RAMAPO COLLEGE - “COSTUME & FASHION IN BRITAIN” - LONDON, UK
SUMMER 2015
Website: https://ramapo.studioabroad.com/?go=LondonCostume
THEA 337 (4 credits), taught by Professor Beba Shamash (hshamash@ramapo.edu)

RAMAPO COLLEGE - “INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EXPERIENCE: FOCUS ON LATIN AMERICA”
SUMMER 2015
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IBUS 337 (4 credits), taught by Professor Gladys Torres-Baumgarten (gtorresb@ramapo.edu)

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NEW PROGRAMS
The audience in the hall burst out with laughter hearing my surprising stuffs about the United States. The families gathered in a presentation hall of Ramapo College as it was the Honors Family day. I was sharing my cultural difference. This laughter was brought up by the tradition of saying “sorry” in Nepal and “Bless you” in the United States. Well, the experience was actually awkward. When I sneezed for the first time in the United States, the person in front of me went “Bless you”. However, I did not understand him and I said “I am so sorry.” While expressing these things in the family day, I suddenly realized that I have experienced much more cultural shock than I thought I would. I had read the whole book of cultural shock in the United States, but still I faced it. Am I actually supposed to get this cultural shock?

The memory of my first day on campus is still fresh in my mind. My friend and I were about to cross the road when we saw a car coming. I suppose the car was much more expensive than the Maruti 800 I used to see in my country. Even if it was not, the “reflectiveness” had made me feel so. As we did in Nepal, we stopped for the car to pass by. The surprising factor was that the car stopped too, and the driver insisted us to go first. Had it been in Nepal, the car driver would have thanked us for being the only civilized citizen in the country. This feature of US culture really shocked me. Moreover, I have not heard a single horn by cars. Well, this was something out of my knowledge I gathered from the culture shock book.

I had read and heard a lot about the “international table” where the whole college would be divided into two parts: the Americans and the Internationals. I actually planned to be the exception to get this cultural shock?

The objective of the Roukema Center for International Education (RCIE) is beyond simply sending students overseas or receiving international students, but striving to create a learning community committed to global understanding and intercultural competency and that supports international initiatives across the campus community. The RCIE Team has worked to implement federally-recognized standards of best practices to inform Ramapo College’s education abroad activities, as well as to strengthen the awareness and accessibility of international opportunities. In addition, the RCIE Team has developed creative, collaborative programming across campus to promote intercultural and global awareness.

The Center is named for the Honorable Marge Roukema, who represented northern New Jersey in the United States Congress from 1981 to 2003. She championed the Family Leave Act and educational and financial reform legislation among other things, and enhanced resources for education in her district and at Ramapo College. She is a recipient of an Honorary Doctor of Law degree from Ramapo.

The Roukema Center for International Education is located in the Anisfield School of Business, Suite-123. Our phone number is (201) 684-7533, or contact us by email at goabroad@ramapo.edu. www.ramapo.edu/international
When My Dream Became Reality

I always thought studying abroad was an unrealistic fantasy of mine that I would never have the chance to make come true. I remember researching different programs and countries as a freshman, wishing I could be one of those lucky people that get the incredible opportunity to study in another country. As a member of the softball team at Ramapo, it was clear that I would never have time to go abroad. But luckily, an incredible summer program was brought to my attention; and from that moment on, I knew I would do anything to make sure I was a part of it. I became anxious and began applying immediately. Through all this excitement, my roommate also became interested, applied, and before we knew it, we were on a plane heading to Sydney, Australia for seven weeks.

Upon arriving, I wasn’t sure what to expect. I remember being extremely excited but also overwhelmed. Immediately after landing in Sydney, we were brought to Bondi Beach where we walked along the coast, got ourselves lunch, and began meeting the people we would be spending this amazing adventure with. As I sit here and relive each day in my head, the first few days of orientation all seem like a blur. We were all running on no sleep due to the 16-hour time difference, which was probably the hardest adjustment that had to be made. There were multiple instances when I Facetimed my parents in the middle of the night New Jersey time because I completely forgot about that time difference, but luckily they were understanding. While in Sydney, I had class all day Monday and was involved in an internship Tuesday through Thursday. I immediately began noticing the differences of simple day-to-day tasks. There were many more people focused on their fitness and living a healthy lifestyle; people were always running and working out. Also, every Monday in class we wouldn’t only have a lunch break but also a morning tea break, which is a regular occurrence in Australia. In addition walking and driving on the opposite side of the road was a change for sure.

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Christopher Lukasik ’14
Kansai Gaidai University
Osaka, Japan
Fall 2013

Photographer’s Journey

CLOCKWISE
1. Sanjusangen-do in Kyoto, a temple housing over a thousand Kannon Statues
2. In Autumn, the changing leaves, “Momiji,” are considered one of the most beautiful sights in the country
3. Kiyomizu Temple, one of the most famous mountainside temples in Japan
4. Beautiful foliage in Nara during the changing of the seasons
5. Owl Cafés are one of the many types of cafés where you can play with and have your picture taken with unusual animals

Reflections from Abroad

The most common request from my friends in the United States while I was abroad was to bring home a Koala or Kangaroo. Sadly I wasn’t able to do that for everyone, but I did have the opportunity to be around them myself. We visited Featherdale Wildlife Park where we walked around and fed the kangaroos that roamed freely in a large enclosed area. I never thought I would actually be that close to a kangaroo in my life, but I’m happy I was. That wasn’t the extent of the awesome things I experienced while in Australia. I traveled north to Queensland and spent a weekend in Cairns visiting the Great Barrier Reef. I consider my weekend in Cairns to be the craziest times of my life. I went snorkeling at the Great Barrier Reef, which was beautiful, and somehow found the courage to Sky Dive and Bungee Jump. Every experience I had in Australia was unlike any other. I attempted surfing for the first time, repelled down the Blue Mountains, visited Olympic Park, climbed the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and got to see the Sydney Opera House in person. These experiences would not have been the same if it wasn’t for the close bond that had formed with the group of friends I had met. To top off my amazing adventure, I was extremely lucky to have my parents visit for two weeks and have the chance to be involved in the things I had been telling them about. Sharing some of these experiences with my parents is something I know we will never forget.

Everything I had the chance of doing while in Australia are without a doubt the most incredible things I’ve ever done in my life. But more importantly, the friendships I formed while in Australia are going to be for a lifetime. The distance may seem like a problem but the way I look at it is I have more of a reason to travel now that I have people to visit. With all this being said, thank you Australia for teaching me more than I could have ever learned in a classroom! Thank you for bringing these people into my life, and I will be back someday! Thank you for introducing me to my addiction with Tim Tams, the most amazing biscuits (cookies) ever. And most importantly thank you Mom and Dad because without you both, I would never have had this eye opening opportunity that has forever changed me and can bring an instant smile to my face.

