

Boston University School of Law

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**BOSTON  
UNIVERSITY**

# Boston University School of Law

## Study Abroad Final Reports



University of Hong Kong  
Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong

# FINAL STUDY ABROAD REPORT

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Please provide a written assessment of your experience abroad this past term in light of your academic and educational objectives. In particular, please touch on the following: your overall experience at the foreign institution, the quality of the faculty and the quality and availability of courses offered. Please also comment on other topics you feel might be helpful to future students, such as quality of life, financial, housing, social or other considerations that had an impact on your experience. Your report need not be longer than two pages.
- 2) Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in our study abroad programs.
  - a) Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?  
YES ☒  
NO ☐
  - b) Will you share your final study abroad report (with any identifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?  
YES ☒  
NO ☐

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**Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.**

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**Name:**

**Semester/Institution:** Fall 2023, The University of Hong Kong (HKU)

**REPORT:**

## OVERALL

Hong Kong is a great city in which to spend a semester abroad. I enjoyed my time there, and I am very happy with my decision to study abroad during my 3L year. It was enlightening to attend The University of Hong Kong (HKU), meet new people, and experience Asian culture. I would recommend this study abroad experience to other BU Law students.

## ACADEMICS

My academic experience at HKU felt more similar to my undergraduate years than my time in law school. The J.D. program in North America is quite unique in comparison to law school around the world. Law school in the United States is practice-oriented and rarely comparative. At HKU, you will likely be taking a mix of LLB and LLM classes, and these classes often cover theoretical topics and take comparative perspectives.

- Difficulty and assessment

Because most of my classes were taught at the bachelor's/LLB level, they were less demanding and more basic than graduate/JD courses. There are more small assignments throughout the semester (i.e., response papers) than there are in a typical doctrinal class at BU Law.

Assessments included presentations, research papers, group projects, participation, and short written assignments. Two of my classes had take-home exams. These exams were similar to exams I would take at BU Law, but I generally had more time to prepare for and write the exam at HKU. Two of my classes had long research papers (4,000-6,000 word minimum) as a final assessment. Unfortunately, I did not receive much feedback or advice from my professors throughout the writing process for these papers. They were completed independently and required a lot of outside-the-class research.

- Quality of faculty

My professors were kind and widely accomplished. Many of them were well-respected researchers with a solid body of publications. HKU's faculty and staff is very international. I found it interesting to learn from experts who had done different legal work around the world, including the countries of Great Britain, Singapore, and Mainland China. I did not get close to many of my professors, but it is possible to catch up with them beyond class time if you take the initiative. Generally speaking, my professors taught in a lecture style and there was little to no cold calling. Not all classes had opportunities for discussion.

- Courses offered

My favorite course of the semester was my language course. I took a semester of Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language, and I found the class very effective for language learning. The workload is significant—it included quizzes, oral assessments, presentations, and written assessments—but it was never unreasonable. I would recommend taking a Chinese language course; even if you are familiar with the language, you may benefit from taking one of the higher-level courses. There was a decent variety of law courses available to me. I had a relatively



easy time enrolling in the classes I wanted. There is a small window of opportunity to try out different classes during the add/drop period at the beginning of the semester. I think Hong Kong has some great classes in human rights, national security, and corporate law. My favorite law course was Comparative Constitutional Law.

### COST OF LIVING

Financially, four months in Hong Kong was cheaper or equally expensive as four months in Boston, though study abroad will always be an investment because of travel expenses. In comparison to other Asian cities, Hong Kong is quite expensive. In comparison to the United States, though, I found the cost of living as an exchange student to be reasonable.

- Food

Food and groceries were affordable. Most days, I ate on and around campus. The same meal almost certainly costs less in Hong Kong than the United States. Snacks and drinks from MTR shops are cheap and convenient. Overall, there is a great diversity of food options in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is a fantastic place to try different Asian cuisines.

- Housing

I stayed in an on-campus student residence, so my rent was significantly cheaper than off-campus residences. If you plan to rent off-campus, expect high prices and small spaces. (I think the best areas to look for housing would include Wan Chai and North Point, or other areas along the MTR Island Line.) I had a generally positive experience with my student residence, Jockey Club Student Village IV. After participating in HKU's housing lottery over summer, I received notification in early August that I had been placed in the newest dorm available. JCSV IV was modern, clean, and fully staffed (security, front desk, resident tutors, cleaning staff). I had a single bedroom with communal kitchen and bathroom. You will have to buy your own kitchen tools and appliances, such as pots, pans, and blenders. There are no ovens or dishwashers. Unfortunately, my building was not fully ready when I moved in, so parts of the building and many of the amenities were still under construction throughout my stay. This was somewhat inconvenient, though HKU discounted our lodging fee accordingly. The location of the student residence was also somewhat inconvenient because JCSV IV is at the southernmost area of the island, which meant campus was around a 35-minute commute away. Though the dorms were not perfect, I thought the student residence was worth it overall. (A word of warning—from what I saw of the older dorms, many of the other halls are old, dirty, and poorly maintained, so my experience at JCSV IV might have been unique.)

