

PARIS

Study Abroad Reports

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 ☐

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

Name:

Semester/Institution: 2018-2019, Université Panthéon Assas Paris II

REPORT:

The yearlong LLM at Paris II was an excellent experience. Our classes were mostly taught by fantastic professors. We had a number of French judges teaching our classes, including from: the Conseil d'état, the Cour de Cassation, and an administrative tribunal in Lyon. Part of the value-added of the program was having such notable names teaching in the program. At the same time, we had a number of professors who are at the top of their areas of specialty in European academia. Federico Fabbrini, who taught human rights, was an especially excellent professor. The academic setup allowed the class to, through small seminars, gain a deep understanding of European Union law. Students without a background in European law may find it useful to read an introductory book in the summer before. Two qualms I had related to our classes were last minute schedule changes and long classes. Students should know that, because of the nature of some of the professors' schedules, the class schedule will change; sometimes at the last minute. European students tend to be more used to this. Maintaining a flexible attitude towards the schedule is important to a positive experience with the program. As well, the three-hour seminar classes were very long. However, reminding professors to take breaks certainly helps with this.

The year was academically quite vigorous. Because the seminars are short, accelerated modules, there are times during the year when work ebbs and peaks. As a result, very intense weeks can be followed by more relaxed ones. Being flexible with varying coursework demands during the year is important.

Our study trips during the year were phenomenal. We took a trip to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg for about 4 days. We stayed in Trier, Germany and the trip was a wonderful networking and experiential learning opportunity. We also went to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France where we heard from one of the Irish judges—also a phenomenal experience. Unfortunately, our trip to Brussels was canceled. All in all, these study trips were one of the best aspects of the program.

Two stressful things during the year for me were things that I could have arranged before leaving for Paris: the upper-class writing requirement and the 2-credit independent study. I would recommend that future students try to complete/make arrangements for these requirements before leaving as communicating with professors at BU while in Paris can be difficult.

Panthéon-Assas has a number of social clubs and organizes several job fairs throughout the year. These can be a great way to meet French students and network with various employers. However, getting involved does involve some leg-work. The job fairs are not particularly well advertised, and one might find it a difficult environment with minimal conversational French. Nonetheless, these can be great avenues for students to enrich their social or employment opportunities.

Finding housing in Paris can be incredibly difficult due to strict renter-protective laws. The easiest option is to go through an agency. Other websites which may be useful for American students are fusac.com (France USA Contacts), where I rented my 'chambre de bonne' in the 15th, and leboncoin.fr. Some students may benefit from a CAF reduction in rent—looking into this is worth it because it can be a significant deal of money.

The CROUS is a cafeteria for students located at various locations throughout the city. Students can 'top up' their student card and get home-cooked French meals for lunch and dinner for just over 3 euros. This is a great option as Parisian restaurants can be very expensive. Students should also follow the instructions that the university sends out and sign up for French state health insurance as a foreign student. The CPAM office will issue you a temporary social security number—the state will reimburse a certain percentage of health care costs should the need arise. This is certainly worth doing.

For students that would like to improve their French before and during the program, there are a number of excellent podcasts that are free on Itunes. Feeling comfortable with the language can make a big impact on how comfortable students feel in France, even though all instruction is in English. Coffeebreakfrench and Francaisauthentique are especially helpful. The program also offers French courses which are tailored to your level and taught by excellent professors. These are very worthwhile to take part in throughout the program, even when time is limited.

Overall, I had a very positive experience at Paris II. Sharing ideas and arguments with a broad range of students from all of the world in small, seminar-style classes was a great way to learn about EU law. Some professors will publish your class papers in European law journals which can be a great resume builder (my 4 Freedoms final paper will be jointly published in the Nordic Journal of European law). All in all a very professional and fun academic experience. Socially, being in Paris is wonderful—if you can avoid getting bogged down in French bureaucracy. Having basic knowledge of French certainly helps with this. Paris is also a great base to use to explore the rest of Europe. I highly recommend this program to other students and met all of my own academic and personal goals for the year.

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Semester/Institution: Université Paris II- Panthéon Assas

REPORT:

Academic Objectives

The Master in European Law Program offered courses in; The Institutional and Decision-making Structure of the European Union, the History of the European Idea, Free Movement of Goods, Capital and Services, Competition, Company Law and Financial Markets, Private International Law and

Commercial Dispute Resolution, Labor Law, Intellectual Property, Environmental Law, External Relations, Consumer Law, and Human Rights.

I was especially enjoyed courses in the Free Movement of Goods, Capital and Services, Company Law and Financial Markets, Private International Law, Competition law and Intellectual Property.

I achieved all of my educational objectives and enjoyed that aspect of this program.

Things a potential student needs to be aware of...

French Bureaucracy

Whether at the university or in matters of immigration, the French can be a headache to deal with. Prepare to be self-reliant or rely on the program's alums. I recommend that you begin your visa process including the campus-France process as soon as you can upon your acceptance. VFI visa services are difficult to deal with so I recommend you begin the process for a long-stay visa for France as soon as possible.

