Germany, Bonn Language
Summer 2013 program handbook

The Bonn, Germany Language program is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in conjunction with the University of Bonn. This IAP Program Handbook supplements handbooks or materials you receive from the University of Bonn as well as the IAP Study Abroad Handbook and provides you with the most up-to-date information and advice available at the time of printing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

Questions about your program abroad (housing options, facilities abroad, etc.) as well as questions relating to your relationship with your host university or academics (e.g. course credit and equivalents, registration deadlines, etc.) should be directed to IAP at UW-Madison.

This program handbook contains the following information:

GERMANY, BONN LANGUAGE SUMMER 2013 PROGRAM HANDBOOK .................................................. 1
CONTACT INFORMATION ........................................................................................................................ 2

On-Site Program Information .................................................................................................................. 2
UW-Madison information ........................................................................................................................... 2
Emergency contact information ................................................................................................................ 2
Embassy Registration ............................................................................................................................... 2

PROGRAM DATES ...................................................................................................................................... 3
PREPARATION BEFORE LEAVING ........................................................................................................... 3

Immigration Documents ............................................................................................................................ 3
Handling Money Abroad ............................................................................................................................. 3
Packing ...................................................................................................................................................... 4
Electronics ................................................................................................................................................. 4

TRAVEL AND ARRIVAL .............................................................................................................................. 5
THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM ....................................................................................................................... 7

The Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn .............................................................................. 7
International Summer Course ................................................................................................................... 7
Course Information ................................................................................................................................... 8
Pass/Fail/Drop .......................................................................................................................................... 8
Grades and Grade Conversions ............................................................................................................... 9

LIVING IN BONN .......................................................................................................................................... 9
Germany .................................................................................................................................................... 9
Bonn ........................................................................................................................................................ 10
Housing ................................................................................................................................................... 11
Safety ...................................................................................................................................................... 12
Health ...................................................................................................................................................... 13
Communication ...................................................................................................................................... 13

STUDENT TESTIMONIALS ...................................................................................................................... 15
Contact Information

ON-SITE PROGRAM INFORMATION
Your primary contacts will be:

Anne-Christine Hoegen                   University of Bonn
International Student Advisor          International Office
+49 (0)228 73 5948                       Poppelsdorfer Allee 102
sommerkurs@uni-bonn.de                 53115 Bonn
                                          Germany
                                          Tel: +49 (0)228 73 2062
                                          Fax: +49 (0)228 73 5891

http://www3.unibonn.de/institutions/international-office/

UW-MADISON INFORMATION
International Academic Programs (IAP)
University of Wisconsin-Madison
106 Red Gym
716 Langdon Street
Madison, WI 53706
Tel: (608) 265 6329
Fax: (608) 262 6998
Web: www.studyabroad.wisc.edu

For Program Advising & Grades:
Erica Haas-Gallo
IAP Study Abroad Advisor
Tel: (608) 265 6329
E-mail: haasgallo@studyabroad.wisc.edu

For UW enrollment and CER procedures:
Annie Berberet
IAP Enrollment Specialist Advisor
Tel: (608) 265 6329
E-mail: aberberet@studyabroad.wisc.edu

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION
In case of an emergency, call the main IAP number (608) 265 6329 between 8:00 a.m. and
4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP staff on call at (608) 516
9440.

EMBASSY REGISTRATION
All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before
departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-
line at https://travelregistration.state.gov. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home
country’s embassy or consulate.
Program Dates

Summer 2013
Arrive in Bonn August 5, 2013
Farewell meeting/depart Bonn August 30, 2013

• The University of Bonn will provide a detailed program calendar prior to departure. Please confirm the above dates with the University of Bonn calendar, as they are subject to change.

Preparation Before Leaving

IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

Passport: A passport is needed to travel to Germany. Apply immediately for a passport if you do not already have one. Passport information and application forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website http://travel.state.gov/passport/. If you already have your passport, make sure it will be valid for at least 6 months beyond the length of your stay abroad.

