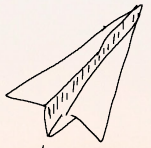


Plane & Simple



Issue 1 Volume XIV December 12, 2018

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Traveling to
Niigata, Japan

Plane & Simple

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Special thanks to:

Erin Willis, the head of the Department of International Education

Elmer Ploetz, the professor making me do this project for COMM 346

Ben Rockafellow, the design editor for The Leader who inadvertently taught me how to use InDesign

Brought to you from the hearts and minds of students that find their greatest sense of belonging when traveling to new places. Who find comfort in the betweens. Who long to be on a plane and are constantly dreaming of where they are going next. This is the culmination of the stories that we have to tell. Enjoy. Not all those who wander are lost.

Proud member of SUNY Fredonia

Don't think twice

A look into Fredonia's Office of International Education

AMBER MATTICE

Choosing where to study abroad can be a difficult choice. It becomes even more difficult when your university offers at least one program on every continent and have over 600 programs total.

Fredonia's international education program is extensive and diverse, with options that cater to almost every student. Through the office, students have the opportunity to do internships abroad, study for a semester, a summer or over J-term.

Students also have the ability to travel through any SUNY program through any SUNY school if Fredonia does not have a specific program that peaks interest.

Erin Willis is the Assistant Director for the office. She oversees preparations for programs and advises students on program options through SUNY. She began working for Fredonia in the Fall of 2014 and has been in her position for four and a half years. Willis has seen many students go and return and has seen how much studying abroad has affected them.

"One thing I always tell people is that studying abroad ages people — in a good way. The best way to describe it is like this: before they go, a student is truly 20 years old.

They, usually, have not yet had to overcome challenges or use critical thinking to solve major problems on their own," said Willis. "When they return to Fredonia, the student is more like a 30 year old. Their sense of self has developed, their confidence has grown and they have been able to live independently as an adult for weeks or months."

The study abroad office is available to help students while they are abroad and advise them in stressful

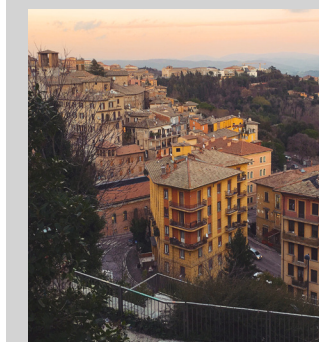
situations. They also provide insurance and assist students in figuring out financial aid and how credits will transfer.

It is inevitable that students will face challenges abroad but

many students gain life skills and reflect positively on those experiences when they return.

"I got this kind of confidence that, no matter what situation I was in, I would be able to figure it out, that I did not have before going," said Celina Kryk, who studied abroad in Kuzco, Peru in the Spring of 2018. "I feel like now that I've studied abroad, there's nothing that I can't do."

If you have any questions or are interested in traveling abroad, the Office of International Education is located in LoGrasso.



On the cover:

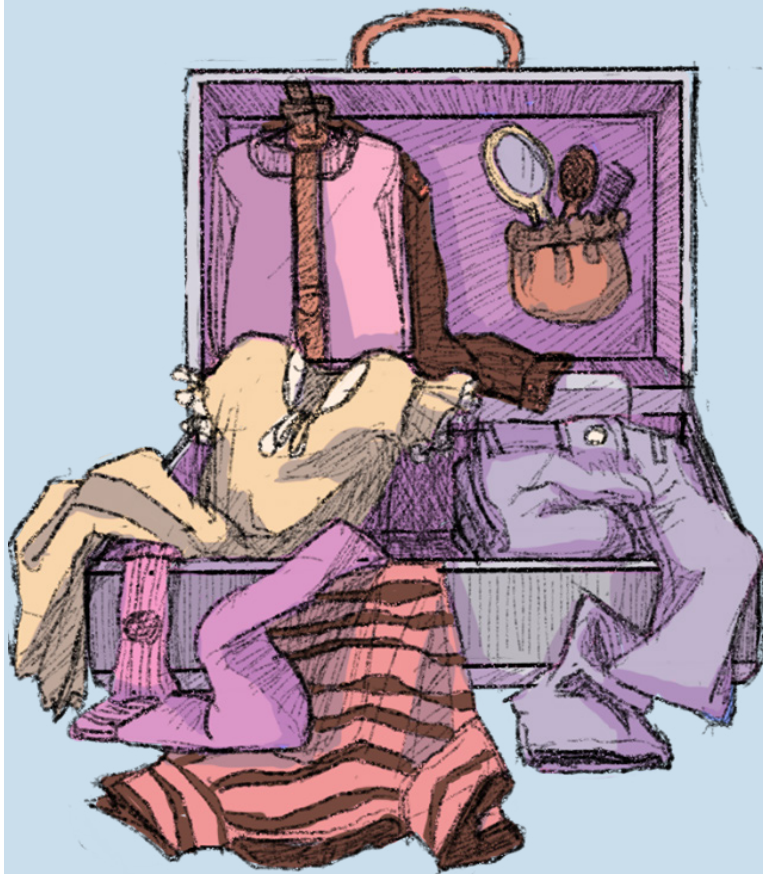
An Italian sunset paints the city of Perugia in pastels.
 Photo taken by Amber Mattice

