

Courses

During my exchange for the fall semester of 2016, I am in my last semester of a Bachelor of Commerce (no option). I took the following courses:

S3CLE400 French (2 ECTS): French as a second language.

S3CLE450 European Business Environment & Culture (5 ECTS): This course is designed to examine the background and current position of Europe and the European Union to help students understand the factors and influences at work in the European business environment. This involves understanding the circumstances faced by Europe's firms, some of which are legacies of history and some which are changing faster than many think, and the effects of numerous government and EU initiatives to bolster European corporate performance. Project presentation 60% Final exam 25% Class participation 15%

S3MKT460 Digital Marketing & Social Networks (3 ECTS): Through readings, case studies and hands-on projects, students will get an understanding of prospering online marketing strategies, user generated content, search, social media and networks, mobile, and web analytics. To complement the concepts, students will be addressed special topics such as email marketing, user experience design, search engine optimization, setting up online communities and mobile marketing.

S3CGC401 Management Control (5 ECTS): This course focuses on key issues related to management control, including: methods and techniques of forecasting, budget control and evaluation of responsibility centers. The program is designed to improve students' analytical and decision making skills. Participants will indeed gain a better understanding of the ways firms operate through lectures, discussions, case analysis and personal work. Final Exam 80 % Participation 10 % Interim Exam 10%

S3ENT402 Initiation to Entrepreneurship / Project (4 ECTS): This course is designed to help students understand the concept of entrepreneurship, the present context and projected tendencies in company creation, together with the socio-economic profile of the company creator and to identify the psychological characteristics of the entrepreneur and understand the process of setting up a business. In addition to theoretical input, students undertake self-analysis entrepreneur profile exercises and learn how to draw up a Business Plan. Entrepreneurship: 70% (Pitch: 30%/Business Plan: 30%/Quality of the intermediate assignments: 10%) Project management: 30% (Note framing and planning the entrepreneurial project: 15%/Participation in forums: 10%/Quiz: 5%)

S3STR401 Strategic Management (5 ECTS): The strategic management process is the full set of commitments, decisions, and actions required for a firm to develop a vision and compelling business plan to achieve strategic competitiveness, earn above average returns and sustain growth. The course will develop knowledge of the strategic management process, including strategy analysis, formulation and deployment, including embracing and managing rapid and constant change while minimizing disruption and chaos. Continuous assessment 50% Final Exam: 50%

S3STR402 Business Simulation (3 ECTS): The objective of the course is for students to have a broad overview of main marketing challenges. Students will focus on the firm's marketing strategy and will resort to operational marketing. The course will also look at the impact of marketing decisions on other departments of the firm such as accounting, HRM...The course mainly consists in a business game and students will have to dive into real, concrete and practical marketing decisions.

Typically, you will spend around 2-3 hours a week in class for each course, and there will be anywhere from 6-13 sessions depending on how many ECTS the course is worth. The course workload depends on how many ECTS the course is worth. For the most part there will be a final along with a group assignment and presentation. While you can take French as a second language, it will not count towards your degree at the University of Ottawa and will be on top of the mandatory credits you accumulate at the host university. There is a list of available courses is online on Audencia's website. Classes are mandatory to attend and you only have one unexcused absence in each course, any more and you will lose about 10% of your final grade per missed class.

Academic calendar

May 15, 2016 – Application due including course selection

August 31, 2016 – Orientation for International Students

September 7, 2016 – Courses begin

October 22-30, 2016 – Break week

December 21, 2016 – Session ends

Arrival procedure

You will receive an orientation day upon arriving that details culture differences and offerings of the school from the French academic system to extracurricular activities to sports to the library and its various databases. You will be given your login for the school portals and Wi-Fi which allows you to access your schedule that you had previously registered for online. The IC team organizes events for international students which you will be well aware of before arriving because they contact you prior to your arrival via email and social media. They answer questions regarding banking, public transit, and many other topics during this session. There is a limited amount of help for finding housing, so you should try to deal with this before arriving.