Visa: U.S. citizens do not need a visa to enter Germany. Non-U.S. citizens should consult with the German consulate for visa requirements.

HANDLING MONEY ABROAD

The official currency of Germany is the Euro (EUR), with 1 Euro equaling 100 cents. As of 4/17/12, the exchange rate was $1 USD to 0.76 Euro. Students should plan to have money available through a combination of ATM cards or cash to cover their first few days in Germany.

Banks: Most German banks are open from 8:00 a.m. until noon and again from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon. Most banks stay open until 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays. Banks are normally closed on Saturdays.

ATM/Debit Cards: Probably the simplest way to access funds from the United States is to obtain an ATM debit card for your U.S. checking account. With the card, you will be able to withdraw cash (in Euros) from a Geldautomat (money machine) and have it debited (in U.S. dollars) to your U.S. account at a fairly favorable exchange rate (a transaction fee may apply). Past participants with ATM cards from Citibank and Bank of America have withdrawn from the ATMs of Citibank and Deutsche Bank, respectively, without incurring transaction fees.
Throughout Western Europe, **CIRRUS** and **PLUS** are the most widely available ATM systems. Be sure to ask your U.S. bank or credit union for an internationally accepted ATM card and PIN number. The upper limit on the amount that can be withdrawn at any one time or on a single day is established by your U.S. bank. Thus, it is important to consult with your bank on these matters prior to leaving for Germany. Past participants recommend increasing your ATM withdrawal limit so that you may withdraw enough funds for program expenses.

**Traveler’s Checks**: You should be aware that traveler’s checks (be they in dollars or Euro) are not accepted at the overwhelming majority of German restaurants, hotels, and stores. Instead, you must exchange your traveler’s checks for cash at a bank, which generally imposes high transaction fees.

**Credit Cards**: Both Visa and MasterCard may be used to obtain cash advances at most banks and many ATMs (fees apply). Prior to departure, ask your credit card company for an international four-digit PIN if you do not already have one. Also, find out what your credit card company charges for cash advances. American Express offices will also cash personal checks up to $1,000 every 3 to 4 weeks, as long as you are a card member and have a passport as identification. The American Express office in Bonn is located at Bonngasse 10 (tel. 76 61 10). It is open Monday through Friday, and Saturday mornings.

**PACKING**

Students who studied in Germany in previous years will assure you that almost everyone takes more than necessary. Keep in mind also that you will be carrying your own luggage when you arrive, so avoid bringing a piece of baggage that is so heavy that you cannot lift or move it without help. Highly suggested Items:

- Hiking Boots (if you are the outdoorsy type)
- One Nice Outfit
- Passport Pouch/Money Belt
- Towels
- Journal
- Laptop Computer (with Ethernet cable)
- Travel Guide
- Collins (large) German-English dictionary
- Pictures/Postcards of Your Hometown

**ELECTRONICS**

Germany runs on 220V (volts), 50Hz (cycles) AC and uses the “europlug” with two round pins. If you plan on bringing any appliances from the United States, keep in mind that they will require adapters/converters which you should purchase before departure. It may be more convenient and less expensive to purchase appliances in Germany rather than purchasing the necessary converter/adapters in the United States.
Travel and Arrival

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements. Most program participants choose to fly to Germany and to land at one of three airports: Frankfurt am Main (FRA) www.airportcity-frankfurt.com, Cologne (Köln) (CGN) www.koeln-bonn-airport.de, or Düsseldorf (DUS) www.dus-int.de. The Frankfurt airport, which is the second largest in Europe, is by far the most frequently selected. Düsseldorf is actually closer than Frankfurt to Bonn, but there are fewer flights into the Düsseldorf airport. The Cologne airport, situated between Cologne and Bonn, is the most convenient but also the smallest, and there are fewer flights into it.