CLOCKWISE
1. The last weekend in Australia on a Hunter Valley Wine Tour while my parents were visiting
2. Featherdale Wildlife Park hanging out with the Koalas
3. Roommates, Michelle Mouhtis and Kristen Wilson, their first day in Australia at Bondi Beach
4. Abseiling/Repelling at the Blue Mountains
I wanted to study abroad in Spain over the summer of 2013, but when I found out the only program which would satisfy the requirements was in Bilbao, I was disappointed. I dreamed of going to school in a populous and magnificent city, such as Madrid or Barcelona, and I accepted the program in Bilbao only for its academic benefits. Little did I know that I was going to visit the most beautiful city I’ve seen and have one of the best months of my life.

Bilbao is a city of 350,000 people, located in the Basque Country on the northern coast of Spain and only an hour drive from the French border. It is the capital of the Biscay province and the largest city in the entire Basque Country. It was founded in 1300 on the banks of the Nervión River.

Bilbao is exceptionally green and surrounded by mountains. When I arrived in the city, I was surprised by how fresh and lively the city looked in contrast to the dry plains of Madrid, where I had spent the previous couple of days.

On our first day in Bilbao, we were taken on a guided tour (to my horror, in Spanish) around the city. Bilbao is small in size and it only takes a couple of hours to walk around it and see the main points of interest. It was at this tour when I fell in love with the city.

Bilbao and the area have so much to offer: mountains, a river and a sea, old quarters and modern buildings; museums, libraries, and a theater; cheap bars and fancy restaurants; an enormous park and a new soccer stadium. You just name it!

In addition, Bilbao is clean and safe. Gardens, flowers, and fountains can be seen all around the city. Transportation is available and cheap. For 3 Euros, you can buy a Barik card, which reduces the cost by half for all vehicles (city buses, trams, metro, and funiculars (cable railways)).

Bilbao is also big on its nightlife, as almost every week one of the surrounding towns would have a "fiesta". On my first week in Bilbao, some of my classmates and I took the metro to Sopelana, a nearby town, to enjoy the local festival. I was surprised that the train was packed at 11 p.m., but it wasn’t until we got out that I saw the full scope of the event. People were everywhere: parks, streets, sidewalks, all around us talking, singing, and drinking.

Alexander Vasilev ’15
University of Deusto - Language and Culture
Bilbao, Spain
Summer 2013
Cultural tourism is also a major aspect of Bilbao. On my free time, I visited the Fine Arts, Archaeological, and Basque museums, which all had a free day for visitors. However, the king of museums in Bilbao is definitely the Guggenheim, located on the river bank across from my campus. Its colossal building of metal and glass had become the most important landmark of the city.

In July, Bilbao is the most popular destination for rock fans all around Europe. BBK Live is a three-day festival, which features various performers from around the world on live stages. One of my friends and I got to see, among others, bands like Depeche Mode, Kings of Leon, and Green Day.

One of the guided excursions took us to the famous running of the bulls during the San Fermin festival in Pamplona. Watching people running and trying to touch or mount the bull at the arena after the run was an exciting and thrilling experience. The euphoria at the event is almost palpable as everybody in the entire town is dressed in the same way: all you see on the streets, squares or at the arena is a sea of white clothes and red scarves.

Discovering Bilbao was one of the luckiest accidents that has ever happened to me. In only five weeks, I managed to learn so much, experience a new culture and make new friends. I miss walking along the river, eating pintxos, and seeing the Guggenheim as I go to class. I am already making plans to go back, not to study, but to experience more of the city and see what else it has to offer.
The plane had just landed. It was not only my first time out of the country on my own, but my first time out of the country ever! I took a deep breath, but couldn't help letting out a smile. What did Paris have in store for me?

It didn’t take too long for Paris to surprise me. It was our first day in Paris, my roommate and I had just taken a taxi to our host mother’s apartment, who lived in a cozy, little cul de sac. It was hard to believe that this quiet court ran off of a busy street, complete with cafés, supermarchés, and even some tourist attractions. As my roommate and I walked up to the door that would lead us to the apartment building, we were wide-eyed, staring at everything, and probably everyone, in utter amazement. However, something recaptured our interest: we could not open the door. We came to the conclusion, as most people probably would in this situation, that the door was locked.

There was a button on the side of the door – a doorbell perhaps? We continued to press the “doorbell” in five minute intervals. We were waiting outside for at least twenty minutes before a woman with a scooter came through the cul de sac. She pressed the button that we had mistaken for a doorbell and opened the door. The button opened the door! My new roommate and I gave each other a look that can best be verbalized into, “We are such idiots!” as we followed this woman into the apartment building. The woman turned to look at us with a confused expression. After this whole door predicament, I often wondered what that woman was thinking. I came to the conclusion that it was something along the lines of, “What planet are these people from? Are there no doors where they come from?” I will never forget that woman’s expression, as it characterized every miss-stated phrase, butchered communication, and cultural blunder that were inevitably made on the trip that often left me wondering, “What planet am I from?”

Despite all of these blunders, or maybe because of them, going to France was one of the best experiences of my life. By placing myself outside of my comfort zone I not only learned a lot about the world around me, but also about myself. I couldn’t imagine a more enriching experience than going abroad (how else would I learn to open a Parisian door?), and I can’t wait to go abroad again, perhaps back to Paris or maybe to a new destination, to have new and exciting adventures.
I don't remember the exact moment when I fell in love with Ireland. Perhaps, it was when I first walked down the winding and bustling streets of Galway on New Year’s Eve. Maybe, it was when my Lecturer helped the entire class sneak into the ruins of Clonmacnoise castle. Or, it might have been when I stood on the hills of ancient Tara. But, I can tell you without a doubt that this is not a fleeting emotion. I often find my mind wandering through the green hills and beautiful landscapes, and find myself wishing I had never left them. Studying abroad in Galway taught me countless lessons and provided me with priceless memories I will carry with me for the rest of my life. I made friends I would have never met otherwise, and experienced so many new and wonderful things. If you can study abroad, do it! Believe me you will learn a lot more from leaving your comfort zone and taking that chance. “Go n-eiri an bothar leat,” as they say in Ireland, or as we say here “Happy Travels!”

