

Travel Report

GENERAL INFORMATION

What was your semester abroad like?

I agree to the publication of the report and attached photos (there are no third parties rights to these photos)	Yes
New outgoing students sometimes ask us for a way to contact former outgoings. Are we allowed to pass on your contact details in case of inquiries?	Yes
My stay (this information will not be displayed if the report is published)	
Academic year	2022/2023
Start semester	Frühjahr/Spring 2023
Duration in semesters	1
Study program at EUF	BA European Cultures and Society
Subject 1 (only applicable to teacher training students)	
Subject 2 (only applicable to teacher training students)	
Subject 3 (only applicable to teacher training students)	
Host country	France
Host university	Université Lumière Lyon 2

YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

How did you prepare for the semester abroad? What should be organized in advance?	I looked for a room/apartment a few months in advance, I applied for my residence permit 2-3 months before leaving, I looked up the courses I wanted to take.
Do you have any recommendations for environmentally friendly travel (if applicable)?	In Germany you can get the Bahncard 50 for 60 euros only and get lots of discounts for train travel and in France you have the Carte Avantage Jeune for 30% off on most tickets for only 50 euros (I bought it for 25 euros on Black Friday). It makes the traveling a lot cheaper. Also booking in advance will save a lot of money.
Where did you live and how did you find your accommodation (self-organized/provided by host university, dormitory/private etc.)?	I lived in a private apartment with two other girls. I found the apartment on lacartedescolocs.fr and I found two girls on Facebook who were looking for an apartment and we found one for 3 girls together.

Did you participate in events for exchange students? How did you establish social contacts in other ways?

Yes, I participated in meet&speaks, I signed up to have a French welcome buddy. I also took classes specifically for exchange students, so I got to meet lots of international people there.

How satisfied were you with the host university (facilities, staff etc.) and the course offer (workload etc.)?

The university was a bit chaotic, the organization of choosing the classes was very stressful as the university does not have a specific page for the course offerings, you have to ask the different departments and look on the departments' websites to find courses. The course workload and the exams are very different to what I was used to. In France they tend to learn a lot of things by heart, they memorize everything and then write the exams. Also, for more than half of the semester, the campuses were blocked due to strikes, so we missed out on going to classes a lot. Furthermore, there were no breaks between the classes so if you had a class from 10-12, and you had another class starting at 12, you had to run to the next class and hope you don't miss out on anything. Overall, I would say I was not very satisfied with the facilities and the courses. I feel like everything could be improved. The courses were pretty hard for me, even though I am a native French speaker.

Did you learn the local language? How important was the language for your stay?

I was already fluent in French when I went there, so the language was not the most important part for me. It was however a challenge to get used to the 2 hour lectures in French, since I haven't had French courses since college.

What intercultural experiences/skills have marked your stay?

I noticed that France is a lot more digitalized and you can pay by card everywhere. The trains in France are a lot more reliable and cleaner than the ones in Germany. However, my semester abroad was during the times where France had the huge protests against the raising of the retirement age, so I experienced a lot of frustration from classes being cancelled or online and trains getting cancelled or just feeling unsafe because of the protests.

Which perspectives on your host country/home country have changed - and why?

It made me see how nice France can be. All the stereotypes about French people being rude: I haven't experienced it at all! I really enjoyed seeing the relaxed lifestyle French people have. I was actually surprised to see how modern and clean the country is as well, I heard a lot of things about how painful bureaucracy is and how dirty the cities are, but I actually didn't experience that and I found it even better than Germany. I also thought that French people would really make fun of my accent, as I am from Quebec and we speak French differently. I didn't have any people laughing at me or anything, although people sometimes spoke to me in English assuming that I don't speak French properly or they pointed out that I have an accent and asked where I was from. My perspective on Germany changed a bit as well. I noticed that the trains in Germany, although they are cheaper and go more often, they are not as reliable as the French trains. I think that Germans can learn a lot from the French in terms of lifestyle too. French people don't take everything too seriously but Germans do, they need to have more time for themselves and enjoy their life.

How was your everyday life (leisure, shopping, transportation, inclusion etc.)?