- Transportation

Hong Kong has a fantastic public transport system. I used the MTR every day. Occasionally, I would ride the CityBus, Public Light Bus (small bus), a ferry (to outlying islands), or a taxi. The MTR gets you around most places in Hong Kong. The trains are reliable and come often (every 2-7 minutes), though they can get very crowded and the MTR does not run all night. The "Octopus" metro card is an everyday essential, and it is used around the entire city, not just the



metro system. The metro system is fairly modern, so payments are compatible with Apple Pay/Android Pay and you can manage your card from an app. Public transit is reasonably priced. Ubers and taxis are comparable to rates in the United States.

- Social

There should be no trouble socializing with others. There are many international and exchange students at HKU, so it is a great school to attend if you are interested in a diverse student body. keep in mind that many students are studying at the bachelor's level, so many of the people you meet will be younger than the typical age of an American J.D. student. I met a lot of Canadians and Europeans throughout my stay. There were a few other students from the United States, and I enjoyed learning about their respective J.D. programs. Socializing with "local" students may require a little more effort than socializing with international students because my classes were predominantly composed of exchange students. I met some local students through the CEDARS orientation, my language class, and mutual friends/acquaintances. If you are intentional about it, you will not have a problem meeting and bonding with Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese students. People that I met were friendly and happy to talk about their culture and lifestyle. Some people may say that Hong Kongers are "rude," but I think that is an unfair characterization. Hong Kong locals are impatient and blunt, but they are not mean-spirited. There is simply a different standard for politeness. Additionally, all students know English, so it is not hard to converse with others, though certain activities and social events will be exclusively (or predominantly) in Cantonese. It is hard to be bored in Hong Kong because there are so many different activities throughout the city: hiking, eating, going to museums, going to the beach, clubbing, attending concerts, shopping, and more.

- Safety

One thing I would like to highlight: Hong Kong is a very safe city. I found it much safer than Boston and other American cities I have visited. I was pleasantly surprised by how safe and comfortable everywhere on Hong Kong Island was. While it is still important to remain aware and take care of yourself and your belongings at all times, I experienced no trouble related to theft or crime.

## FINAL STUDY ABROAD REPORT

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- a) Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?

NO ☐

- b) Will you share your final study abroad report (with any identifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?

YES ☐

NO ☐

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**Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.**

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**Semester/Institution:** Fall 2019/Faculty of Law, University of Hong Kong

**REPORT:**

The overall experience for my fall semester in Hong Kong has been incredible in many ways.

Academically, the University of Hong Kong Faculty of Law is very similar to BU Law School. The professors are mostly international and are all fluent in English. All courses are taught in English and assessed through papers and/or final exams. The courses are more often conducted in lecture-styles than Socratic-methods, but questions are always encouraged both in-class and at office hours after class. There is a variety of law courses offered at the HKU Law School. Although the majority of them are China and Asia-focused, there is a great number of classes that are comparative in nature: allowing the students to analyze and compare the similarities and the differences between common law subjects in Asia and in the U.S.

For my fall semester in particular, I had a British professor from the City University of London who was also the first foreign dean of a Chinese law school before he came to teach at the HKU. It was a wonderful experience learning from him about the comparisons between Chinese human rights and international human rights. Because I elected four advanced level classes, all my final assessments were papers that ranged from 15-25 pages each. This kind of situation requires a better planning at the beginning of the semester to spread out the workloads so to avoid too much pressure at the end of the semester.

In addition to the academic, one important factor for potential candidate to consider is the cost of living. While grocery and food prices in Hong Kong can be similar or cheaper than those here in the US, rent in Hong Kong is substantially higher. Hong Kong has consistently been ranked as one of the most expensive real estate market in the world. This potential issue, however, can be easily resolved by applying to HKU dorms. The dorms cost a little over US\$1000 ~~for the~~ whole semester, whereas renting your own studio could easily cost US\$3000 each month.



# FINAL STUDY ABROAD REPORT

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Write a one page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

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**Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.**

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**PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER:** University of Hong Kong (Fall 2014)

Below are insights that speak to the academic, financial, and social aspects of life as an exchange student at the University of Hong Kong.

**Academic Matters.** There are a few differences to academic life at HKU and academic life at BU that are worth noting. First, classes only meet once a week for a three-hour block. Thus, if someone were so inclined, it is possible to schedule an entire week's classes over two days with six hours of class each day. Second, in my experience, there is no cold calling and very little class participation outside of a question or two. Most professors are content to lecture for three hours, but even those who push for their students to participate still have trouble generating any sort of back and forth. This can make class a little tough to get through especially during the third hour. Overall, the professors have been quite impressive and the subject matter engaging.

Each of the four classes I was enrolled had one and only exam (the final exam). Attendance and participation (between 10% and 20% depending on the class) are also used in determining ones final grade.

**Money Matters and Housing.** Hong Kong is expensive. Its cost of living (outside of housing) is a bit more expensive than Boston. Housing easily poses the biggest problem for exchange students studying at HKU. While HKU does offer affordable dormitory housing for exchange students, there are two issues: (1) the housing is not guaranteed and (2) some of the housing can be quite Spartan and lacking privacy. A fellow BU Law exchange student and I opted to rent a flat on our own. The space was very small as well as more expensive than our current housing in Boston. The one silver lining to Hong Kong - as far as money is concerned - is public transportation. The MTR (subway) and bus system are very cheap and extremely effective. Trips all over Hong Kong are convenient through use of the MTR and busses and rarely ever cost more than \$2 US dollars. Taxi cabs are also very affordable and readily available.