PACKING TIPS

AMBER MATTICE

First things first, I want to let you know to breathe. Inhale and exhale slowly. If you are looking for packing tips about studying abroad, it probably means that you already gone through the process of applying (glad you've survived this far) and are preparing to delve into the messy arena of choosing what to bring across the world. It can seem like a harrowing and overwhelming task so I wanted to impart my advice onto you as someone who has done it and really regrets the choices I made.

- 1. Put the thing you've never worn down.** You think you are going to wear it while you're in a new country but you won't. I packed dresses, sweaters and even some pants that I had never worn, or not worn often, thinking that having them in my suitcase would make me wear them. I didn't. I avoided them like the plague. You want things that you know fit you and that make you comfortable, especially when dealing with the stress of travel.
- 2. Think capsule wardrobe.** Only pack things that go together and can be used for multiple outfits. Maybe include one or two statement pieces, but generally aim for versatile basics.
- 3. Go through your suitcase several times.** Pack and then re-pack your suitcase as many times as you can before you leave. Try to take something out every time. You will still end up with more stuff than you actually need and you'll want space for all of the things that you'll end up buying while you're there.
- 4. Look up the climate.** For the love of all that is good in this world, PLEASE LOOK AT WHAT THE WEATHER IS LIKE IN THE COUNTRY YOU ARE GOING TO. Don't pack for the weather of your home country or what you imagine it being like. I packed for spring weather when I went to Italy and didn't plan for how cold it would be in Berlin or Paris when I traveled there over my Spring Break. Do your research.
- 5. Prepare for any and all situations.** Make sure to have a plethora of comfy clothes for traveling and things to layer to reduce one-wear items. Have at least one nice thing in case an opportunity comes up where you need to dress up. And don't pack heels if you're going anywhere with cobblestone streets unless you want a broken ankle.



- 6. Look up the trends of the country you'll be in.** I studied abroad in Italy and their fashion is very trendy. Everyone always looks on-point and the fashion there is very minimalistic. I didn't want to stand out too much and it helped me to feel like less of an outsider in places I was unfamiliar with.
- 7. Sizing.** Look up what size you are in the country you are going to. Size charts vary across countries and it's helpful to know what you're looking for if you need to ask an associate for help. Bonus points if you can ask them in the language of the country!

Well, that's what I've got for ya! I hope this helps and puts your mind a little more at ease as you prepare to go. Packing can be overwhelming but it doesn't have to be. As long as you are vigilant and willing to compromise, the process will go by quickly. Happy adventuring, travelers, and good luck in all of your foreign endeavors!

Whimsy and chicken mcnuggets

Notes from a study abroad program to Galway, Ireland

CLAIRE O'REILLY

Rain drops splash on the ground, and the cobblestone streets glisten. A soft glow of light spills out of a local pub and laughter fills the air. Welcome to Galway, Ireland.

For the next three and a half months, I will be fully immersing myself into the studies and culture of Ireland. While abroad, I am taking classes through the National University of Ireland at Galway and living with other Irish and American students.

I may have decided to embark on this journey just a few months ago, but it has been my dream to make it to Ireland since I was little.

I landed in the Emerald Isle around 6 a.m. last Tuesday morning, about 15 hours after leaving my home in Rochester, New York.

Long hours of traveling, including a five hour layover in JFK International Airport, didn't exactly leave me begging to get into a van and drive another hour and a half from the Shannon Airport to my new apartment.