Every day I would have a different schedule at university. I would get up, have breakfast, take the bus and then a tram to university. It took me around 40-45 minutes to get to the main campus. We sadly did not have any breaks between classes, all classes start at 00 and end at 00, so you have to run from class to class and I sometimes had 3 2-hour classes in a row, so I barely had the time to eat anything. I always had to bring food with me, there were not many places I could buy something to eat on the way to my other classes. When I got back home, I lived right next to a grocery store so I bought things to eat and made dinner. I started to eat dinner a bit later in France, so around 7:30 pm or even later than 8 pm. I felt quite included in French society, it took me a few weeks to figure everything out and where to go, but once I did it, it was quite easy to feel like I was a local. Maybe it's because I spoke French fluently before coming to Lyon. Transportation was very easy in Lyon, students pay a 25 euro ticket per month for unlimited public transport throughout the city and it's very easy to get around.

Do you have any recommendations for a sustainable stay abroad (projects, initiatives, everyday life)?

If you want to travel in France or to the other countries around, I recommend using the amazing train system in France. Trains are reliable, clean, and the fast trains go around 300 km/h, so you arrive to your destination in no time, even quicker than going by plane. If you plan on going by train a lot, I do recommend the Carte Avantage Jeune, which costs 50 euros (valid for 1 year). I got mine for 25 euros on discount on Black Friday! It gives you 30% discount on most train rides throughout the country! Using public transport throughout the city is also very easy and quick, so there is no need to get a car or taxi. Otherwise following the recycling/trash separation rules is also a must in France.

How did you manage financially? How much did you spend on visa (if applicable), travel, accommodation (per month), living expenses, leisure activities, other expenses (books etc.)?

The erasmus grant definitely helped with paying a part of my rent, as it was quite expensive (rent in Lyon is from 400-600 euros per month, I paid 560). The visa cost me nothing, since it was through the erasmus program that I was going to France. However, to get the visa, I had to travel twice to Frankfurt to give and pick up my passport, so you have to keep those costs in mind too. Groceries are very expensive in France. For a full month I paid twice as much as I would normally in Germany. Going out to bars and restaurants is not really much different than in Germany, I would even say that it's a bit less expensive. For university, I did not have to buy any books, so that saved me some costs.

What was your best/worst experience? Is there anything else you would like to share?

The best experience was definitely making friends there. The people who you end being friends with really makes your whole experience better. The city also has lots of nice cafes and different restaurants with all kinds of foods from all around the world, so discovering new places all the time was also very fun. My worst experience was probably the area I lived in (Bron, a suburb right next to the city), my roommates were not the best either and the constant strikes made it a very difficult learning environment (online classes, checking the emails every day to see in the campuses were blocked or not, train/ public transport cancellations, etc.)

Would you recommend a semester abroad at your host university? For what reasons?

I would recommend the city of Lyon, I really enjoyed my stay there. However, the university was a bit messy for erasmus students. There were no course catalogues, so you had to ask the departments to find the courses you needed, once you found which class to take, you had to ask the department which classroom it's in. There wasn't much contact with us during strikes, we didn't always know what to do. It was also hard to make friends in classes with French people. Also, the learning techniques and exams are very different from what I'm used to in Germany. In France the exams and classes are mostly about memorizing details and doing real exams, but in Germany we mostly write essays and we have lots of time for them, which I prefer. The positive sides, however, was that the university is really modern/digitalized when it came to the learning agreement and signing documents. The professors were also more accomodating to students who weren't native speakers, and the university had some classes in English for those who didn't want to take classes in French. So overall, even though there are some points to improve when it comes to the university, I still enjoyed my time there. I would really recommend choosing Lyon, it's an amazing city.

PHOTOS

In this section, you may upload some photos that represent your stay abroad. When selecting the photos, please bear in mind that the pictures will be visible online if you have given us the permission to publish your report.

Photo (1) file_6478bdbcb481a-20230521_162235.jpg

Photo (2) file_6478bdc023343-20230517_211204.jpg

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Photo (5) file_6478bdce03317-20230318_145909.jpg

Photo (6) file_6478bdd368fea-20230124_151619.jpg

Here you have the possibility to enter descriptions/explantions for the photos

On the first picture, you can see the Parc de la tête d'or, which is a beautiful and huge park in the Northern part of Lyon. The second picture is the view from the rooftop bar on top of the Opera of Lyon. The third picture is the view from the Fourvière Basilica of Lyon. You can see the whole city from there! The fourth picture is of Vieux-Lyon (the old city of Lyon). The fifth picture is the main shopping street in Spring. The last picture is also of Vieux-Lyon, but the oldest part of the city, overlooking the Saone river.