**Social Matters.** There is no shortage of things to do and people to meet in Hong Kong. The exchange student population is very large (1,000+ students) so it was quite easy to meet people to experience Hong Kong with. The exchange population mostly consisted of Europeans and Canadians. In general, Hong Kong is a very gregarious atmosphere - mostly because of the large expat community. Thus, many exchange students made inroads with people who live in Hong Kong full time. As far as activities are concerned, Hong Kong offers a very active nightlife that mostly takes place at restaurants and bars because of the very small living spaces. The city also offers an array of outdoor activities with numerous world class hiking trails and beaches within the city limits. Furthermore, Hong Kong International Airport is a central hub to all of Asia and provides many affordable flights to some of the world's most exciting and beautiful locations.

**Concluding thoughts.** I loved my time as an exchange student in Hong Kong and am thus a big proponent of the program. While the city is unquestionably expensive and the living quarters miniscule as compared to Boston/U.S. standards, the positives of life in Hong Kong far outweighed the negatives. Please feel to share my information with any students who are interested in exchange programs (HKU or other).

# MID-SEMESTER STUDY ABROAD REPORT

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- Write a one page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

- Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in study abroad programs.

- Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?

YES ☒ NO ☐

- Will you share your mid-semester report (with any indentifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?

YES ☒ NO ☐

**Please write your Mid-Semester Study Abroad Report below.**

**PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER: University of Hong Kong (HKU) - Fall Semester**

Thus far, my time at the University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong has been a very positive experience. The following briefly touches on the academic, economic, and social aspects of spending a semester in Hong Kong.

*Academic Matters.* There are a few differences to academic life at HKU and academic life at BU that are worth noting. First, classes only meet once a week for a three hour block. Thus, if someone were so inclined, it is possible to schedule an entire week's classes over two days with six hours of class each day. Second, in my experience, there is no cold calling and very little class participation outside of a question or two. Most professors are content to lecture for three hours, but even those who push for their students to participate still have trouble generating any



sort of back and forth. This can make class a little tough to get through especially during the third hour. Overall, the professors have been quite impressive and the subject matter engaging.

*Money Matters and Housing.* Hong Kong is expensive. It's cost of living (outside of housing) is a bit more expensive than Boston. Housing easily poses the biggest problem for exchange students studying at HKU. While HKU does offer affordable dormitory housing for exchange students, there are two issues: (1) the housing is not guaranteed and (2) some of the housing can be quite spartan and lacking privacy. A fellow BU Law exchange student and I opted to rent a flat on our own. The space is very small but it does the trick. The one silver lining to Hong Kong - as far as money is concerned - is public transportation. The MTR (subway) and bus system are very cheap and extremely effective. Trips all over Hong Kong are convenient through use of the MTR and busses and rarely ever cost more than \$2 US dollars. Taxi cabs are also very affordable and readily available.

*Social Matters.* There is no shortage of things to do and people to meet in Hong Kong. The exchange student population is very large (1,000+ students) so it has been quite easy to meet people to experience Hong Kong with. The exchange population mostly consists of Europeans and Canadians. In general, Hong Kong is a very gregarious atmosphere - mostly because of the large expat community. Thus, many exchange students have made inroads with people who live in Hong Kong full time. As far as activities are concerned, Hong Kong offers a very active nightlife that mostly takes place at restaurants and bars because of the very small living spaces. The city also offers an array of outdoor activities with numerous world class hiking trails and beaches within the city limits.

Please feel to share my information with any students who are interested in exchange programs (HKU or other).

# FINAL STUDY ABROAD REPORT

## INSTRUCTIONS:

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Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

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Money Matters

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YES ☒ NO ☐
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YES ☒ NO ☐

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Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

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**PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER:** University of Hong Kong – Spring 2012

As the semester has begun to wind down, I feel as I can say that everything I wrote in my previous report remains my impression today - the teaching in the second half of the semester was of very high quality and I was glad to see that all of my professors were able to cover the vast majority of material they set out to cover at the beginning of the semester - so I'll take about the changes. One of my courses made a preplanned change in lecturer as we shifted to a new focus in the course and I found the switch to be very effective. While I would not characterize the practice as common in courses here, I know of a few courses where professors shared the duties of teaching and it has helped keep the courses fresh and interesting.

Examinations have obviously been the most visible addition to the second half of the semester, though, really, it is something students can (and probably should) begin to work on very early on in the course. Most of my courses required end of the course research papers rather than examinations and the one examination I did have was of the take-home variety that allowed outside research, so the feel was not substantially different from the research papers. Because

some of the topics are rather specific and covered early on in the course, there is opportunity to get a good head start in writing, which can most definitely ease the normal stress of finals period. I would highly recommend students take advantage of the opportunity as the weather toward the end of the semester is much nicer than at the beginning. The library is quite nice, but I'm sure most would prefer sunlight to artificial light if there is an option.