All participants must ensure that they arrive at the International Office (53 Poppelsdorfer Allee) between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on the arrival day for the program. At the International Office you will register and receive materials for orientation. After you register, you will then be transported to your dormitory. Please note that only on the arrival date can the International Office be held responsible for transportation to your housing. If you are unable to reach the International Office on time, be sure to notify the office staff in advance. If you are delayed on your trip and are likely to arrive late, call the office staff.

If you arrive in Bonn earlier than the arrival date, you will need to find your own accommodations, such as the local youth hostel (Jugendherberge):

Jugendgästehaus Venusberg
Haager Weg 42
53127 Bonn
Germany
+49 (0) 228) 28 99 70
+49 (0) 228) 28 99 714 fax
E-mail: bonn@jugendherberge.de
Web: www.bonn.jugendherberge.de

You can reach the hostel by catching city bus line 621 at the main train station in Bonn. You exit the bus at the stop named "Jugendgästehaus." For participants arriving on the arrival day, we recommend that you take a taxi from the airport or the train station to get to the program office.

Arrival in Frankfurt: The train is the best way to travel between Frankfurt am Main and Bonn, with several direct trains from the Frankfurt airport to Bonn every day. Trains depart about once an hour, and the journey takes about an hour and a half to two hours. There are even more possibilities involving a transfer in downtown Frankfurt (the Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof) or in Mainz. You can inquire at the airport DB counter when the next good connection to Bonn will be departing, and be sure to ask where and when you may need to transfer (you can conduct your business with the train staff in either German or English).

You can also check out possible train departure times and connections at www.bahn.de as well as purchase tickets online with your credit card. You may buy your ticket either before you depart for Germany or right at the DB information and ticket sales counter in the airport station. A one-way ticket between Frankfurt and Bonn costs between 25 and 35 Euro. You can pay with a credit card or with cash. It is even possible to buy a ticket on the train, but then there will be an added surcharge.
At the Frankfurt airport, the train station is on the basement level directly underneath Terminal 1 the international terminal. After your flight, you will proceed through passport check, claim your luggage, and pass through customs control. Then you will need to find your way through the airport to the escalator leading down to the train station. Look for the signs with red and white train icon and the letters DB (Deutsche Bahn), and follow the arrows.

Once you go onto the airport train platform with your luggage, take your time and make sure you are at the right track (Gleis, numbered 1 through 4) and boarding the correct train. They come and go frequently, so don’t worry if you miss one: another will be coming soon. The Schaffner (conductor) or uniformed train workers on the platform can help you find your way to the right track. You will notice that German trains have 1st and 2nd-class cars, marked prominently with 1 and 2 beside the doors. Just as with coach and business class on the airlines, there is a steep price difference between traveling 1st or 2nd class on the trains.

Be sure that you get a ticket and a train that will take you to the Bonn Hauptbahnhof. Some of the trains from Frankfurt go to Bonn-Beuel (a nearby suburb, but on the opposite side of the Rhine River from the university, and thus an inconvenient place to get off) or Siegburg (another town very close to Bonn, but you will have to transfer to a subway train to the Bonn Hauptbahnhof). Also, find out in advance at what time the train is scheduled to stop in Bonn, either by consulting the printed schedule or asking the Schaffner or other passengers. If you are not prepared when the train pulls into Bonn, you may find it very difficult to gather your suitcases in time to exit the train before it continues on to Cologne.

Arrival in Düsseldorf: If you deplane in Düsseldorf, you will have two choices. Once you have collected your luggage and gone through passport control and customs, you continue on to Bonn by taking either a train all the way or a shuttle bus/train combination. Directly underneath the airport there is a small train station. Trains depart for Bonn about every 20 minutes, and the trip takes a little over one hour. Depending on the particular train(s) you select, the ticket costs between 11 and 25 Euro. At the information and ticket sales counter in the airport station, you can ask when the next cheap (12 Euro) train connection will be departing. Some trains travel directly to Bonn, but others will involve transferring at the Düsseldorf train station (Hauptbahnhof).