When I wasn't dozing off with my head against the window, I could hear bits of the jokes our cab driver was making. He was a little old man with Santa Claus-white hair and a peculiar take on the sheep grazing along the road.

"Those aren't sheep. They're just cardigans with legs," he said, laughing to himself.

Our group let out a little fake laugh and then returned to our zombie-like state of exhaustion. I don't think any of us were really ready for what we were about to experience once we stepped out of that cab into Galway City.

An interesting thing about this Ireland trip is that it has brought me closer with a fellow Fredonia student. Senior music industry major Megan Stade is actually my roommate, and

we have been on this adventure together since I arrived at the airport in New York City.

We both felt the pain of the extreme tiredness and ended up sleeping from 11:30 p.m. Tuesday night until 3 p.m. Wednesday afternoon. All I have to say is that jet-lag is a real thing, people.

Starving and looking like we were straight out of AMC's "The Walking Dead," we hit the only place we knew would have good old french fries and chicken nuggets: McDonald's.

Feeling like a typical American, I bore my shame and ordered that six piece with confidence.

What was actually surprising is that the portions were so much smaller here than back in the U.S. Larges in Ireland are equivalent to what we know as mediums, and mediums are equivalent to smalls.

On Thursday, I finally got a taste of the famous Irish rain. Coming out of the 90 degree weather in Western New York all summer, I am blessing the 60 degree rainy days.

Despite the rain, our little group walked into town and did our own version of a pub crawl.

Just a heads up, if you ever visit Galway, just know that a Galway Hooker is a beer named after the Galway fishing boats known as hookers, not the hooker you might first think of. Also, order the fish and chips. You won't be disappointed.

After three days of getting my bearings in a new country and my little guilty McDonald's treat, I'm starting to really take in the whimsical feel and pub culture this city is full of.

It's all sort of ironic, being tossed into a new culture and new country but at the same time feeling so completely at home.



Photo courtesy of Claire O'Reilly

‘Sex, drugs and bacon rolls’

Notes from a study abroad program to Galway, Ireland

CLAIRE O'REILLY

As cheesy as I know it sounds, ever since I first watched Disney's "101 Dalmatians" and "Peter Pan," I dreamt of spending time exploring London and being able to see Big Ben. I didn't run into my soulmate walking his dog or catch a flying ship to Neverland, but I did step into a world and a city I had always imagined.

After spending my first three weeks exploring Galway and parts of Ireland's west coast, I decided it was time for an adventure outside of the Emerald Isle. I booked a plane ticket to England, and set out for Buckingham Palace.

On the first day of my five day vacation, my roommate and I got on a bus to Harry Potter Studios and we were on our way to Hogwarts. I got to walk into the Great Hall, wait in line to board the Hogwarts Express, sip Butterbeer and take a stroll through Diagon Alley. The tour made the story and the movies come alive. Hundreds of people swarmed the studio, all speaking different languages. I realized then just how many of us have been impacted by J.K. Rowling's words.

Saturday morning was spent in search of the famous Abbey Road. After a ride on the Underground, we were on foot towards the site of one of The Beatles' most iconic album covers. The neighborhood was cheery, vibrant and surprisingly extremely normal.

Imagine 30 people standing in a cluster waiting for a chance to cross the street and snag their pictures as the locals try to drive down the same road just as they probably have done a hundred times before. It was almost comical watching everyone wait for the perfect moment, clear of vehicle traffic, to impersonate a picture. I, of course, was guilty of waiting for that perfect moment. I wondered if any of the band members imagined that more than 50 years later, people would be swarming the street and paying tribute.

In another part of London, on 3 Savile Way, The Beatles played their last concert on a rooftop in January 1969. Megan and I traveled to this location as well. Much to our surprise, and unlike Abbey Road, the street was empty except for us. Abbey Road was full of tourists and even had a shop full of records, postcards and other collectible items. We matched the building to a picture we had found on Google. 3 Savile Way is now an Abercrombie Kids.

When the sun set in the city and the street lights dimmed,

we made our way to a free Jack the Ripper tour. Jack the Ripper is notorious for murdering prostitutes in London's West End. There are many theories about who the murderer might have been, but ultimately, the case remains unsolved.