French Professors

Old-School French professors are not used to being questioned. Their academic culture is quite incompatible with anything we have in the US. Upon evaluation for courses, they are completely unused to providing justifications and rarely do. Some may even take it as a sign of disrespect. In particular, be wary of the Financial Markets Professor "Thierry Bonnot" and the Environmental Law Professor, "Faverique-Cosson." Otherwise, I recommend keeping your head down and being as deferential as reason would allow. Should you have any substantive issues, there is a formal appeals process at the University which Marion Chenu might help you access.

Bank account

- You will need a French bank account for many useful things listed below. The process might be a bit

bureaucratic, but once it is done it makes your life easier. (You will need it for the student annual transport pass, the CAF subsidy, insurance).

You will need:

- A copy of your passport/ID, a copy of your renting contract, a copy of your student certificate, a copy of your landlord's ID and a consent form from him. It varies from bank to bank.

-Some banks have special offers for opening a bank account:

Societe General on rue d'Assas

LCL on rue Vavin and rue du Montparnasse

Try HSBC and opening a French account stateside, or perhaps BNP Paribas.

Transport options:

- If you are under 26 and you are officially a student, you can apply for the Imagine R pass which allows you to travel unlimited in Paris (it includes Metro, RER, TGVAL, and access to the airports CDG & Orly (though you have to pay extra in Orly regardless))
- You can pick up the subscription envelope in any Metro Information Desk and fill in the "contract" which will give you several options of payment methods (direct debit every month from a French bank account OR by check) and how long the pass will be valid for (the earlier you do it the better!).
- You will have to provide a passport photo, your document from the university certifying you are a student and a filled in contract form. You can send it back to them via post without cost and they will send you your pass to your home address.
- Alternatively, if you are over 26 or you are not interested in the Imagine R pass, you can always buy a Navigo Pass, which you can buy in any Metro Information Desk for 5 euros and recharge it every first day of the month. It is 75 euros a month and it has the same reach as Imagine R. You must charge it at the beginning of every month and stick a passport photo on it with your name.

CAF/APL:

- In France, if you are a student, under 26 and are living in a rented apartment, you can apply for a subsidy from the government provided you fulfil some conditions. Because this aid applies not only to students but other people, it is a bureaucratic nightmare. My advice is to register online, fill in the forms and send your documents in a clear manner (alternatively, you can make an appointment in an office near you and give them your entire file personally).

You can find more info here: <http://www.caf.fr/>

Normally, the usual documents to provide are:

- A copy of your renting contract, passport/ID, EU health card or insurance and if they need more documents

they will always send you a message on your online portal and post.

- Always send copies, never originals and check your CAF account regularly!

Phone:

I strongly suggest the Free deal, for 20 euro per months, you have 100 Gb)

Buying books for the LLM:

- Some books are available in English in our library in Institute of Comparative Law (IDC)
- Most of the books are available online (Amazon FR) but should you want to buy used books, here are some suggestions:

Medimops.com, bol.com a German and a Dutch site with most of the books for good price.

Otherwise, going to Cujas library is your best shot if you don't want to buy anything

Housing

Don't stay at the American house in Cite Universitaire if you can help it. Stay in any of the other Houses. It's basically a dorm so if you don't want it, I recommend getting an apartment through a broker like Lodgis, beforehand. It's quite expensive through a broker. IF you would like to be present and visit, I recommend getting an AirBnB for about 2 weeks before the program starts and visiting apartments with a broker or independently. If you don't speak French, Lodgis is a great broker for you.

If you don't want to stay in Paris, Villejuif is quite popular for students to commute from. Classes will be in the 7th and 6th Arrondissements, so make sure it isn't difficult for you to get to classes from your apartment.

Living in Paris is a wonderful experience. Studying there, however, can be a miserable one, if you are not properly prepared for the experience. The university system in France is essentially the antithesis of law school as we know it here in the United States. Law school in the United States is a graduate level institution; it is an undergraduate institution in France. Although the law schools are competitive (particularly Paris II), rather than having roughly 100 students for large classes and seminars with sometimes as few as five students, in Paris the classes range in size from the hundreds to the thousands. Instead of meticulous preparation for class, you are expected merely to be present and take copious notes. There are no required books. Class participation is non-existent. Individual or original thoughts (or any thought contrary to the beliefs held by the professor) are discouraged. Classes are analogous to long-term dictations. The professors speak and students take copious notes, knowing that all they need to know for the exams is whatever the professor is saying.

When exams come, the only hint that professors will give you as to the content is, "anything covered in the course." You must prepare yourself for the oral exams by attempting to memorize all of your frantically written notes. There is no separate reading period; you will still be taking classes when you are preparing for your exams and you will be responsible for the material discussed in class up to the day that you are taking the exam. Your exam will take approximately twenty minutes: ten minutes of preparation and ten minutes of examination. When you enter the room, you will be given your question and a sheet of paper on which to write notes. You attempt to write anything relevant to the question on your sheet of paper while the student before you answers her question in

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divided into groups based on national origin; students from the United States and Toronto are grouped together and these will most likely be the people that you end up spending the most time with. There are no organized activities for the foreign students and there is no assistance with finding an apartment or dealing with the intricacies of the French bureaucracy (for the many seemingly simple tasks such as establishing phone or internet service and opening bank accounts). This semester is essentially an experience that you will have to undertake entirely on your own.

