Cassidy’s Majors: French, Community Service and Nonprofit Leadership

Program: Academic Program in Aix-en-Provence, Spring

Academic Life: The French education system was drastically different in comparison to the United States’ education system for a couple of reasons. Most notably, there is little to no student-teacher interaction and most classes are structured as three hour lectures with a ten minute break around the halfway point. All of my courses were taught in French along with mostly native French students; however, I did share some classes with American students who were on my program. Probably the most difficult adjustment I had to make was having my whole grade be dependent on one final at the end of the course—the French don’t consistently take midterms or have regular homework assignments.

Housing: My living situation was undoubtedly the most memorable part of my semester. I was located on the 4th floor of a cozy apartment nearly in the heart of the idyllic city of Aix. Directly outside my window I had a view of the Rotonde (big, beautiful fountain) and the rolling hills in the background. I opted to do a home stay in hopes of becoming a more fluid French speaker. I was assigned to an 84 year old Parisian woman, named Josette, who had retired in the south of France and has hosted a handful of students. She cooked dinner for me 5 times a week and didn’t speak a lick of English. Although at first it was challenging to make the transition from feeling like a guest to treating it like my home, eventually it was home and I was lucky enough to build a loving relationship with Josette.

Tip for Students Considering Study Abroad: Just do it. There are so many factors that you can dwell upon while considering going abroad that might hinder you from possibly the most exciting realization of all: you get to study abroad!!!

“Immersing yourself in a foreign culture teaches you so much about not only this new culture but your own as well.”

Cassidy’s Majors: French, Community Service and Nonprofit Leadership

Program: Academic Program in Aix-en-Provence, Spring

Academic Life: The French education system was drastically different in comparison to the United States’ education system for a couple of reasons. Most notably, there is little to no student-teacher interaction and most classes are structured as three hour lectures with a ten minute break around the halfway point. All of my courses were taught in French along with mostly native French students; however, I did share some classes with American students who were on my program. Probably the most difficult adjustment I had to make was having my whole grade be dependent on one final at the end of the course—the French don’t consistently take midterms or have regular homework assignments.

Housing: My living situation was undoubtedly the most memorable part of my semester. I was located on the 4th floor of a cozy apartment nearly in the heart of the idyllic city of Aix. Directly outside my window I had a view of the Rotonde (big, beautiful fountain) and the rolling hills in the background. I opted to do a home stay in hopes of becoming a more fluid French speaker. I was assigned to an 84 year old Parisian woman, named Josette, who had retired in the south of France and has hosted a handful of students. She cooked dinner for me 5 times a week and didn’t speak a lick of English. Although at first it was challenging to make the transition from feeling like a guest to treating it like my home, eventually it was home and I was lucky enough to build a loving relationship with Josette.

Tip for Students Considering Study Abroad: Just do it. There are so many factors that you can dwell upon while considering going abroad that might hinder you from possibly the most exciting realization of all: you get to study abroad!!!

“Immersing yourself in a foreign culture teaches you so much about not only this new culture but your own as well.”

Cassidy and the Parisian host of her homestay, Josette.