While on the tour, our guide mentioned to us a little joint called "The Breakfast Club." He told us that although it may look like your typical restaurant, there is actually a secret underground bar below it. All you have to do to gain access to this secret bar is state a peculiar sentence to your waitress: "I'm here to see the mayor."

Obviously, our group was intrigued. We snuck off the tour and ran back to The Breakfast Club. The restaurant is famous for serving breakfast all night. We were seated in a booth right in front of an electric sign reading "Sex, drugs and bacon rolls."

Palms sweating and excitement rushing through us, we told our waitress we were here to see the mayor. She smiled, handed us a drink menu and said, "it'll be about an hour."

Sure enough, an hour later, our waitress made eye contact with another worker and gave him the thumbs up. He motioned for us to walk over to a huge fridge on one of the walls of the joint. When the doors to the fridge were opened, a stairwell was revealed to us. While being led down the stairs, the faint sound of music grew louder with each step.

So, it is true. At a cool little breakfast joint in the West End of London, you can enter a secret bar through a fridge. If you ever get the chance to go, remember to ask to see the mayor. Oh, and once you're down there, order a drink called "Purple Rain." You'll thank me later.



All photos courtesy of Claire O'Reilly

P H O T O S

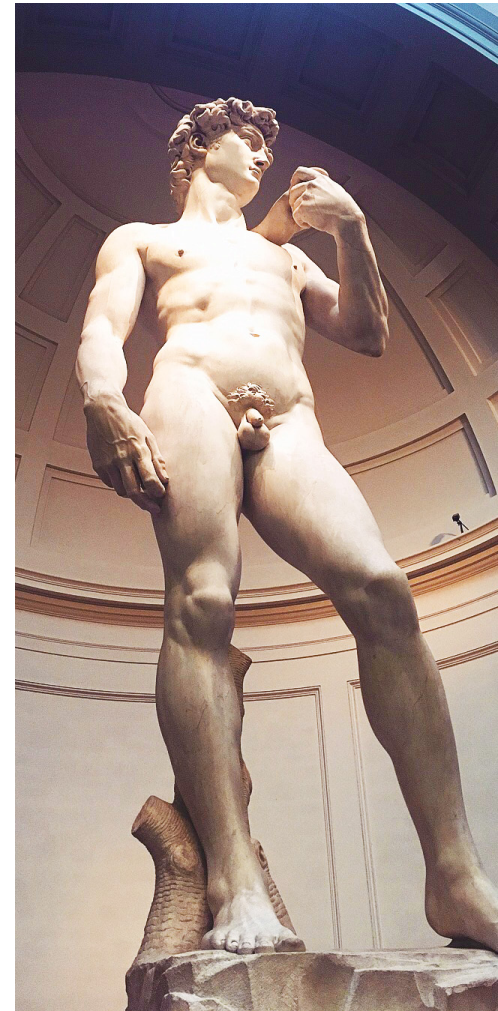


(A): A shrine in Tokyo is surrounded by foliage. Photo courtesy of Makenzie Smith

(L): Big Ben in London. Photo courtesy of Claire O'Reilly

(R): Piazza IV Novembre in Perugia, Italy. Photo by Amber Mattice

(B): The Seine in Paris reflects evening lights. Photo by Amber Mattice



(Far Left): Michelangelo's "David" towers above the crowds at his feet. Photo taken by Amber Mattice

(L): A 'Berlin' mural pops among the art of the Berlin Wall. Photo taken by Amber Mattice

(B): Iconic rock formations off of the coast of Capri, Italy captures the attention of boat riders. Photo taken by Amber Mattice

(Bottom): Greenery in Ireland creates a breathtaking scene. Photo courtesy of Claire O'Reilly

The best advice you'll ever get

A student reflects on her time in Perugia, Italy

AMBER MATTICE

To all potential world travellers and whomever just happened to land on this page,

This is going to sound painfully cliché but, if you are thinking about studying abroad, please do. It will change your life.

I knew I wanted to study abroad from the moment I was accepted into college. I wanted to travel to Italy more than anything in the world and I was determined to make it happen. The process was stressful, terrifying and so rewarding. Erin Willis, the study abroad advisor in the Office of International Education, has definitely seen me at my worst but I managed to get through it.

Fast forward to now. I just got back from the most magical four months of my life. I spent them living in Perugia, Italy, travelling around the beautiful country (and other parts of Europe) and just living my life to the fullest.