Budgeting costs

Budget outlining the cost of studying abroad

Airplane tickets: \$1000 roundtrip, monitor prices as soon as you are nominated

Accommodation: 450-550 €/month

Food: 200€/month

Monthly transit pass: 30 €/month

Cell phone: 10 € for sim card, you can find no contract plans for around 20 €/ month

Other expenses (transport, leisure...): 200 €/month

None of my courses required textbooks that you had to buy. You can download previous versions for free online or use a copy at the library, however most classes present all material as lecture based. You are in Europe, so I encourage you to travel as much as you are able. Having said that, budget based off your means. You can get around on a budget but it takes planning and adaption of your habits.

Prior to arrival

In order to study in France for more than 3 months, students require a residency permit. Visa application procedures are different depending on a student's nationality and where they live. Students with a European nationality do not require a visa to study and students living in Quebec have a different visa procedure than those in the rest of the country. As a general rule, you need to apply for your visa within 3 months of your departure date while allowing processing time of several weeks. Visa procedures are outlined on the consulate website along with contact information.

Students who are a non-European student under 28 years old and will be studying in Nantes for more than three months are required to enrol on the French social security plan provided through Audencia. It is explained during your orientation day. If you are from the EU, you just need bring your European Health Insurance Card. Social security covers around 70% of health expenses and runs from October to September. It costs about €215 per year. Repatriation and civil liability are not included; therefore, we recommend that you also take out private health insurance that is valid for the entire duration of your stay that covers the first month in France, repatriation and civil liability, and the 30% of medical expenses that are not covered by the French social security plan.

Housing

Students receive emails regarding housing options and forums where you can find housing options. Costs vary depending on where you decide to live:

Host family: 350 €

Private Apartment: 450-600 €

Hotel residence: 450-700 €

I am living with two other exchange students from the University of Ottawa in an apartment found on Airbnb. We pay 440 €/month each and we live in a neighborhood called Talensac, which is near the downtown core and right off a main tram line that goes directly to Audencia Nantes. I recommend living near downtown because there is a lot of nightlife there and on l'île de Nantes, and the majority of transport shuts down at night so it is much easier to get home.

Personal experience

I always intended to travel to Europe after I completed my studies. I was unsure of exactly what I wanted to do after graduation and it seemed to be a great idea to inspire some direction. However, I found it rather difficult to convince my parents that wandering aimlessly around Europe instead of looking for a job was the best way to spend my time. My compromise was to finish my studies in Europe which gave me the opportunity to study in Europe and improve my French, which they could not argue looks good on a resume, and places me in the perfect location to jump from city to city on weekends.

The other benefit I found once I arrived from doing an exchange is it gives my travel more of a focus. Sure, classes are not always the most enjoyable way to spend time. But I love to learn, and the school environment was the perfect way to connect with other international students. They were all such interesting people from all over the world. We had different native tongues but we all were keen to hear about the other cultures and customs while exploring France and creating memories during meals or music festivals. The other students have proven to be an amazing connection in Europe. They know the best destinations to travel during a break in your studies, which country has the cheapest beer, and they are the best travelling companion because in a group of international students there is always a translator.

I have loved taking advantage of my time off school, whether it be a weekend or a reading week, to travel around. I have found great discounts at the last minute and having a student pass for the train in France has been extremely worthwhile for me. I have seen the beautiful wineries in France. I took a road trip to Spain to go surfing. I have flown to Copenhagen and Budapest to meet up with some old friends from uOttawa who are studying in Europe in other countries, and I still have a few more months to go.

It can be hard being so far away from family and friends back home. If you have already lived away from home during your studies, that is definitely a good start. I have lived away from my parents for over 4 years now, but Europe has proven to be a little more difficult. There is a time difference of 6 hours and you are distant from everyone you know and love. However, there are so many ways to stay in touch with people that never used to exist. You may not be able to constantly talk on the phone, but a text message to let your friends know you are thinking of them goes a long way, and when you are able to talk to your parents, you both have so many more stories to share. It is important to connect with the people back home and technology makes it easy, but remember that they will be there when you fly back home. Take advantage of this exchange and the people you meet and stay in the moment.

Good luck and bon voyage!