The examination situation is somewhat similar to seminars here at BU and almost all LLM courses at HKU meet for an extended period once a week, again like seminars, so the experience should be familiar to most. The formal guidelines for all of my papers were fairly similar and I ended up writing roughly 20 pages for each submission in double-spaced format. From what I heard from my peers, most courses seem to require papers between 4000 - 6000 words, depending on what else is required during the semester. Indeed, the one class where I had semi-regular assignments required the least involved research paper. Though I got the impression that expectations are set slightly lower than at BU, I hope I turned in quality work.

Because the semester in Hong Kong ends several weeks after that of BU, I turned in my exams earlier than most. Thanks to the Office of Graduate & International Programs here, the process seems relatively painless. I simply spoke with each of my professors and let them know that BU required examination by a date of which I was informed and asked them how many days beforehand they would need for grading to meet that deadline. I turned in the paperwork with such dates to the registrar there; it varied between 2 - 4 days between all of my professors. This is another reason students should take advantage of the ability to start early in writing exams.

Now that classes have ended, I think I can reflect on the totality of my impressions at the University of Hong Kong as very positive. I feel as though I had the opportunity to learn about and write something that could have meaningful contribution to legal scholarship and I hope that future students set their standards high when they approach exams as the professors at HKU are a fantastic resource in the fields in which they lecture. I extend my deepest thanks to the BU and the Office of Graduate & International Programs for providing the partnership and opportunity for me to study at HKU as it has provided me a venue in which to make new connections that I intend to fully explore soon, study in new areas of law, and make friends that I hope to have for quite some time.



## Study Abroad Experience: Hong Kong 2004

Attending the University of Hong Kong Law School at this vibrant time in the Special Administrative Region's political development is nothing short of thrilling. The future of Hong Kong, as a region of China, as a political entity, as a financial center, and as a potential democracy is being debated every day, on campus, on the streets, and in the press. At the center of the debate are lawyers, because many issues revolve around the interpretation of Hong Kong's Basic Law, the governing document that binds HK's political and legal system, in a similar way that the Constitution binds the United States. As a student visiting from a law school in the United States, I found that my opinions were sought constantly in and out of the class room. Our legal system and Constitution are still the envy of the world, if for no other reason than because of their enduring nature and the promises of freedom they have offered. I was pleased to discover that BU had prepared me well to answer practical and theoretical questions about US law.

Besides the usual first year classes in US law, one BU course I found particularly helpful in HK was Professor Seipp's English Legal History. HK has inherited the English common law, and HK's version is in its nascent stages as an independent legal system. Prior to 1997, all legal cases in HK could ultimately be appealed to English courts, but now the system is in the hands of HK citizens. There is much debate about the direction the law should take now, and I found the historical perspective offered by Professor Seipp's class to be particularly helpful when confronting these matters. For example, there is much current debate about whether legal proceedings ought to be conducted in Cantonese, the first language of over 90 percent of HK's people. Many lawyers argue to keep legal proceeding in English, because they say the development of common law is dependent on the precision offered by the English language, and in fact the legal culture and the language are inseparable. However, this ignores the fact that for most of its early development, English legal proceedings were conducted in French. This was just one example of how I found what I learned in English Legal History useful. While it's certainly not a *sine qua non* for understanding HK law and participating in debate about it, it's a course any student studying in HK ought at least to consider.

The teaching style at HKU is very different from what a US law student is used to. The Socratic Method is unknown to the Chinese and courses are conducted in a traditional lecture format with power-point slides. There are often one or two class sessions known as "tutorials" that are designated specifically for class discussion, and discussion questions are usually distributed before hand. However, even in these classes, there is often little participation. Outspokenness and verbal confrontation do not come naturally to the Cantonese. In fact, there are courses at HKU about how to be more demanding and confrontational. US students may find the lectures to be less engaging or interesting than American law school classes, especially because classes meet once a week for three hours. I would recommend taking classes that are unique to HK, or that offer a perspective that may be different in HK. I chose to focus on civil and commercial law classes. I think if I could do one thing differently I would have taken at least one course in criminal law, human rights law, or a course in legal theory. Most visiting students who took courses in these areas found them to be very helpful and engaging.

I chose to live in university housing. There are many dorms, and I lived in Starr Hall. I would highly recommend living in a dorm, because, while it may be a little less comfortable than a flat, you are thrown right in with local students. Also, it's considerably cheaper. Many dorms have single rooms, but I lived with a roommate, and found this very beneficial. On the one hand, I wasn't used to sharing a sleeping area with someone, because I hadn't since college, but on the other hand having a local roommate made it much easier to connect with the other students on my floor. (In HKU dorms, the most basic unit of organization is the floor, and floors have special outings, meetings and usually field a few intramural teams.) Many other western students I know had single rooms and never really became friends with the other people on the floor. A visiting student must be prepared to make every effort to reach out to the locals if he or she wants to make friends, because the culture of south China and the culture of the west are very different. Living in a dorm is the best way to do this. You may find yourself in demand for intramural games and floor committees, as well as a helpful editor of term papers, resumes, and cover letters, all of which must be written in English. With patience, an open mind, and a good sense of humor, you will be rewarded immensely with an intimate look at how another culture lives on a day to day basis, make some great friends, and eat some really good food. You will also be able to reciprocate as curious students will wonder what life is like in the US, and if "Sex and the City" is accurate.