If you choose to take the airport shuttle bus instead, you will exit the airport and take the bus to the Düsseldorf train station and proceed from there to Bonn via train. Either way, you can buy a one-way train ticket to Bonn (einen einfachen Fahrschein nach Bonn), and then find the appropriate track. Find out in advance when the train is scheduled to arrive in Bonn so that you will be prepared to gather your luggage and exit the train in a timely manner.

Arrival in Cologne/Bonn: There are no direct flights from the United States to Cologne/Bonn; instead, you will fly to some other German or European airport, where you will go through passport and customs checks, and then transfer to a second flight on to Cologne/Bonn. If you fly into Cologne/Bonn, you will need to make your way outside the airport to the shuttle bus stop. (Unlike Frankfurt, there is no direct train service from the Cologne airport to Bonn.) The shuttle bus to the Bonn Hauptbahnhof is Bus #670 and is clearly marked, but if you have questions, simply ask for information. Shuttle buses depart about every half hour during the daytime, and the ride to Bonn takes about 35 minutes. You buy the ticket directly from the bus driver for 6 Euro (bus driver will only accept Euro), so be sure to have some money handy.

Arrival in Bonn Hauptbahnhof: Whether you arrive in Bonn via shuttle bus or train, you will disembark at the main train station or Hauptbahnhof (Hbf). For bus passengers, this is the final
stop on the route. Train passengers, however, need to be alert so as not to miss the stop. Once you have arrived at the Bonn station, the International Office is within walking distance approximately four long blocks, or five minutes on foot. The International Office is located at Poppelsdorfer Allee 53, which is the street located directly behind the train station and is perpendicular to the train tracks. It is best reached by exiting the train station at the front entrance, turning to the right, and going approximately 100 meters to the pedestrian underpass that leads under the tracks. The underpass leads directly onto Poppelsdorfer Allee.

You will receive a student handbook from the International Office prior to your departure which will provide detailed directions as well as a map. You can also study an on-line city map of Bonn available at [http://map24.de](http://map24.de). Once you are at the train station, you can consult the large, illuminated city map prominently positioned at the entrance to the train station or also ask a passerby to point you in the right direction: “Wie komme ich zur Poppelsdorfer Allee?” Most Bonners do not know the precise location of the International Office, but they should know the street.

**The Academic Program**

**THE RHEINISCHE FRIEDRICH-WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT BONN**

The predecessor of today’s Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität was an Academy of Sciences (Akademie der Wissenschaften) founded in 1777 by the then ruling electoral prince (Kurfürst) of Cologne. It was devoted exclusively to research, not teaching. In 1786, the Academy was officially restructured as a university with a teaching mission, but less than a decade later it had to close because of the German-Austrian Coalition War against revolutionary France. On October 18, 1818, just three years after Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo, the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität was (re)founded. It was named for Friedrich Wilhelm III, King of Prussia from 1797 to 1840. There was already a university named for him in the Prussian capital Berlin, so the university in Bonn received the added designation “Rheinisch”.

Today, the University of Bonn (Universität Bonn) is one of the larger ones in Germany, with around 27,500 students. It is the third largest university in the state North Rhine Westphalia. The university has approximately 4,100 international students and 100 visiting professors from over 100 different countries each year. Its outstanding reputation in teaching and research and its splendid location on the banks of the Rhine River are some of the reasons why the University of Bonn ranks at the top in Germany.

Unlike UW-Madison, the University of Bonn is not contained in one campus. Rather, the Hauptgebäude (the main university building) is in the historic city center, while many other university buildings are located throughout Bonn and the city’s environs.

University of Bonn Website: [www.uni-bonn.de](http://www.uni-bonn.de)

**INTERNATIONAL SUMMER COURSE**

The Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelm University of Bonn invites all those interested from across the globe to participate in its four-week International Summer Course. The International Summer Course is designed to give participants a comprehensive and practical understanding of German culture and traditions as well as contribute to fostering international friendships. German language classes (different levels) will take place in the morning and work groups as well as excursions in the afternoon. Participants will get a chance to experience one of Germany’s oldest and largest universities as well as enjoy staying in Bonn, a city proud of its
2,000 years of history. It is the birthplace of Ludwig van Beethoven. As the former seat of government, Bonn still houses various governmental institutions and is also called a "Federal City".

