 20th Century Germany

Florence, Italy
Brian Szuster szuster@hawaii.edu
Geography

Kōbe, Japan
Roderick Labrador labrador@hawaii.edu
Ethnic Studies

Fall 2015

London, England
Robert McHenry mchenry@hawaii.edu
English
ENG 272 (W): London in Literature
ENG 445: Shakespeare

Paris, France
John Lynham lynham@hawaii.edu
Economics
ECON 130: Principles of Economics in Modern French History
ECON 358: Environmental Economics

Delhi, India
Richard Johnson rich@hawaii.edu
Curriculum Studies
ITE 417: Developmentally Appropriate Practices
EDCS 440: Curriculum Implications of Multicultural Education

Machida, Japan
Wayne Iwaoka iwaoka@hawaii.edu
Food Science and Human Nutrition
FSHN 181 (W): The Chemical Nature of Food
FSHN 476 (O): The Cultural Aspect of Food Habits

Florence, Italy
Kathryn Hoffmann hoffmann@hawaii.edu
LLEA - French
LLEA 471B (W): The Devil, Hell, and the Tales of the Fall: Italian Art and Literature
LLEA 471C (E): The Fantastic and the Strange in Italy: Art, Curiosity Collections, and Tales

Seville, Spain
Fabio López-Lázaro fl@hawaii.edu
History
HIST 433 (W): Medieval Cultures: Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Western Mediterranean
HIST 489 (W): World Maritime History: Merchants, Migrants, and Pirates

Spring 2015 Calendar at a Glance

Study Abroad Fair
Wednesday, January 21
9:00am - 2:00pm
Campus Center

Informational Meetings
Please visit www.studyabroad.org for details.

Summer 2015 Application Deadline
Tuesday, February 17

Academic Year-in-Japan 2015-2016 Application Deadline
Monday, March 2

Fall 2015 Application Deadline
Wednesday, April 1