In addition to participating in hall and floor activities, I played on a Rugby team in the HK Rugby Football Union. Besides providing an outlet for fun, I met many people. Some of the team members were ex-pat businessmen from around the world, and several were lawyers. They provided valuable insights about living, working, and practicing law and doing business in Hong Kong. Through them I learned about what practice areas are hot in Asia and the various career tracks that have led people to that part of the world. I would highly recommend that any visiting student take the time to meet a few lawyers and talk to them about what it's like there and how they got there. One possible route, and one that I used, is through a student's college alumni office. Simply ask if there are any alumni practicing law in HK and give them a call. Chances are they'd love to talk. There are also some BUSL alums practicing in HK who might be amenable to talking with students, although I had met many lawyers through other channels and didn't contact them.

The night before I flew out of HK was the fifteenth anniversary of the massacre at Tiananmen Square. As I looked out of my window onto the throngs of protestors in the streets below, demanding representative democracy, and as I read newspaper interviews the following day with marchers, who were not, it turned out, political people, but machinists and bank tellers and clergymen, I knew that the PRC government had underestimated the people of HK. The conventional wisdom in Beijing was that with all of the haute bourgeois material comforts HK enjoys, no one would bother to care too much about political freedom. I only hope that the people of HK have not underestimated the heavy hand of Beijing. Two days later when I landed in New York, the Chinese government had shut down the factory in Shenzhen that made the umbrellas the protestors carried, reading "Democracy Now," and had severely restricted the travel of mainlanders to HK. HK may become the seed that spreads democracy through the rest of China, or a distant memory of a land that was once free, but in either case the events taking place there right now will have an impact on Asia for years to come, and there is perhaps no better place on earth to be a student of the law at this moment. Your opinions will be sought by

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everyone and you will see a legal system that is undergoing moving change that is relevant to the lives of every citizen.



From an academic standpoint, my two primary goals in studying abroad at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) were to (1) gain a better understanding of legal issues confronting emerging economic markets, specifically in Asia, and to (2) develop a more in-depth knowledge of the evolving body of international human rights law. My experience at HKU more than satisfied these two goals.

Two of my classes, Law, Enterprise and Development (LEAD) and PRC Security & Insolvency Law (PSIL) dealt largely with the choices that governments in “developing” nations have in structuring and refining legal systems to meet certain economic objectives. PSIL mostly covered mainland China’s struggles to codify a comprehensive bankruptcy law scheme, and the influence of more “established” foreign legal models, especially that of the United States, in the Chinese Communist Party’s proposed and past legislation. I learned about the unique struggles of the Chinese economy as it relates to property and insolvency, with regards to its state-owned enterprise structure and its lack of history with individual property ownership, due to its communist roots. In addition, as with many of my classes that covered the Chinese legal system and economy, I learned about the influence of Chinese culture, and its emphasis of the “collective good” versus individual gain or profit, in the domestic legal foundation. LEAD was less of a legal and code-heavy class, dealing more with the interplay between politics and economic theories with economic structures. I was especially pleased that the class delved into the financial issues confronting emerging economic markets in Southeast Asia, and the need for legal reform after the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. Both of these classes helped build a foundation in an area I hope to eventually practice, namely advising global companies in structuring their transactions to meet evolving legal guidelines in emerging economic markets.

Although it is not an area that I am likely to pursue as a career, I have had a strong interest in international human rights and international criminal law. Unfortunately, BUSL does not offer much coursework in this area; however, HKU has an LLM concentration in human rights, and as a result, I was able to take two interesting human rights courses during my study. These courses were International Criminal Law (ICL) and Human Rights in China (HRIC). Both courses, as with many of those in the LLM concentration, were taught by professors who have extensive experience in the international human rights field, including working with such organizations as the United Nations (U.N.). In ICL, my professor taught us the history of the comprehensive body of international criminal law, from medieval codes of war to the current efforts of the International Criminal Court. More than just the black-letter material, which was interesting in itself, I enjoyed the way my ICL professor structured the class. This included a very discussion-oriented lecture style, and a moot court in which we worked in parties of two to argue an actual U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda case, with the professor acting as impartial "judge." The moot court forced me to delve deeply into the facts and legal debate dealing with the crime of genocide, and to take a stance on my research. This was a valuable learning experience, and I found it extremely worthwhile.

HRIC was taught differently, with more of a straight lecture focus, but I probably gained most in that class from my readings for class and from my final research paper. I wrote a paper comparing capital punishment in China and India, and this exercise allowed me to implement legal and cultural lessons learned about China to a controversial issue in the international human rights community. Overall, my HKU experience was memorable, and provided me with an international law foundation in two areas in a way that I would have been unable to achieve had I not undertaken this study abroad program. Although I found HKU to be bureaucratic at times,

more so than even large state universities in this country, my academic and social experience more than made up for any annoyances in dealing with the HKU administration.