After my study abroad experience, I truly believe in the quote “Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.” I cannot tell you how much just six weeks changed my life forever. I have told bits and pieces to anyone who will listen, but no one can truly know how it changed me for life. For the greater part of my life, I was the shy girl in the back of the classroom that kept to herself. Once I set off for college, I opened up a bit more, but I was still cautious to let just anyone in. How did this normal girl from New Jersey go from being a really shy person to hanging out with a large group of students going out to discover what Seville held for us? The friends I made during my time abroad as well as those who have studied abroad themselves are the few people who understand what being a part of this particular experience truly means. Now I crave to travel around the world, and comfort does not matter to me anymore. Backpacking and staying at hostels was the best experience for me personally. I guess I have become a wanderlust kid, but at least, I know that I’m not the only one and seek comfort that some of the friends I met along the way are the same as I am.
Reflections from Abroad

Through, I was 100% foreign and odd though it might sound, that “exclusion” comforted me tremendously. I didn’t have to worry about fitting in because realistically speaking, I probably never would. That knowledge gave me the freedom to just observe and absorb as much as I could about Japan without having to battle my own cultural issues. It definitely made the whole experience that much more enriching and thought-provoking.

Having said that, those six months as a student were very different from my six months as a working professional there. My mindset when I studied abroad came down to this: learn Japanese, enjoy the country, and try to move past your comfort zone. I did my best to just observe and absorb as much as I could about the Japanese culture in a corporate setting. There’s an entirely different set of vocabulary and style in the language precisely because of this important hierarchy.

As a student, I didn’t really experience the infamous Japanese style of communication because all of the Japanese teachers at my language school worked in an international environment that necessitated open dialogue to avoid misunderstandings. Suffice it to say, I got a massive dose of Japanese communication when I actually worked in Japan for a Japanese company. It doesn’t matter that it’s one that specializes in English education; it has been and will always be a Japanese corporation run by Japanese people in the Japanese way, which unsurprisingly enough for those familiar with this reality, is having a negative impact on the country’s business world.

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Japan: A ROAD TO SELF-DISCOVERY

I remember the nausea and the hunger, the hyper energy and the exhaustion after the 14-hour flight from Newark to Tokyo in January of 2010. I remember a cold breeze hitting my face when I dragged myself and my suitcases up the exit stairs and onto the street. I remember noticing the wet ground and clear night sky. But most of all I remember that feeling of belonging the moment I walked out of that station. Even at the time, I thought it was an odd sensation, especially considering I’d only been in the country for a few hours. Granted, I knew a lot about the culture and history through my studies over the years, but to feel like the place was home right away? I figured it was just the mixed-up emotion that didn’t mean I embraced every aspect of the Japanese culture, but I accepted them and tried to behave accordingly instead of expecting them to suit my needs. When in Rome (Tokyo), ya know? The fact that my parents raised me the “Indian” way probably helped a lot as I settled into life in Japan because many Asian cultures share similar values: respect for your family, especially elders and those in positions of authority, like teachers and doctors, respect for education and anything capable of advancing your knowledge of yourself and the world around you, the importance of hard work and determination to move ahead in life, how to be a cheapskate (or be thrifty, I think I’ll stick with the latter), and many more. This upbringing ultimately became a success.

As a science major, chemistry specifically, studying abroad always seemed like a far reach for me. However, I was pleasantly surprised to see how many options there are for many science majors. I studied abroad with SIT (School for International Training) on their Rainforest, Reef, and Cultural Ecology program in Cairns, Australia. The program was not a typical study abroad program, in that I wasn’t enrolled in an Australian university. Rather, I was with a group of other American students, learning through field excursions supplemented by lectures with the group. My program took me to various rainforests, on a camping trip with Aboriginal elders, and even a 10 day stay on an island in the Great Barrier Reef, where I had the opportunity to snorkel twice a day.

While the traveling was an amazing and an awesome experience, the best part of the program was the Independent Study Project the final month of my program. I was tasked with finding my own research project anywhere within Australia, my own housing near the research, transportation to that city/town, transportation from my housing to my project, and all the other budget-like tasks involved.

For my research, I was to spend one month in Sydney to conduct field research. Mind you, Sydney is a 2-3hr flight from Cairns, and I needed to complete most of the tasks above before arriving. The weekend of my departure was one of the most stressful times of my life. It was also one of the most rewarding in personal growth.

I found research with a professor from the University of Sydney. He was commissioned by the Catchment Authority to conduct water quality analyses on top and bottom water samples from 26 different sites across the Sydney Harbour and three of its tributaries. I was tasked with conducting the nutrient analyses on all the samples, about 4 different nutrients on 52 samples per week, as well as help collect them from time to time. Essentially, during sample collection, I got a free tour of the harbour.

With that aside, I had to look for my own housing! I looked online, and it didn't start off as successful as I thought it'd be. I had planned two appointments before arriving in Sydney. The first place wasn't at all what it was advertised as, owners and space included. The second was better (not saying much) but felt like a dirty dorm room.

I panicked: I had a hostel booked for two nights and had no idea where I'd be living for the next month after that. Luckily, I made a friend with someone staying in my room that helped calm me down and re-focus. I was able to contact another person which ultimately became a success.

The apartment was in the center of the city across the street from the Queen Victoria Building, a beautiful market building above a major train station. It had two bathrooms, laundry, and unlimited wi-fi (a major luxury and expense in Australia). It was high in price, but definitely worth it compared to the others. The bus I would need to catch to get to my research also was across the street from my apartment. I really couldn't have asked for a better location.

While my first weekend in Sydney seemed (and to an extent) unpleasant, the whole experience was an unforgettable and rewarding journey. Throughout my entire time in Australia, I learned more about myself in that semester than I have in 21 years. I realized what I wanted to pursue in my future academically and professionally. I discovered a confidence I never had, and I developed a thirst for travel and adventure that I was always too afraid to quench. My time alone in Sydney helped me in so many ways. At times you need to reevaluate, see what you want, and enjoy things.
SUMMER 2013