University of Bonn International Summer Course  
http://www3.uni-bonn.de/studying/international-students/exchange-and-study-abroad/summer-course

COURSE INFORMATION

Courses: There will be courses for beginners and for advanced students as well as courses dealing with specific terminology. Classes will be small (10 to 12 participants), and there will be an assessment test first to ensure that students' individual needs and expectations are taken into account. As excursions and other events of the supporting program are part of the Summer Course, all participants are expected to attend. The participation fee includes all courses and events or more specifically a choice of:

- 15 German language courses (basic, intermediate and advanced level)
- 60 hours of language classes
- Seminars on German culture, literature and linguistics (4 hours per week)
- Supporting program including concerts, German culture excursions, international meetings, guided tours of the town and visits to German companies

Equivalents and Course Equivalent Request Form (CER): Each course you take abroad must be assigned a UW-Madison “equivalent” course in order for your grades and credits to be recorded on your UW-Madison transcript. **UW-Madison participants will receive 4 credits in the UW-Madison German language sequence for this program.**

Course equivalents will be determined solely by your prior language course work at UW-Madison, not by the title or level of the course at Bonn. You will receive an appropriate course equivalent according to your individual position in the UW-Madison German language sequence. If you have completed GER 102 before the summer course, you will receive credit for 203. Likewise, if you have completed 203, the summer course will count as the equivalent of 204. If you have completed 204 and have taken no courses at the intermediate level (249, 258, 262, or 274/284), you will receive credit for 249 (Intermediate German: Speaking and Listening). If you have taken one or two intermediate-level language courses, please contact Prof. Mark Louden (mllouden@wisc.edu) in the Department of German for guidance as to which equivalent to request. If you have completed three courses (9 credits) at the intermediate level, you will receive credit for 337 Advanced Composition and Conversation. Note that 337 may be repeated once for credit. One additional comment: although 249, 258, 262, and 337 are all 3-credit courses when taken on the Madison campus, you will still earn 4 credits if you take the equivalent in Bonn. Any questions regarding GER course equivalents may be directed to Prof. Louden.

PASS/FAIL/DROP

Courses cannot be taken pass/fail, nor can courses be dropped.
GRADES AND GRADE CONVERSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bonn Grade</th>
<th>UW grade</th>
<th>German number with decimals</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>90 - 100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>85 - 89 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1,7</td>
<td>82 - 84 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>2,0</td>
<td>79 - 81 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2,3</td>
<td>75 - 78 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2,7</td>
<td>72 - 74 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>69 - 71 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>65 - 68 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3,7</td>
<td>60 - 64 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>50 - 59 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note the Bonn Grade, German Number, and Percent are set by Bonn. Grades D-F at UW have been assigned based on the German numeric grade. Bonn does not currently award grades below their D.

Living in Bonn

GERMANY

Considering the limited space which it occupies (only 138,000 square miles—about 15 percent smaller than Wisconsin, Michigan, and Iowa taken together), Germany is a remarkably diverse country. Its topography ranges from the coastal lowlands on the North and Baltic Seas, where Low German is still spoken, to Alpine heights in the south. Bordered by nine different countries, Germany lies in the heart of Europe and acts as a bridge between the east and west. With its 80 million citizens, Germany is the most populous Western European nation. The famed Ruhrgebiet of Germany, just north of Bonn, is Europe's largest industrial region, boasting such world-famous companies as Braun, Krupps, and Bayer.