If you are uncertain about leaving your home, family and friends behind, I totally get it. But taking that leap and immersing yourself into a new culture is worth it. If I hadn't forced myself to go, I wouldn't be who I am right now, writing an article about travelling to new parts of the world. So, if you want some advice to get you through the inevitable panic attacks, here's some things I've learned over the past semester.

1. Spend money on experiences. Obviously souvenirs are great and little momentos are a must when going to new places but you will regret getting so many when you have to buy a carry-on suitcase just to fit all of the excess you've compiled over your time abroad. There is so much to see so spend money on seeing those things and also treat yourself to some more gelato. Trust me when I say that you WILL go into withdrawals once you're back in the States.

2. You will make friends so don't stress. I am a relatively shy human being and I was so scared that I wouldn't live with people that I liked or wouldn't be able to make friends living in a new place, let alone a new country. Little did I know that my roommates would become three of my life-long friends and three people that I love so much. Also, I met so many people from different countries. Talk to locals and fight the language barrier!

3. Speak the language. I cannot stress this enough. If you are studying in a country whose language is different from yours, learn it and try your hardest to speak it. My biggest pet peeve abroad was meeting students in my program who didn't care to even try to speak Italian. Your job as a student there is to immerse yourself as best you can and being able to speak to locals in their language is a part of that. They will appreciate it more than you know now and you will feel so accomplished when you hold your first conversation with someone in a new language.

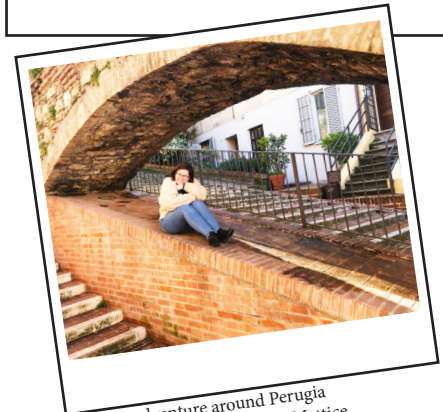
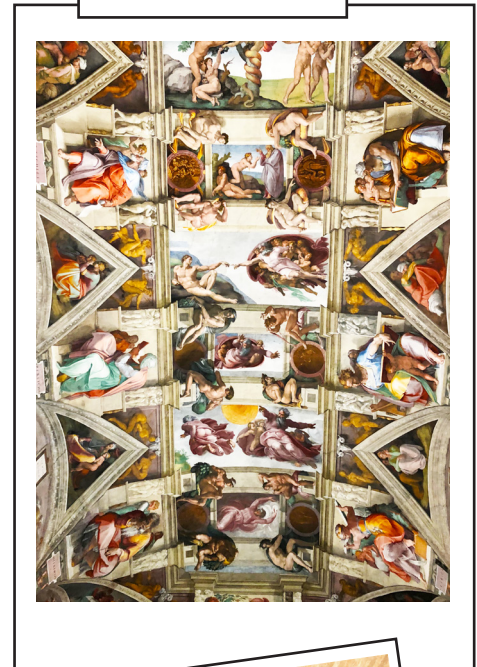
4. Take pictures and then take some more. I took over 5,000 pictures and videos while I was abroad. While this is ridiculously excessive, I am so glad I did. Whether they were stupid ones of my friends at our favorite bar or the sunset from my favorite lookout, I took pictures of everything. While Perugia is still fresh in my mind and looking at the pictures makes me feel so homesick for Italy, I will appreciate them in a few months.

5. Be prepared for the post-travel depression. While your return should be far from your mind right now, I felt that it was important to mention my struggle of coming back to America after living in Europe. Wherever you are studying will begin to feel like home and when you start to notice who the tourists are, that's when you know you are really a part of the community you have been living in over the past semester. When you have to leave your heart will hurt. I am currently struggling through it but it does not mean that the experience was any less worth it. You will come back changed. The desire to travel will always be with you but if nothing else, that just gives you a reason to go back, right?

So give in to the wanderlust and take the world in your hands. You've got this.

Sincerely,

A girl homesick for the place she left behind



Students adventure around Perugia
All photos courtesy of Amber Mattice

Take the leap and travel: Summer Iceland trips offers immersive learning opportunities

AMBER MATTICE

It is no secret that Fredonia has a plethora of study abroad options that offer students the opportunity to learn and grow in various countries around the world. With at least one option on every continent, choosing where to go can be a harrowing process, as can the thought of spending an entire semester in another country.