Colleen Moran | Madrid, Spain | Spanish Language Studies
Caroline May | London, United Kingdom | Psychology
Jacob Marks | Copenhagen, Denmark | Accounting
Natalie Marek | Copenhagen, Denmark | History
Amanda Lutz | Copenhagen, Denmark | Economics
Alexandra Lehaf | Paris, France | Communication Arts
Kelsey Kozak | London, United Kingdom | Social Science
Brian Kirk | Copenhagen, Denmark | Business Administration
Kimberly Halloran | Copenhagen, Denmark | Psychology
Haydee Guardamino | Barcelona, Spain | Undeclared
Victoria Grey | Barcelona, Spain | Psychology
Shenelle Gooden | London, United Kingdom | Nursing
Danielle Gold | Bilbao, Spain | Spanish Language Studies
Francesca De Rosa | Tokyo, Japan | Literature
Marissa Eck | Galway, Ireland | Psychology
Kathryn Ann Ferrari | Florence, Italy | Business Administration
Mark Florzynski | Paris, France | Information Systems
Emily Gang | Valencia, Spain | Spanish Language Studies
Kristen Garafano | Florence, Italy | Communication Arts
Rebecca Gobker | Edinburgh, United Kingdom | Literature
Danielle Gold | Bilbao, Spain | Spanish Language Studies
Shanele Gooden | London, United Kingdom | Nursing
Victoria Grey | Bilbao, Spain | Psychology
Haydee Guardamino | Barcelona, Spain | Undeclared
Kimberly Halloran | Copenhagen, Denmark | Psychology
Brian Kirk | Copenhagen, Denmark | Business Administration
Kelley Kozak | London, United Kingdom | Social Science
Alexandra Lehaf | Paris, France | Communication Arts
Amanda Lutz | Copenhagen, Denmark | Economics
Natalie Marek | Copenhagen, Denmark | History
Jacob Marks | Copenhagen, Denmark | Accounting
Alyssa Maurin | Copenhagen, Denmark | Visual Arts
Caroline May | London, United Kingdom | Psychology
Joseph Moncada | Seville, Spain | Business Administration
Colleen Moran | Madrid, Spain | Spanish Language Studies

FALL 2013

Catherine Morris | Bilbao, Spain | Political Science
Michelle Mouhets | Sydney, Australia | Social Work
Courtney Mower | Dublin, Ireland | Biochemistry
Bridge O'Keefe | Copenhagen, Denmark | American Studies
Ashley Orlando | Copenhagen, Denmark | Business Administration
Lauren Pry | Dublin, Ireland | Accounting
Jessica Pulsort | London, United Kingdom | Undeclared
Kaitlyn Reilly | Barcelona, Spain | Mathematics
Ilieona Roundtree | San José, Costa Rica | Nursing
Sarah Shahabi | San José, Costa Rica | Biology
Richard Suarez | Bilbao, Spain | Business Administration
Aleksander Vasilec | Bilbao, Spain | Communication Arts
Kelly Ward | Galway, Ireland | Biology
Kristen Wilson | Sydney, Australia | Psychology
Carolyn Woghsad | Dublin, Ireland | Biology
Audrey Zabolomski | Barcelona, Spain | Literature

WINTER BREAK 2014

Blair Ballin | Paris, France | International Business

SPRING 2014

Gianna Acevedo | Barcelona, Spain | Psychology
Kate Ambrose | Seville, Spain | International Studies
Razia Antiques | Barcelona, Spain | Psychology
Isabel Arrieta | Bangalore, India | Matric-Undeclared
Marlon Becker | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
Samantha Bell | Barcelona, Spain | Communication Arts
Jeffrey Bendett | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
D'Alhna Bishop | Gold Coast, Australia | Business Administration
Christina Bruscimano | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
Kristina Cuthal | Bilbao, Spain | Spanish Language Studies
Justine Diaz | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
Patrick DiGangi | Bangalore, India | Law and Society
Emily Eger | Prague, Czech Republic | Business Administration
Olivia Elton | Barcelona, Spain | Political Science
Donawon Falls | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
Charles Feinroth | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
Nicole Fibbert | Bangalore, India | Social Work
Oliver Francisco | Seoul, South Korea | International Studies
Emily Gang | San German, Puerto Rico | Spanish Language Studies
Gregorio Gangala | Rome, Italy | International Business
Sarah Garas | Rome, Italy | Business Administration
Koensten Gormley | Hilo, Hawaii | Communication Arts
Kostra Gormley | Hilo, Hawaii | Undeclared
Kayleigh Gumbrecht | Gold Coast, Australia | Psychology
Kelly Haggerty | Cambridge, United Kingdom | Music
Veronica Hill | Cairns, Australia | Accounting
Kelly Haggerty | Cambridge, United Kingdom | Music
Veronica Hill | Cairns, Australia | Accounting
Shannon Jirkovsky | Paris, France | International Studies
Lee-Anna John | Bangalore, India | Communication Arts
Lauren Keller | Paris, France | International Business
Rebecca King | London, United Kingdom | Communication Arts
Kelly Kosza | Melbourne, Australia | Business Administration
Katherine Lane | Galway, Ireland | Psychology
Stephanie Manzanares | Madrid, Spain | Spanish Language Studies
Michael Mikhail | Rome, Italy | Business Administration
Colleen Moran | Seville, Spain | Spanish Language Studies
Amaial Morgenstern | Bangalore, India | Business Administration
Kelly O'Dowd | Bangalore, India | International Studies
Linear Placencia | Bangalore, India | Social Work
Amanda Pontone | Florence, Italy | Business Administration
Elena Ru bertini | Rome, Italy | Communication Arts
Laura Sanci | Bangalore, India | Liberal Studies
Andreina Santamaria | Bangalore, India | International Studies
Mikolatce Swasky | Madison, South Dakota | Communication Arts
Carmen Trujillo | Bilbao, Spain | International Business

SPRING BREAK 2014

Claude Barnes | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Accounting
Anthony Darstly | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Accounting
Mark Ellickbra | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Accounting
Daniel Johnson | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Information Systems
Tharth Lai | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Accounting
Jonathan Mangil | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Political Science
Alicia Miller | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Biochemistry
Nasa Osari-Agemon | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Law and Society
Nora Preguer | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Business Administration
Muneshwar Sambal | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Business Administration
John Sapada | Beijing and Shanghai, China | International Studies
Nicole Trud | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Law and Society
SUMMER 2013

- Giselle Acero | Sevilla, Spain | International Studies
- Anna Anjarasumporn | Prague, Czech Republic | Communication Arts
- David Ballan | San José, Costa Rica | Environmental Studies
- Elizabeth Broc | Galway, Ireland | Nursing
- Laura Calandra | London, United Kingdom | Communication Arts
- Julia Clinton | Cambridge, United Kingdom | History
- Thomas Colalla | Paris, France | History
- Christina Covello | London, United Kingdom | Contemporary Arts
- Jackson Currie | Prague, Czech Republic; Seville, Spain | Communication Arts
- Elisa D’Silva | Paris, France | Literature
- Francesca De Ros | Tokyo, Japan | Literature
- Marissa Eck | Galway, Ireland | Psychology
- Caitlin Ann Ferrara | Florence, Italy | Business Administration
- Mark Florczyński | Paris, France | Information Systems
- Emily Gang | Valencia, Spain | Spanish Language Studies
- Kristen Garafano | Florence, Italy | Communication Arts
- Rebecca Gokberk | Edinburgh, United Kingdom | Literature
- Danielle Gold | Bilbao, Spain | Spanish Language Studies
- Shanelle Gooden | London, United Kingdom | Nursing
- Victoria Grey | Bilbao, Spain | Psychology
- Haydee Guardamino | Barcelona, Spain | Undeclared
- Kimberly Halloran | Copenhagen, Denmark | Psychology
- Brian Kirk | Copenhagen, Denmark | Business Administration
- Kelsey Koza | London, United Kingdom | Social Science
- Alexandra Lefah | Paris, France | Communication Arts
- Amanda Lutz | Copenhagen, Denmark | Economics
- Natalie Marek | Copenhagen, Denmark | History
- Jacob Marks | Paris, France | Accounting
- Alyssa Maurin | Copenhagen, Denmark | Visual Arts
- Caroline May | London, United Kingdom | Psychology
- Joseph Moncada | Seville, Spain | Business Administration
- Colleen Moran | Madrid, Spain | Spanish Language Studies