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Despite all of the challenges described above, the semester in Paris can be a fantastic experience. If you are the type of person who is strong willed, self-sufficient, and proficient in French, you will most likely enjoy your time there. Paris is a wonderful city. There is so much to do in the city itself and it is incredibly easy to travel from Paris to other destinations within France and Europe. The absence of reading for classes leaves you with abundant free time to enjoy the city and travel. You choose your classes so, just as at BU, you can design a schedule that fits your lifestyle. The warning that I cannot emphasize enough, however, is that you *must* attend classes or else you will be completely hopeless when it comes to the exams. From my experience, the keys to a successful semester in Paris are: attend classes, enjoy Parisian life, and then devote yourself to studying for two weeks before and during exams.

PARIS STUDY ABROAD EVALUATION: 2005

I went to Paris expecting to improve my French, make useful contacts in my future international job search, and learn about French law. All in all, the semester was easier and required much less work than I expected it to. I was frankly surprised given the warnings in the Study Abroad Office program materials. It has been quite a shock returning to my normal workload at BU. In Paris, we never had reading and were not even required to buy books. All our classes were lectures, which meant they were mainly exercises in transcription, rather than the strict required participation we are used to in American law schools.

The most difficult part of the semester for me was exams. Rather than a 3-hour sit down exam in which we are required to demonstrate knowledge of the entire course, we had 15-minute oral interviews on one specific topic. It was stressful because my notes were not as good at the beginning of the semester as at the end, so I worried that if I was asked a question about the material from the beginning I would not be well prepared. Fortunately, for some of our classes we were able to get notes from French students from previous semesters (much like sharing old outlines at home) which was very helpful.

My spoken French did not improve much, but my listening and note-taking skills improved a lot. I would have liked to have been able to take French lessons while I was there. The French classes the school offered were of a very low level, and conflicted with most peoples' class schedules anyway.

One advantage of being in Paris for the semester was that I was able to attend the Fall Meeting of the ABA's Section of International Law in Brussels. That was a good experience, especially since one of my goals for the semester was to make some useful

very fast. My T.D. was with M. Hécart, who assigned no written work. I know for some other T.D.s, people had several written assignments due throughout the semester, which caused them considerable stress. We also had a midterm exam a few weeks prior to our oral exams.

Finally, there is a mandatory class with M. Audit, who is the closest thing to an advisor in the program. His class was an overview of the French legal system, some of which was interesting. As an advisor, his information was sometimes flawed though, and he seemed to have no authority to help people who ran into major scheduling problems based on his advice. The Bureau des Programmes d'échanges is a much more useful resource. I found Simone Flechon to be very patient and understanding.

I took European Union Law with Professor Caruso in the spring before I went to Paris. I would recommend her class over the class in Paris. EU law is hard enough to understand without taking it in French. I also felt like it provided a good base of knowledge for some of the things we covered in International Criminal Law and M. Audit's class.

I don't feel that I gave up or missed out on anything at BU while I was gone. I was able to conduct two interviews I received through OCI over the phone. I was even able to persuade my journal to let me take an Editorial position for just half the year. Overall, I am always happy to have studied abroad, and this experience was no exception. I would encourage anyone to pursue studying abroad while in law school, with the caveat that not everyone who wants to or who would benefit from it is allowed to go.

Paris Mid-Semester Study Abroad Evaluation

My semester so far at the University of Paris-Assas is going extremely well. I am currently taking four seminars in English – Institutions of the European Union, Private Dispute Resolution, External Relations and Competition (Anti-trust) – and one seminar in French, L'Histoire de la Construction Européenne. I am also auditing another course in French, La Marché Intérieure. The courses are all seminars that meet once or twice a week. The main difference between courses here and in the US is that courses here focus less on case law and more on treaties, directives, and regulations of the European Union. Also, the professors use the Socratic method of teaching less, and even in a small group (there are 16 students in the program), the teaching format is more lecture-based. I enjoy my classes and have learned an enormous amount so far, as I knew little about the EU before coming, nor about legal systems outside of the common law tradition. The professors are all extremely knowledgeable in their given fields and comprise a great mix of nationalities and backgrounds. My French seminars are challenging but enjoyable, and they are great for learning French legal terminology. The final grade will be based on a paper, which I am looking forward to using as an opportunity to improve my written French.

The campus is situated in a very vibrant part of Paris, close to Rue St Germain des Près. The neighborhood is filled with lots of students, stores, cafes and restaurants. Our classes all take place in one building, and like BU, there is not a campus per se. It is near Science Po, a very famous French University, where we can use the internet, read free newspapers in French and English, and take advantage of student meals. The university has been very welcoming to the foreign students as far as helping us get situated, taking care of administrative things, helping us find resources, etc. We have also had the opportunity to meet the president of the university, as