

## Exchange Questionnaire

### a) Courses

Energy Law and Policy

Style: Lecture

Grading: One Presentation

Class hours: 20

Technology Dynamics, Innovation Policy and Economic Prosperity

Style: Lecture

Grading: Group paper

Class hours: 30

International Business Law

Style: Lecture

Grading: Final exam

Class hours: 40

German Language

Style: Lecture

Grading: Several tests and homework assignments, final exam

Class hours: 60

Polish Language

Style: Lecture

Grading: Final exam

Class hours: 30

Building Social Capital and Productive Networks

Style: Lecture

Grading: Group paper and presentation

Class hours: 20

International Economic Law and Business Transactions

Style: Lecture

Grading: Exam

Class hours: 20

Islamic Finance and Gulf Economics

Style: Lecture

Grading: Exam

Class hours: 20

Case Studies of Globally Successful Businesses

Style: Lecture

Grading: Group presentation and final exam

Class hours: 20

EU Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice

Style: Lecture

Grading: Final exam

Class hours: 20

Economy and Culture in Europe

Style: Lecture

Grading: Group presentation and final exam

Class hours: 20

Political Economy of the Global Economy

Style: Lecture

Grading: Final exam

Class hours: 30

b) Timetable

For information regarding the academic calendar and key dates for registration, exams, and holidays, I recommend you consult the information regarding that specific semester on the Kozminski University website. This is because these dates are subject to change, as I found out when attempting to base my plans off of the 2018 Winter semester. However, regarding the end of the semester, June 30 always appears to be the last day of the exam period and therefore the semester.

Welcome week happens one week before the first day of classes and I highly recommend you attend this. I made the mistake of booking my flight so that I would arrive in Warsaw on the same day as the first day of orientation. It is a better idea to arrive at least 2-3 days beforehand to let yourself get acclimatized and sort out any administrative things such as phone plan, etc before an intense week of activities start (also to get over jet lag, since almost every night we were out until around 2am, which only served to prolong the feeling of jetlag and subsequent exhaustion).

c) Procedures to follow upon arrival

- Check into accommodation
- Set up Polish bank account (there is one at Kozminski that is recommended to exchange students called Santander which I had numerous problems with, so perhaps inquire about other options that other ESN and Erasmus students are using before opening an account).

- Load money for public transit onto your student card. This can be done at the university post office. For 50zł you get three months' access to all public transportation in Warsaw.
- Purchase Polish SIM card for phone
- Download the app Jakdojade as this will help you get around the city by giving you a list of routes you can take to get to your destination.

#### d) Budget

Apart from spending \$1000 a month on accommodation, prices in Poland are quite cheap by Canadian standards (except for gas, which is more expensive). I spend roughly 200zł a week for grocery shopping and eating out, which are my two main expenses. Meals on average are 20zł if eating out. I usually spend around 80zł a week on groceries. Plus an additional 30-40zł on miscellaneous expenses. So a weekly budget of 240zł, or \$80 CAD will certainly be enough.

A round trip by plane from Toronto direct to Warsaw and back is typically a little over \$1,000 CAD.

Textbooks – Buying textbooks is not as much of a thing here as it is at uOttawa. Out of the 10 classes I am currently in (two have not started yet), I have only had to buy two textbooks. Each were around 150zł so about \$50 CAD each.

Flights intercontinental – I have not yet flown between European cities.

Train – A train from Warsaw to Kraków is around 87zł, however students get a 50% discount.

Haircuts in Warsaw are considerably expensive by Polish standards. Be prepared to pay between 60-90zł for a decent haircut.

#### e) Application Procedure

Kozminski University is quite late to reply. I did not hear from them until early November regarding my exchange semester for the Winter term, so do not panic if you feel they are late to respond to you. You will have to submit your transcript, passport photo, and other related documents in order to receive the official acceptance. A list of required documents will be emailed to you.

Visa Application – Apply for the National D Type Visa. For this you will need to submit your passport, proof of studies in Poland (Kozminski will email you an official letter of acceptance to present to the consulate), proof of sufficient funds for your entire stay in the Schengen area, insurance, and biometric photo. However please consult the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs website for a more comprehensive list and outline of procedures. Visa deadlines – the Polish Ministry of Foreign affairs has a rule against applying for a visa more than 3 months in advance. I applied for my visa around early-mid January. I left for Poland on February 11.