FALL 2013

- Catherine Morris | Bilbao, Spain | Political Science
- Michelle Mouhats | Sydney, Australia | Social Work
- Courtney Mower | Dublin, Ireland | Biochemistry
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- Ashley Orlando | Copenhagen, Denmark | Business Administration
- Lauren Pry | Dublin, Ireland | Accounting
- Jessica Pulsort | London, United Kingdom | Undeclared
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- Aleksander Vasilev | Bilbao, Spain | Communication Arts
- Kell Ward | Galway, Ireland | Biology
- Kristen Wilson | Sydney, Australia | Psychology
- Carolyn Wighsiaik | Dublin, Ireland | Biology
- Audrey Zabohonski | Barcelona, Spain | Literature

WINTER BREAK 2014

- Blair Ballin | Paris, France | International Business

SPRING 2014

- Gianna Acevedo | Barcelona, Spain | Psychology
- Kate Ambroso | Seville, Spain | International Studies
- Karna Antiquera | Barcelona, Spain | Psychology
- Isabel Arrieche | Bangalore, India | Matric-Undeclared
- Marlon Becker | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
- Samantha Bell | Barcelona, Spain | Communication Arts
- Jeffrey Bendett | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
- D’Anna Bishop | Gold Coast, Australia | Business Administration
- Christina Cossinamanno | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
- Cristina Cuth | Bilbao, Spain | Spanish Language Studies
- Justine Diaz | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
- Patrick DiGangi | Bangalore, India | Law and Society
- Emily Egner | Prague, Czech Republic | Business Administration
- Olivia Elliot | Barcelona, Spain | Political Science
- Donavon Falls | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
- Charles Feinroth | Bangalore, India | Environmental Studies
- Nicole Filsber | Bangalore, India | Social Work
- Oliver Gasco | Seoul, South Korea | International Studies
- Emily Gang | San German, Puerto Rico | Spanish Language Studies
- Gregorio Gangala | Rome, Italy | International Business
- Sarah Garas | Rome, Italy | Business Administration
- Kistian Gomery | Hilo, Hawaii | Communication Arts
- Kistian Gomery | Hilo, Hawaii | Undeclared
- Kayleigh Gumbrecht | Gold Coast, Australia | Psychology
- Kelly Haggerty | Cambridge, United Kingdom | Music
- Edward Lai | Sydney, Australia | Business Administration
- Christopher Lukasik | Osaka, Japan | Communication Arts
- Nikolette Srawsky | Madison, South Dakota | Communication Arts
- Amanda Wilson | Florence, Italy | Communication Arts

SPRING BREAK 2014

- Claude Barnes | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Accounting
- Anthony Darlay | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Accounting
- Mark Elbracht | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Accounting
- Daniel Johnson | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Information Systems
- Thanh Lai | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Accounting
- Jonathan Mangal | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Political Science
- Alicia Miller | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Biochemistry
- Manasa Anumud | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Law and Society
- Coral Peguero | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Business Administration
- Liz Shroff | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Accounting
- Samantha Bell | Beijing and Shanghai, China | Biochemistry
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fact that my parents raised me the “Indian” way probably

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Asian cultures share similar values: respect for your family,

especially elders and those in positions of authority, like

teachers and doctors, respect for education and anything

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most likely contributed to the feeling of belonging, but

there was and still is an intangible something more to it.

Some of it might relate to my “identity” issues in

ethnic and nationality terms. Long story short, I’m a first

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went as an English teacher instead of a student.

That emotion didn’t mean I embraced every

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With that aside, I had to look for my own housing! I looked online, and it didn’t start off as successful as I thought it’d be. I had planned two appointments before arriving in Sydney. The first place wasn’t at all what it was advertised as; owners and space included. The second was better (not saying much) but felt like a dirty dorm room.

I panicked; I had a hostel booked for two nights and had no idea where I’d be living for the next month after that. Luckily, I made a friend with someone staying in my room that helped calm me down and refocus. I was able to contact another person which ultimately became a success.

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While my first weekend in Sydney seemed (and to an extent) unpleasant, the whole experience was an unforgettable and rewarding journey. Throughout my entire time in Australia, I learned more about myself in that semester than I have in 21 years. I realized what I wanted to pursue in my future academically and professionally. I discovered a confidence I never had, and I developed a thirst for travel and adventure that I was always too afraid to quench. My time alone in Sydney helped me in so many ways. At times you need to reevaluate, see what you want, and enjoy things.

I remember the nausea and the hunger, the hyper energy and the exhaustion after the 14-hour flight from Newark to Tokyo in January of 2010. I remember a cold breeze hitting my face when I dug myself and my suitcases up the exit stairs and onto the street. I remember noticing the wet ground and clear night sky. But most of all I remember that feeling of belonging the moment I walked out of that station.

Even at the time, I thought it was an odd sensation, especially considering I’d only been in the country for a few hours. Granted, I knew a lot about the culture and history through my studies over the years, but to feel like the place was home right away? I figured it was just the mixed-up

condition my body and mind were in, so after the perfunctory explanations by accompanying staff from the school and the mandatory call home to the ‘rents, I knocked out.