## Hong Kong Study Abroad – Fall 2006

My experience in Hong Kong was truly amazing and I can not imagine a better way to have spent my semester. I can honestly say that it was probably one of the best experiences of my life and I am so glad that BU gave me the opportunity to study there. I learned a lot about myself and Eastern cultures. It was a personally gratifying experience for me in so many way but in particular because my family is from Hong Kong and I felt like I could finally get in touch with that part of me. I wish that I could say that my legal academic experience was as fulfilling but unfortunately, I cannot.

The classes were not as vigorous as a typical law school class; they are far more autonomous given that they are mostly large lectures where each student blends together with another and the teachers never call on students, they just lecture. The classes certainly had a much more undergraduate feel, even the LLM only classes. With many of the final exams being papers, many students found that it was unnecessary to go to class. In my Human Rights in China class, the numbers in attendance certainly dwindled as the semester progressed. My Human Rights in China professor also seemed very unenthusiastic about the class and teaching. He would often joke about how boring it would be to read all our papers. I enjoyed the class because it taught me more about China and the culture. The class was definitely less of a law class so much as a sociology class. We barely discussed cases or statutes but instead heard stories about human rights instances in China and debated the extent of China's cruelty. This was also true of my Regulation of Financial Markets class where we studied the basic structures of financial markets and the agencies which regulated them. I learned a lot about global markets

and I thought the professor was very good but I would have liked to learn more about the law and policies of financial markets.

Like the Regulation of Financial Markets, many of my classes were very basic and only touched the surface of the area. This was good in areas where I was very unfamiliar with the law but got very boring where I had more experience in the area. For instance, in Company Law and Securities Regulation in China we discussed many basic concepts of company law (which we call corporate law). Although the context was China, the basics were very similar and I was bored until we got to securities regulation. This was certainly my least favorite class from which I learned very little. I did not enjoy the professor's teaching method of putting statute numbers on overhead projectors, and it was very difficult to follow his train of thought.

One class in particular stood out, Public International Law. It was very small and intimate, and although I prefer lecture style classes, I admit that I learned a lot more from my small class. That may also be a product of the final exam which was a 24 hour take home versus a take home paper or group take home finals (two of my classes were take home papers and one was a group final that we were given ample time for). I would say that this class was the most similar to classes at home and that I learned the most from them. I enjoyed this class the most because we discussed cases and issues as a class. I also really liked both of my professors for the class and thought they were very intelligent. I will note that they were both Western, as was my professor for the Regulation of Financial Markets. Perhaps I enjoyed classes with my Western professors more because their teaching was more what I was accustomed to, but I also thought they were more serious about their teaching and were easier to understand. As a whole I can say that I did learn more about international law and international finance, and with the exception of Public Int'l Law, I learned most of what I did on my own through writing my final exams.

One of the benefits of a more relaxed learning environment was that it gave us the opportunity to travel and explore the city of Hong Kong. I believe that part of the experience of studying abroad is not only to learn the law of different countries but also to experience the culture. Hong Kong is a great hub from which to travel because of the many flights coming through, although the flight patterns are not nearly as frequent as we are used to here. Through my travels to other countries, I was able to see the benefits of being in Hong Kong. The city is very Western and modern when compared to those around it. Although there were some things I missed, such as my own room and showering barefoot, the international feel of the city prevented me from ever really getting homesick. There were very few things you could not find there that you might have a craving for. The fact that the city is so international also made adjusting easier because most people speak English so there is less of a language barrier. I am certainly very glad that I did not choose to go to Beijing instead although I would have liked to learn to speak mandarin. Since my family is Cantonese in background, I was able to pick up more of the language than most, but we were definitely able to get by with just English most of the time. I recommend to any student going to study there to try to immerse in the Chinese culture and not to stick to the areas that are notoriously Western, like SOHO or LKF. It is easy to feel like you are in just another big Western city but Hong Kong has a strong culture that students should explore. I also suggest that participants travel as much as possible, especially to China so that they can see the contrast between HK and the Mainland, and realize why HK is not considered part of China. Traveling and experiencing all the different cultures in Asia was truly the best part of the experienced from which I learned the most.

As a final suggestion, I think that BU should allow students to apply much earlier. BU should start the process earlier in the semester because most other schools do and they received



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better housing selections than we did. The abroad office should also recommend that students going abroad speak with students that have gone to get more information and to be more informed about their country. There were a lot of areas where it would have been nice to be more forewarned or have more guidance from those more experienced.

To:

From:

Date: March 23, 2007

Re: Mid-semester Study Abroad Report

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### Classes

My classes vary in their interactivity. My International Commercial Arbitration and Comparative Law classes are almost entirely lecture-based, with almost no student participation. I don't prefer this format because they're less engaging than interactive classes. Furthermore, the few times when students are active in these classes are when we're asked to split up into groups and discuss problems, which I generally don't find to be the best use of class time.

On the other hand, my Media Law and Equality and Non-discrimination classes are highly interactive, with the professor soliciting and expecting students to speak in class, answer questions posed by the professor, and volunteer their opinions. I prefer this format.

I like all my professors though overall. They are all highly engaged in their subject matter, manifest interest in teaching, and are obviously excellent scholars.