Course registration takes place two weeks before the start of classes. You will be notified of this date in advance by Kozminski.

f) Accommodation

I am renting an Airbnb that is in very close walking distance to Warsaw's Old Town, as well as one of the city's main public transport stations – Ratusz-Arsenał. It is a one bedroom apartment and costs approximately \$1000 CAD per month. While this is not particularly expensive by Ottawa standards, it is more than necessary in Warsaw, however it is an excellent location since it is not far to the university or downtown by tram or metro. There are affiliate student housing companies that partner with Kozminski that might be worth looking into. I should also note that I am the only Erasmus (exchange) student that I know of who is living alone in this city and not with roommates, so obviously sharing an apartment with other students would be much cheaper. The address is Miodowa 23.

g) – No work term

h) Recommendations

1. Attend Welcome Week!!! I cannot stress how important this is. Welcome week happens one week before classes start and lasts the entire week. It is organized by Kozminski's Erasmus Student Network and includes cultural activities such as visits to the National Museum, Warsaw Uprising Museum, a scavenger hunt around the city, as well as outings to some of Warsaw's best bars and clubs at night. It is the best way to meet and make friends with other Erasmus students.
2. Find central accommodation. I know of several Erasmus students who live in the city's suburbs and based off my experiences, living close to Old Town, or the Centrum is far more convenient. However, the nice thing about Warsaw is that with an extensive network of trams, buses and two metro lines, the city's public transportation far surpasses Ottawa in options, efficiency, and speed so it is easy to get from point A to B from anywhere in the city. Upon arriving in Warsaw, I highly recommend you download the app 'Jakdojade' which will give you route suggestions to anywhere you want to go in Warsaw.
3. LEARN POLISH. This came as a huge surprise to me, but I was the ONLY Erasmus student to learn Polish before arriving here. I can honestly say that it has given me a far richer experience than other Erasmus students who had no knowledge of Polish before arriving. Many young people speak Polish, but the older generations often do not. From getting a problem with my Polish bank account sorted out, to interactions at grocery stores, many of this would not be possible without a working knowledge of the language, especially when you leave Warsaw. I spent a weekend in the south of Poland acting as a translator for 14 other Erasmus students because we were in a small town where the vast majority of Poles did not speak English. Also, as a

foreigner making an attempt to learn and speak Polish, you will truly ingratiate yourself with the locals. The Poles you meet will be very surprised and impressed, and will (for the most part) be very accommodating. Also, going to a foreign country where English is not the main language and expecting everyone to understand English is a very arrogant thing to do. Don't be that person. Learn Polish. There are Polish courses at the University of Ottawa, an abundance of online materials and apps, podcasts, music, and a large Polish diaspora in Canada ensures who won't have to look very hard to find a native speaker to practice with.

4. Visit museums and cultural centres. One of the best museums I have ever been to is POLIN, which is a museum about the history of Jews in Poland. It one best European museum of the year in 2016. I highly recommend going. Of course, you should also make an effort to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau. But please be respectful. Refrain from taking pictures of yourself there. The Warsaw Uprising Museum will give you a huge appreciation for this city, which was rebuilt brick by brick after being completely razed during WWII.
5. Travel in Poland. So far, I have also been to the Polish cities of Wrocław, Łódź, Kraków, and Zakopane (where there is great skiing), and I plan to travel to many more. Poland has a lot of interesting cities with their own histories and beautiful architecture, and it is fairly cheap to travel by bus or train, or even to rent a car for a weekend with a group of friends (although gas is more expensive in Poland than in Canada).
6. Personality and cultural differences between Poles and Canadians. While I do not wish to generalize, one main difference is that most Poles are not as outwardly friendly and outgoing as most Canadians and are far more reserved. Whereas in Canada extraverted traits are highly valued, this is not necessarily the case in Poland. However, you should not mistake Poles' reservedness for being unkind or rude. Polish people are quite warm and sincere. In this regard, it is important to understand the legacy that WWII (in which over 6 million Poles were killed) and nearly half a century of Soviet imposed communism has on the country. For this same reason, history and politics can be a very sensitive topic, and there is a great deal of respect for the Catholic church. Poland is a very conservative country compared to Canada and one should be aware of this before arriving.
7. If a Polish person asks you why you chose to come to Poland to study, do not say because Poland is cheap. 80% of Erasmus students say this and it makes my ears bleed. Poland is a country very rich in culture and history, a member of the European Union, 21<sup>st</sup> largest economy in the world with an impressive growth rate, stunning architecture, a beautiful language, and delicious food. All of that should be more than enough to inspire you.



Location: Kasprowy-Wierch, Zakopane Tatry, Poland