The feeling didn’t disappear though. The first few weeks felt surreal as I slowly adjusted – mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially – to this unfamiliar place. Yet strangely enough, despite the new and interesting, there was always a sense of, “I know this place. I know these people.” Which is why after that first time in Japan ended, I couldn’t wait to go back and do it all, this past winter and spring. Except the second go-round, I
Reflections from Abroad

Fargol and Dan (my research mentor) - Sydney Institute of Marine Science

10 15

Feeding a Wallaby - Port Douglas Wildlife Habitat

Daintree River

Anemone fish - Great Barrier Reef

Sydney Opera House

Cuttlefish - Great Barrier Reef

Research Station, Great Barrier Reef

Another day of snorkeling - Lizard Island

Hiking to Cook’s Look - Lizard Island

Cairns, Australia

Moorish Idol - Great Barrier Reef

Little joeys - Port Douglas Wildlife Habitat

trees - Cairns

LEFT PAGE CLOCKWISE:

1. Cheesin’ it in Takamatsu, the udon capital of Japan

2. The most tranquil view I’ve ever experienced, from an outdoor room of a 17th century feudal home

3. Ha ving said that, those six months

4. Aside from the frustrating management
culture far more for its good than bad. Even when I was dealing with frustration, that sense of belonging in Japan didn’t go away. I grew to love and admire the culture more for its good than bad. Even though it was one that specializes in English education; it has been and will remain a Japanese corporation run by Japanese people in the Japanese way, which unsurprisingly enough for those familiar with this reality, is having a negative impact on the country’s business world.

As a student, I didn’t really experience the Japanese communication style precisely because of this important hierarchy. As a student, I didn’t really experience the (in)famous Japanese style of communication because all of the Japanese teachers at my language school worked in an international environment that necessitated open dialogue to avoid misunderstandings. Suffice it to say, I got a massive dose of Japanese communication when I actually worked in Japan for a Japanese company. It doesn’t matter that it’s one that specializes in English education; it has been and will always be a Japanese corporation run by Japanese people in the Japanese way, which unsurprisingly enough for those familiar with this reality, is having a negative impact on the country’s business world.

Alumni Profile

So what’s next for me? A lot of things, chief amongst them Japan Tales 3 in the next year or two, I love and admire the culture far more for its good than bad. Even when I was dealing with frustration, that sense of belonging in Japan didn’t go away. Even with those years and a whole lot of growing up separating rounds 1 and 2, I felt drawn towards that country and its people. I needed both of those experiences to shape who I am now, and only those who have been on similar journeys can understand how grateful I am. You don’t really live until you’ve done it on your own in an unfamiliar place, whether it’s in Alabama or Argentina. So go make your own adventures outside of New Jersey. I promise you won’t regret it. If you do, you’re doing it wrong!
I don't remember the exact moment when I fell in love with Ireland. Perhaps, it was when I first walked down the winding and bustling streets of Galway on New Year’s Eve. Maybe, it was when my Lecturer helped the entire class sneak into the ruins of Clonmacnoise castle. Or, it might have been when I stood on the hills of ancient Tara. But, I can tell you without a doubt that this is not a fleeting emotion. I often find my mind wandering through the green hills and beautiful landscapes, and find myself wishing I had never left them. Studying abroad in Galway taught me countless lessons and provided me with priceless memories I will carry with me for the rest of my life. I made friends I would have never met otherwise, and experienced so many new and wonderful things. If you can study abroad, do it! Believe me you will learn a lot more from leaving your comfort zone and taking that chance. “Go n-eiri an bothar leat,” as they say in Ireland, or as we say here “Happy Travels!”

“life begins at the end of your comfort zone”

After my study abroad experience, I truly believe in the quote “Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.” I cannot tell you how much just six weeks changed my life forever. I have told bits and pieces to anyone who will listen, but no one can truly know how it changed me for life. For the greater part of my life, I was the shy girl in the back of the classroom that kept to herself. Once I set off for college, I opened up a bit more, but I was still cautious to let just anyone in. How did this normal girl from New Jersey go from being a really shy person to hanging out with a large group of students going out to discover what Sevilla held for us? The friends I made during my time abroad as well as those who have studied abroad themselves are the few people who understand what being a part of this particular experience truly means. Now I crave to travel around the world, and comfort does not matter to me anymore. Backpacking and staying at hostels was the best experience for me personally. I guess I have become a wanderlust kid, but at least, I know that I’m not the only one and seek comfort that some of the friends I met along the way are the same as I am.
The plane had just landed. It was not only my first time out of the country on my own, but my first time out of the country ever! I took a deep breath, but couldn’t help letting out a smile. What did Paris have in store for me?

It didn’t take too long for Paris to surprise me. It was our first day in Paris, my roommate and I had just taken a taxi to our host mother’s apartment, who lived in a cozy, little cul de sac. It was hard to believe that this quiet court ran off of a busy street, complete with cafés, supermarchés, and even some tourist attractions. As my roommate and I walked up to the door that would lead us to the apartment building, we were wide-eyed, staring at everything, and probably everyone, in utter amazement. However, something recaptured our interest: we could not open the door. We came to the conclusion, as most people probably would in this situation, that the door was locked.

There was a button on the side of the door – a doorbell perhaps? We continued to press the “doorbell” in five minute intervals. We were waiting outside for at least twenty minutes before a woman with a scooter came through the cul de sac. She pressed the button that we had mistaken for a doorbell and opened the door. The button opened the door! My new roommate and I gave each other a look that can best be verbalized into, “We are such idiots!” as we followed this woman into the apartment building. The woman turned to look at us with a confused expression. After this whole door predicament, I often wondered what that woman was thinking. I came to the conclusion that it was something along the lines of, “What planet are these people from? Are there no doors where they come from?” I will never forget that woman’s expression, as it characterized every mis-stated phrase, butchered communication, and cultural blunder that were inevitably made on the trip that often left me wondering, “What planet am I from?”

Despite all of these blunders, or maybe because of them, going to France was one of the best experiences of my life. By placing myself outside of my comfort zone I not only learned a lot about the world around me, but also about myself. I couldn’t imagine a more enriching experience than going abroad (how else would I learn to open a Parisian door?), and I can’t wait to go abroad again, perhaps back to Paris or maybe to a new destination, to have new and exciting adventures.
Cultural tourism is also a major aspect of Bilbao. On my free time, I visited the Fine Arts, Archaeological, and Basque museums, which all had a free day for visitors. However, the king of museums in Bilbao is definitely the Guggenheim, located on the river bank across from my campus. Its colossal building of metal and glass had become the most important landmark of the city.

In July, Bilbao is the most popular destination for rock fans all around Europe. BBK Live is a three-day festival, which features various performers from around the world on live stages. One of my friends and I got to see, among others, bands like Depeche Mode, Kings of Leon, and Green Day.

One of the guided excursions took us to the famous running of the bulls during the San Fermin festival in Pamplona. Watching people running and trying to touch or mount the bull at the arena after the run was an exciting and thrilling experience. The euphoria at the event is almost palpable as everybody in the entire town is dressed in the same way: all you see on the streets, squares or at the arena is a sea of white clothes and red scarves.