But that is why the summer trip to Iceland, led by Professor Iclal Vanwesenbeeck, is a unique experience that should not be overlooked. The Iceland trip, referred to as “Magical Iceland” on Fredonia’s study abroad website, is a 3-credit course “designed to introduce students to the unique geology, culture and history of Iceland.”

Students, led by Vanwesenbeeck, travel to and around the island of Iceland for a couple of weeks. This year’s dates are not set quite yet but, in the past, have typically fallen between the end of May and the beginning of June. The tentative dates are May 20-31. The application deadline, according to the course’s study abroad page, is Dec. 8.

The point of the course is to immerse students in another culture, to attend lectures and engage with the community of Iceland.

“I think for those of us who dedicate our lives to education, it is easy to understand that education is the only sustainable way for peace and peacemaking in the world,” said Vanwesenbeeck, who is currently abroad in Istanbul, Turkey. “The more you engage in rigorous study abroad or international education programs, the more you develop or grow as a citizen [and] as a person. . . . I care about this primarily because I think, in the long run, for generations to come, we will need a very

sustainable way to ensure we are in peaceful relations with other people, with other cultures, with other countries and, to me, I can’t find any other answer but education.”

This year will see a new addition to the summer course due to a grant that Vanwesenbeeck received which will allow students that need civic engagement credits to acquire them through the trip. Vanwesenbeeck is integrating civic engagement attributes into the course this year, for the first time, so students will get even more out of the trip than in the past. There is no one set area of study that the trip focuses on but, rather, it encourages students to delve deeper into something that they are interested in and look at it through the view of another culture.

Photographers, biologists, artists and educators have all taken the trip in previous years and, because Iceland is such an isolated island, the rich and vast aspects of the land and culture offer something for everyone to look into.

“Students from all backgrounds and all disciplines are welcome. It is a course that appeals to all students from all different areas of interest,” said Vanwesenbeeck. “The island, even though it is only has 350,000 people and a very limited number of species [that] inhabit the island, it is an incredibly rich place to observe, to perform some experiential learning and also to engage in dialogue [with the people that live there].”

Students are offered the chance to speak with scientists, members of the government and locals within the villages of Iceland throughout

their trip. They are also given the chance to travel across the island and see the beauty that Iceland has to offer as well as the rich culture of Reykjavik, which is the capital city.

“My most vivid experience is definitely the glacier hike! Seeing first hand the effects of climate change on such a massive glacier is overwhelming, but having the opportunity to hike on one (crampons and all), is an experience I won’t forget,” said Virginia Croft, a Fredonia alumna that took the trip the summer after her junior year. “And, it may seem like an everyday part of the trip, but just simply driving around the long, beautiful roads of Iceland and chatting with the guides was very special to me.”

It is an incredibly rigorous course, academically, but also a rewarding one that offers new learning experiences that cannot be achieved within the standard classroom setting.

“If you are a student who is on the fence, all I can say is that you take the leap proudly. Don’t second guess yourself,” said Thomas Brennan, a Fredonia alumnus that took the trip after his senior year. “By the way, keep a journal and write your thoughts daily. You may have pictures, but years from now you’ll wonder what you were thinking on top of a glacier, inside Parliament or gazing at volcanoes in the Thorsmork valley.”

For students that are uncertain about taking the trip, Vanwesenbeeck is offering a course next semester: ENGL 399, Icelandic Film and Fiction. It will be offered from Jan. 23-Mar. 8. It will offer students an opportunity to be introduced to the country before going on the trip but will also give all students the chance to explore the culture of Iceland further.

For any questions about the trip or the course, email Vanwesenbeeck at Iclal.Vanwesenbeeck@fredonia.edu and also check out the study abroad office’s website for more deadlines, costs and applications.

If you are still having a hard time deciding whether or not to take the leap and apply, Vanwesenbeeck had one thing to say:

“Don’t think twice!”



‘A bad experience is still an experience’

A student reveals a side of studying abroad that no one talks about

AMBER MATTICE

Studying abroad is usually depicted as being a dream come true. The stories are often reminiscent of a fairytale. This, however, is not always the case.

Makenzie Smith can attest to that.