### Dorm and Student Life

I don't think I have a representative exchange student life here because I have been spending almost all of my free time here in Hong Kong with my sister, who lives here as well. Thus, I haven't met or befriended many locals.

However, like many of the other exchange students here, I have taken the opportunity on the weekends to travel to nearby Asian countries, and that has been an extremely enriching experience. Hong Kong, as I expected, is an excellent portal to the rest of Asia.

I've enjoyed living here in the dorms. It's very cheap (about 100 U.S. dollars per month), provides you with all the basic amenities (and more), and the students here are friendly, warm, and welcoming.

### Overall Experience

Overall I have had an excellent experience so far. Cantonese was my first language (and the language I still use to communicate with my parents), so being here has allowed me to practice and strengthen my Cantonese language skills. The quality of the HKU education is excellent. And Hong Kong is vibrant and energetic.

Hong Kong can feel at times like one giant shopping mall connected to a giant restaurant, as shopping and eating seem to be the main activities on offer, ~~in~~ the main districts. While I love this aspect of Hong Kong, this of course isn't for everyone and some exchange students may find this aspect unappealing.

Nevertheless, I'd enthusiastically recommend the HKU Study Abroad program to any interested BU Law students.



### HONG KONG STUDY ABROAD EVALUATION

Overall, my experience in Hong Kong was extraordinary and I highly recommend the program to anyone interested in spending a semester in Asia. Since Hong Kong is a large, modern, international city—and since English is widely spoken for the most part—I had very little trouble adjusting to the culture and learning the ins and outs of the city. At the same time, I did not have to travel very far (or even leave Hong Kong) to experience “culture shock” when I wanted to.

Hong Kong is an exciting and vibrant city and is a major gateway to other regions in Asia. Since the academics at HKU weren't very rigorous, and since my schedule allowed for long weekends, I had adequate time to travel around the different regions of Hong Kong and mainland China. I also took trips to Macau, Thailand and the Philippines. Some of these trips I took alone, and others I took with other exchange students. In the Law Program, there were exchange students from all around the world (mostly Europeans, Americans and Australians) who were eager to travel so it was not difficult finding people to travel with.

While my overall experience at HKU was very good, my academic experience was somewhat disappointing. The LLB classes I attended during the add/drop period felt like undergraduate classes (which essentially they are), so I enrolled in all LLM classes. The LLM classes each met once a week, were three hours long, and for the most part were pure lectures. One of the downsides to taking LLM classes is that the selection is quite limited. As a result, some of my classes were in areas where I didn't have much background knowledge or interest (for example, Regulation of Financial Markets). In retrospect, though, I learned a considerable amount in these classes and it was an excellent opportunity to take classes in unfamiliar subjects.

In addition to Regulation of Financial Markets, I took Human Rights in China (which was fairly good), Public International Law (which was fair—it was taught by one very good professor and one bad professor), and International and Comparative Intellectual Property (which was poor—the professor, though very nice and accomplished in her field, could not speak English well). There were many minor annoyances at HKU—for instance, students had to compete for power outlets in the libraries and in the classrooms, and wireless internet on campus was spotty. While this was frustrating at times, I cannot complain because I was forewarned, and at the end of the day, it really wasn't all that bad (plus, it made me appreciate the B.U. law tower more). In any event, I highly recommend bringing extra computer batteries if you don't want to take notes by hand (which most students do anyway).

I did not live on campus, so I can't say much about the campus living accommodations. I can say that HKU has an excellent facility (the Global Lounge) for exchange students. It is a great place to relax, socialize, and interact with other law and business students from all over the world.

Housing is generally very expensive in Hong Kong, but if you are able to spend the money, I highly recommend finding off campus accommodations. I lived in a neighborhood called SoHo, which is about a 10 minute minibus ride from campus. It is similar to SoHo in NYC—lots of good restaurants, clubs, shops, and a trendy and international downtown feel. By living off campus, I was probably able to have a more authentic Hong Kong experience than had I lived in one of the dorms (the dorms also have some very strict rules—see one of the other testimonials for more details about this). Living off campus also gave me a good opportunity to meet non-HKU people, which I enjoyed. On the downside, it was a little more difficult integrating with other exchange students at first.

I was a little hesitant going to Hong Kong during the fall semester because I would be missing out on OCI. I should note, though, that Maura Kelly and others at the B.U. Career Services Office were extremely helpful. In fact, they even contacted a loyal alumnus working in Hong Kong who generously allowed me to use her firm's office and videoconferencing equipment for an interview with a U.S. employer.

By far, the best part of my HKU experience was connecting with and learning from other law and business students from around the world. This experience more than compensated for the generally poor quality of teaching and the outdated facilities at HKU.

One final thing—while the people at HKU were generally incredibly hospitable and helpful, some of the administrative people at the Law Faculty seemed to dislike exchange students and were some of the most unfriendly people I encountered during my time there. So it is not a bad idea to sign up for an HKU "buddy" who can answer general questions about HKU rather than rely on the Law Faculty staff for information.

Also, if you are planning on going in the fall, be prepared for oppressive heat and humidity in late August and early September. For the rest of the term the weather is beautiful.