Discovering Bilbao was one of the luckiest accidents that has ever happened to me. In only five weeks, I managed to learn so much, experience a new culture and make new friends. I miss walking along the river, eating pintxos, and seeing the Guggenheim as I go to class. I am already making plans to go back, not to study, but to experience more of the city and see what else it has to offer.
I wanted to study abroad in Spain over the summer of 2013, but when I found out the only program which would satisfy the requirements was in Bilbao, I was disappointed. I dreamed of going to school in a populous and magnificent city, such as Madrid or Barcelona, and I accepted the program in Bilbao only for its academic benefits. Little did I know that I was going to visit the most beautiful city I’ve seen and have one of the best months of my life.

Bilbao is a city of 350,000 people, located in the Basque Country on the northern coast of Spain and only an hour drive from the French border. It is the capital of the Biscay province and the largest city in the entire Basque Country. It was founded in 1300 on the banks of the Nervión River.

Bilbao is exceptionally green and surrounded by mountains. When I arrived in the city, I was surprised by how fresh and lively the city looked in contrast to the dry plains of Madrid, where I had spent the previous couple of days.

On our first day in Bilbao, we were taken on a guided tour (to my horror, in Spanish) around the city. Bilbao is small in size and it only takes a couple of hours to walk around it and see the main points of interest. It was at this tour when I fell in love with the city.

Bilbao and the area have so much to offer: mountains, a river and a sea, old quarters and modern buildings; museums, libraries, and a theater; cheap bars and fancy restaurants; an enormous park and a new soccer stadium. You just name it!

In addition, Bilbao is clean and safe. Gardens, flowers, and fountains can be seen all around the city. Transportation is available and cheap. For 3 Euros, you can buy a Barik card, which reduces the cost by half for all vehicles (city buses, trams, metro, and funiculars (cable railways)).

Bilbao is also big on its nightlife, as almost every week one of the surrounding towns would have a “fiesta”. On my first week in Bilbao, some of my classmates and I took the metro to Sopelana, a nearby town, to enjoy the local festival. I was surprised that the train was packed at 11 p.m., but it wasn’t until we got out that I saw the full scope of the event. People were everywhere: parks, streets, sidewalks, all around us talking, singing, and drinking.

Alexander Vasilev ’15
University of Deusto - Language and Culture
Bilbao, Spain
Summer 2013
Christopher Lukasik ’14
Kansai Gaidai University
Osaka, Japan
Fall 2013

Photographer’s Journey

1. Sanjusangen-do in Kyoto, a temple housing over a thousand Kannon Statues
2. In Autumn, the changing leaves, “Momiji,” are considered one of the most beautiful sights in the country
3. Kiyomizu Temple, one of the most famous mountainside temples in Japan
4. Beautiful foliage in Nara during the changing of the seasons
5. Owl Cafés are one of the many types of cafés where you can play with and have your picture taken with unusual animals

Reflections from Abroad

The most common request from my friends in the United States while I was abroad was to bring home a Koala or Kangaroo. Sadly, I wasn’t able to do that for everyone, but I did have the opportunity to be around them myself. We visited Featherdale Wildlife Park where we walked around and fed the kangaroos that roamed freely in a large enclosed area. I never thought I would actually be that close to a kangaroo in my life, but I’m happy I was. That wasn’t the extent of the awesome things I experienced while in Australia. I traveled north to Queensland and spent a weekend in Cairns visiting the Great Barrier Reef. I consider my weekend in Cairns to be the craziest times of my life. I went snorkeling at the Great Barrier Reef, which was beautiful, and somehow found the courage to Sky Dive and Bungee Jump. Every experience I had in Australia was unlike any other. I attempted surfing for the first time, repelled down the Blue Mountains, visited Olympic Park, climbed the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and got to see the Sydney Opera House in person. These experiences would not have been the same if it wasn’t for the close bond that had formed with the group of friends I had met. To top off my amazing adventure, I was extremely lucky to have my parents visit for two weeks and have the chance to be involved in the things I had been telling them about. Sharing some of these experiences with my parents is something I know we will never forget.

Everything I had the chance of doing while in Australia are without a doubt the most incredible things I’ve ever done in my life. But more importantly, the friendships I formed while in Australia are going to be for a lifetime. The distance may seem like a problem but the way I look at it I have more of a reason to travel now that I have people to visit. With all this being said, thank you Australia for teaching me more than I could have ever learned in a classroom! Thank you for bringing these people into my life, and I will be back someday! Thank you for introducing me to my addiction with Tim Tams, the most amazing biscuits (cookies) ever. And most importantly thank you Mom and Dad because without you both, I would never have had this eye opening opportunity that has forever changed me and can bring an instant smile to my face.

CLOCKWISE:
1. The last weekend in Australia on a Hunter Valley Wine Tour while my parents were visiting
2. Featherdale Wildlife Park hanging out with the Koalas
3. Roommates, Michelle Moucha and Kristen Wilson, their first day in Australia at Bondi Beach
4. Abseiling/Repelling at the Blue Mountains

CLOCKWISE:
1. Sanjusangen-do in Kyoto, a temple housing over a thousand Kannon Statues
2. In Autumn, the changing leaves, “Momiji,” are considered one of the most beautiful sights in the country
3. Kiyomizu Temple, one of the most famous mountainside temples in Japan
4. Beautiful foliage in Nara during the changing of the seasons
5. Owl Cafés are one of the many types of cafés where you can play with and have your picture taken with unusual animals.
Ramapo Students’ Reflections from Abroad

Kristen Wilson ’14
Arcadia - Sydney Internship
Sydney, Australia
Summer 2013

WHEN MY DREAM BECAME REALITY

I always thought studying abroad was an unrealistic fantasy of mine that I would never have the chance to make come true. I remember researching different programs and countries as a freshman, wishing I could be one of those lucky people that get the incredible opportunity to study in another country. As a member of the softball team at Ramapo, it was clear that I would never have time to go abroad. But luckily, an incredible summer program was brought to my attention; and from that moment on, I knew I would do anything to make sure I was a part of it. I became anxious and began applying immediately. Through all this excitement, my roommate also became interested, applied, and before we knew it, we were on a plane heading to Sydney, Australia for seven weeks.

Upon arriving, I wasn’t sure what to expect. I remember being extremely excited but also overwhelmed. Immediately after landing in Sydney, we were brought to Bondi Beach where we walked along the coast, got ourselves lunch, and began meeting the people we would be spending this amazing adventure with. As I sit here and relive each day in my head, the first few days of orientation all seem like a blur. We were all running on no sleep due to the 16-hour time difference, which was probably the hardest adjustment that had to be made. There were multiple instances when I Facetimed my parents in the middle of the night New Jersey time because I completely forgot about that time difference, but luckily they were understanding. While in Sydney, I had class all day Monday and was involved in an internship Tuesday through Thursday. I immediately began noticing the differences of simple day-to-day tasks. There were many more people focused on their fitness and living a healthy lifestyle; people were always running and working out. Also, every Monday in class we wouldn’t only have a lunch break but also a morning tea break, which is a regular occurrence in Australia. In addition walking and driving on the opposite side always made for an interesting commute to my internship.