Smith studied abroad to Niigata, Japan in the Fall of 2017. Her original plan was to stay for an entire year and come back to Fredonia for her final year. After six months, however, Smith was back in the States due to several problems that led to severe depression, anxiety and an overwhelming sense of isolation.

“The program was not ready yet for American students and [I dealt with] a lot of personal problems,” said Smith. “I had to deal with bureaucracy and file paperwork. I needed to switch my apartment two times

[and it] was not easy — not just because of a language barrier but because of a preconceived bias against me for being both American and female.”

Smith, shifting uncomfortably in her seat, struggled to find the words to talk about what happened.

The first time Smith had to change apartments was because the living situation when she first got there was not what she had been told. She was living 20 minutes away from Niigata University, in a city she did not know, that only spoke Japanese, which she was not told she would have to know much of when she got there.

The second time she moved was because she was harassed by another foreign exchange student, a boy from Russia, that was living in the same building

as her. He would bang on her door in the middle of night and she was terrified to walk through the building alone in case she ran into him. He was aggressive and



continuously tried to push himself onto her and every time she went to faculty, she was met with skepticism.

Eventually, when she was moved to a new apartment, she was already uncomfortable and doubting her decision to come to Niigata.

“It’s not because it was Japan [as a whole] but because of where I was in Japan and because the program I was on was not ready for students who were not at an advanced level of Japanese speaking,” said Smith. “Which is the fault of Fredonia because the paperwork, when you’re applying, says that you don’t need to know much Japanese.”

The city of Niigata is on the west coast, north west of Tokyo and on the mainland of Japan. The exchange program to the University of Niigata is fairly new to Fredonia as only one student had gone, in the Fall of 2016, before Smith went.

Smith was ready and desperately needing to come back home and be with her friends and family, who could nothing but offer words of comfort from afar while Smith dealt with the problems arising in Japan.

“Hearing about her experience was extremely difficult. Being so far away while knowing someone you care about is struggling is a frustrating experience. Being in an unfamiliar place with little to no support around you would be terrifying to say the least,” said Michaela Ruggerio, who had been friends with Smith for two years prior to her departure. “I already had a lot of respect for Kenzie, but after seeing how she pushed through and actively tried to make her situation better, I gained even more admiration for her.”

This was not the first time that Smith had traveled abroad, however, as she went and traveled across Europe when she was in Middle School through a program called People to People and had also traveled to Japan in the summer of 2014 through an exchange program offered by her hometown, Horseheads, NY. She went to Niigata with some Japanese under her belt and a confidence that she carried with her in all aspects of life before her trip.



“I’m pretty good at traveling and was pretty prepared for what could have gone wrong but . . .” Smith trailed off, uncertain how to end her sentence.

She could not find the words.

Smith had wanted to study abroad for as long as she can remember and has always had an intense love of travel.

“I decided to study abroad as soon as I decided to go to college. It was something that I wanted to do because I felt like college was a very unique time in one’s life to travel,” said Smith. “If people have the resources to, they should study abroad in college. Hopefully other people’s experiences are better than mine but even a bad experience is still an experience.”

Smith struggled to get credits transferred correctly and was failed out of several classes while abroad because she was not told before leaving that certain

classes were only offered in Japanese.

She dealt with rude landlords. Heating issues. Harassment. Being written off. Ignored. Looked down on. Yet Smith still came back with some good memories and a love for travel.

Some of Smith’s favorite memories was traveling to Sado Island and spending a day in Tokyo.

“Tokyo just has a way of making everything that is bad better. It’s easy to just get lost there, in a good way. Tokyo is the epitome of why I wanted to go to Japan,” said Smith.

As Smith stated before, she still feels that students should study abroad and holds Japan, itself, in her heart as the best place she has ever traveled to.

“Stick to your guns,” said Smith, when asked what advice she has for students who want to

study abroad and are afraid of having a similarly negative experience. “Because even if things don’t go wrong, like they did with my experience, you’re still going to have moments that seem difficult . . . but you should study abroad and once you do, be confident in yourself and know that you’re going to make the right decisions even if those around you discourage you.”



Photos courtesy of Makenzie Smith

*Find your home ———
——— away from home*

Interested in studying abroad?

Please come to the Office of International Education located in LoGrasso Hall for more information!

Or make an appointment by phone:
716-673-3451