Final Report  
Hong Kong Spring Semester 2010

Overview: When I decided to come to Boston University, I hoped to travel abroad. After applying to go to Hong Kong, I anticipated that it presented transitional challenges but ultimately could give me more international legal credibility and experience. What I did not anticipate, however, was how wonderful of an experience it would become. Although I travelled to Hong Kong alone, I met expats in the city, graduate students at Hong Kong University and other law students. I believe that living and studying in Hong Kong opened countless opportunities for me in the future in international corporate law. This experience not only increased my personal confidence but also enhanced my legal knowledge. As the below summary explains, the Hong Kong program is an excellent choice for students interested in general international law or PRC law.

Classes and Professors: The classes at Hong Kong University are distinctly different than those at Boston University. My professors used a lecture style format and most used slides and distributed the slides for each class. For the master's level law courses it is common that two professors will teach each class. The teaching ability of the professors varied depending on the course. Professors were generally accessible and willing to work with the international students to take exams early.

The reading for each class rarely consisted of cases but usually of International Organization reports or textbook style readings. Often the readings did not clearly explain the subject matter. The workload and assignments are not as strenuous as those at Boston University.

My classes had a mix of international and local students. For the master's level courses several of the students also worked. Most of the master's level courses are offered once a week for three hours in the evening. It was common to have class from 6:30pm to 9:30pm.

Exams: I took four law courses at Hong Kong University. My exams consisted of one 6,000 word paper, one three-day take-home exam and two longer take-home exams. The longer take-home exams both consisted of four questions with a 2,000 word limit (totally 8,000 words for each exam). Students were allowed to work with one partner on the exam.

City: Before coming to Hong Kong, I had not travelled in Asia. I do not speak Mandarin or Cantonese. My transition to Hong Kong, however, could not have been smoother. The transportation in Hong Kong is inexpensive and easy to navigate (although the bus system took a week or so to get used to). Hong Kong offers incredible food (Asian and Western), fantastic shopping and endless opportunities to travel elsewhere in Asia.



Expenses: My overall personal expenses for the semester including travel were equivalent to my expenses in Boston. Because I used graduate housing at Hong Kong University, my housing expenses totalled roughly \$800/month. Local food is inexpensive (\$3-5 dollars for entire meal) but there are expensive food options as well.

Housing: I lived in St. John's College in the graduate student housing wing. I would recommend a similar living situation for any student that come in the future. I had my own room and bathroom. It was also a great way to meet other graduate students that were not in law school. Other international students were housed in dorms. Often they were far away from the campus and had roommate six-years younger. The students in the dorms had a different living experience then me, but the housing in the dorms is less expensive. The graduate apartments are also harder to get a room.

Other international law students lived in service-apartments off-campus. These apartments are the cleanest and nicest option in the city. However, they are significantly more expensive then student housing and may be hard to arrange unless the student is physically in Hong Kong.

In conclusion, I would recommend this program to any law student. Please feel free to contact me with additional questions.

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## **Life at Hong Kong University**

I arrived in Hong Kong about two months ago and I am now completely settled in. I have gotten accustomed to the people, culture, and way of life in this small province of China. When I first arrived it was very easy to find my apartment and get to Hong Kong University. The city is extremely manageable and in some regards is easier to live in than American cities.

Unfortunately, Hong Kong University is not as free flowing as the city. For days I tried to track people down that I had to speak with to answer important questions such as- what classes I could take, what language classes would be taught in, and when exams were going to be. Although it was frustrating, I managed to resolve everything without any major problems.

To this point I am pleased with the courses that I am taking. I have two courses that are specific to Chinese law and two courses that are general international law courses. For future exchange students I would highly recommend talking to each professor before registering for a course. Speaking to a professor before registering will help understand how the course will be taught, the level of English that will be used, the expected workload, and the major goals for the course. In addition to the subject of the course, each professor has a very different style unlike American law schools where most classes are taught in a similar style. The unique aspect of Hong Kong University is that in each class you will meet and work with students from all over the world. Through interactions with other students I am getting the opportunity to learn about legal systems in other countries as well.

My social life has been fantastic. I have been meeting exchange students from the U.S., Australia, Germany, Austria, England, Nepal, and Indonesia. Meeting Chinese students is not extremely easy, but it is not extremely difficult either. I have met a few very gracious Chinese students who have gone out of their way to invite me out for a drink or dinner. Hong Kong is an extremely international city and it has been one of the highlights of my time spent here so far. The mix of locals and foreigners creates a unique environment to learn about international issues inside and outside of class.

In the coming months I plan on taking a few weekend trips to Shanghai, Beijing, and other lesser known destinations in mainland China. I have already met a few attorneys who work for major international law firms here in Hong Kong. Next month I will be visiting the offices of Linklaters to meet their attorneys and get a better understanding of how a Hong Kong based practice functions.

Life in Hong Kong has been great and I am looking forward to the months to come. My experiences have definitely helped me grow as a person and will make me a more effective lawyer when I begin practicing. The only problem in Hong Kong is that there is so much to choose from and so little time. This is a dilemma that I enthusiastically accept on a daily basis.