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Pre-departure tips

1. Be prepared to experience a new academic culture during your study abroad program as many colleges and universities abroad do not use the same teaching styles or grading formats. Greater personal initiative will be required on your part to keep up with your courses.

2. Develop a communication plan with family and friends. If you don’t call, THEY’LL WORRY!

3. Culture shock “comes from the natural contradiction between our accustomed patterns of behavior and the psychological conflict of attempting to maintain them in a new cultural environment.” Culture shock is normal. You can deal with culture shock by recognizing symptoms of cultural fatigue, realizing that what you’re feeling is emotional and not always rational, gathering as much information before you leave, and realizing that some level of discomfort and stress is normal.

4. Contact your bank(s) and credit card company(ies) with exact dates and locations of your travel so that your cards do not get frozen.

5. Make a budget so you don’t go into debt!

6. Register your travel plans with the State Department (called the ‘Smart Traveler Enrollment Program’, or STEP) through a free online service at travel.state.gov. Enrolling will provide you with email updates indicating if there will be a natural disaster, political unrest or other important information.

7. Check the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) recommendations found in your pre-departure orientation packets.

8. Try new foods – experiment with your palate.

9. Be honest about your likes/dislikes/allergies (especially if you are living with a local family.)

10. Travel in groups, never alone.

11. Carry emergency numbers with you at all times; and have a way to contact your emergency number.

12. Bring all your flight, accommodation, and meeting place information in your carry-on in case your checked baggage does not arrive as scheduled.

13. Over packing – don’t do it! If you are responsible for handling your own luggage so be sure you can carry/manage your luggage without any assistance.

14. Check the weather of the location you are traveling to so you know how to pack.

15. Check the study abroad program website to find out specific items you may need to bring: sheets, towels, power adapters, power convertors etc.

16. Research the area you will be staying in before you leave. It is always good to know general statistics and the geographic location you will be living in.

17. Make sure to check if the country you are visiting requires a visa! You may have to get this before you leave home.
The audience in the hall burst out with laughter hearing my surprising stuffs about the United States. The families gathered in a presentation hall of Ramapo College as it was the Honors Family day. I was sharing my cultural difference. This laughter was brought up by the tradition of saying “sorry” in Nepal and “Bless you” in the United States. Well, the experience was actually awkward. When I sneezed for the first time in the United States, the person in front of me went “Bless you”. However, I did not understand him and I said “I am so sorry.” While expressing these things in the family day, I suddenly realized that I have experienced much more cultural shock than I thought I would. I had read the whole book of cultural shock in the United States, but still I faced it. Am I actually supposed to get this cultural shock?

Had it been in Nepal, the car driver would have thanked us for being the only civilized citizen in the country. This feature of US culture really shocked me. Moreover, I have not heard a single horn by cars. Well, this was something out of my knowledge I gathered from the culture shock book.

I had read and heard a lot about the “international table” where the whole college would be divided into two parts: the Americans and the Internationals. I actually planned to be the exception to

The memory of my first day on campus is still fresh in my mind. My friend and I were about to cross the road when we saw a car coming. I suppose the car was much more expensive than the Maruti 800 I used to see in my country. Even if it was not, the “reflectiveness” had made me feel so. As we did in Nepal, we stopped for the car to pass by. The surprising factor was that the car stopped too, and the driver insisted us to go first.

Taking a sip of fresh air in an Aquarium, Boston

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Taking a sip of fresh air in an Aquarium, Boston
this. I thought that I would get involved with the Americans more than any international students do. However, it must be a natural phenomenon that I was clinging with international students for several weeks. We created a separate environment in the cafeterias where we, the “international table” had more noise than any other tables. The interesting part is that the noise had diversity. People were speaking Nepali, Burmese, Bulgarian, Russian, Spanish, and many more. I do not understand all the languages, but I can ensure you that it was fun. Of course, the initial processes of learning new languages were to pronounce our own names, to learn how to say “You are beautiful” and “You are ugly.” Well, this feature was in the book I read. Though, I could not skip it. I was the “victim” of international table.

Well, I thought I was well-prepared with a huge shield of knowledge of cultural shock. Somewhere in the book, I read that people should not know you personally to wave you “hi” or “hello”. So, from the very first day, I raised my shield for the incoming shocks regarding greeting. I started to say “hey, how are you?” to each and every person I saw. My friend also made fun of me for greeting to each and every individual who passed by me. If there were two people walking together, I greeted them “hi” individually so that they did not have to share from one “hi”. Later, I found that this is not a strict rule and I am going to encounter the same person more than one time in a day. It is because I am in a liberal arts school. My book did not say that. I still got the cultural shock.

When I was in Nepal, the rumor was that one does not want to wear the clothes they take from Nepal since it is out of fashion in the States. Well, that turned out to be completely wrong. There is no particular fashion in this country, until and unless you choose to go for the real fashion industry. Anything you wear, no matter how funny it is, is a fashion. I found Americans really enthusiastic regarding the weirdness which they prefer to call “uniqueness.” I still wear the same so called “out of fashion” dress with “bhad gaule topi” with a “khukuri” (part of the national dress of Nepal) in it. Now, I feel proud on my fashion no matter how others think. The tales about the dresses proved to be wrong for me.

My feelings about New York City can be partly controversial. Maybe I do not have a DSLR-resolution eye to see New York City as shown in the pictures. When I went there for the first time, I was not really feeling it, I did not even have goose bumps. I walked uninterestedly in the streets as the tourist who lost his way and also lost the map somewhere amidst the crowd at the Times Square. Moreover, the city was really dirty. Well, the Huffington post publishes it as the dirtiest place for some reason. I really wanted to return back to my own lovely college and hang out with friendly deer and rabbits and sarcastically friendly bears. Well, still NYC is NYC regardless of the shock I got visiting there.

I was prepared for the cultural shock. I read blogs, articles and few books about it so that I would not be its “victim.” Well, I overcame some of the obvious shocks. However, I prepared really well. I never wanted the “international table” in my case. I never learned that “hi” and “hello” is not a strict norm to follow. No books taught me that a wide smile was enough. The books tried to fit us into the American culture but never tried to live with it. Since the presentation in the Family day, I question myself am I supposed to get this cultural shock?
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Production Designer: Janelle Ferraro ’14
Editor: Kathryn Godfrey, Assistant Director of International Education