It is important to learn about Germany’s past and present to gain a deeper insight into the country and its people. Before you leave, while you are there, and when you return, reflect on how Germany’s unique features affect it. Consider, for example, that Germany is bordered by nine countries (compared to the two neighbors of the United States), which the government has to take into account when making political decisions. The more you learn and think about German culture and everyday life, the more rewarding your stay abroad will be.
You will have the pleasure of experiencing all of the differences between Germany and America firsthand, and there are many. You are sure to find some of these differences quaint and interesting, but others you may be inclined to find annoying and bothersome. Regardless of how you respond, however, try to keep in mind that you are in a foreign country experiencing different ways of doing things. Accept these customs for what they are—different, rather than better or worse. After all, if Germans did everything just like Americans, there would hardly be any reason to study abroad!

Here are a few examples of things you will notice. Germany is a much smaller country than the United States: cars are smaller, streets narrower, stores and homes less spacious. For example, you might do your grocery shopping in a store about the size of Walgreen's rather than Cub's or Woodman's. On the other hand, you'll find a larger selection of goods than in America: instead of twenty kinds of cheese at the grocery store, you may find fifty from all over Europe.

Remember to look around while you are in Germany or wherever you may be. Think about what you see and how it is different from or similar to what you're accustomed. As Americans, we are often considered egocentric, thinking that our way is the only or best way. Your experience abroad will introduce you to many other ways of doing things. Welcome them!

**BONN**

Bonn is one of Germany's many great cities and the one that you will call home for the coming term. Spend as much time as possible, especially in the beginning, exploring the historic city center. The more quickly you familiarize yourself with the city and all of its parts, the more quickly you'll feel at home.

The city of Bonn is located in the most densely populated German state (**Bundesland** Nordrhein-Westfalen, along with other cities such as Köln, Düsseldorf, Essen, and Dortmund. Bonn has a population of around 350,000 people and is over 2,000 years old. Throughout history, Bonn has been the home to many great people and events. It is famous as the birthplace of Ludwig van Beethoven, and his boyhood house is located just a few blocks from the university. Following World War II, Bonn became the Federal Republic of Germany's capital, a status that it ceded to Berlin only after the fall of the Wall. You will find that Bonn has a highly international flavor, for it is still home to many agencies of the federal government as well as diplomats, foreign journalists, and UN institutions/organizations.

One of Bonn's leading assets is the Rhine River. From the university campus, you can observe a steady stream of large tourist steamers cruising up and downstream as well as long cargo ships carrying raw materials and finished products to and from the Ruhrgebiet and neighboring Holland. If you enjoy biking or hiking, the Rhine offers miles of beautiful walking and biking paths. If you like, you can easily bike to and from many of the cities that lie on the river (e.g., Bonn to Köln is only 2 to 3 hours, and Bonn to Koblenz takes 5 to 7 hours). Perched atop the Rhine's steep riversides are numerous medieval castles, some intact, most in picturesque ruins. The Rhine region is also well known for its festivals: Karneval (corresponding to Mardi Gras), Rhein in Flammen, or Rheinkultur. In addition, the **Rheinland** (as the Germans know it) has a reputation as a very hospitable region because of friendly, outgoing, and humorous people, no doubt in part because of the celebrated wines that grow on the riverbank’s terraced hillsides.

City of Bonn website: [www.bonn.de](http://www.bonn.de)
HOUSING

UW-Madison students are assigned a single room in one of thirty-four different dormitories in Bonn. Students with a community kitchen may be able to use the equipment left by previous students or borrow kitchen equipment from other students; otherwise, kitchen equipment can be purchased upon arrival in Bonn. Rooms are equipped with basic furniture and in most of the dorms you can also get bed sheets through your dormitory’s management. Some students prefer to bring their own sheets as although the sheets are cleaned, they are re-used from previous tenants. Students should plan on bringing their own towels and toiletries. All dorms are either within walking distance of the university or have easy access to public transportation.

Students are responsible for leaving their rooms clean and damage free when vacating. Failure to do so may result in a hold placed on the student’s transcript.

University of Bonn Housing website: www.studentenwerk-bonn.de

Meals: You will be responsible for arranging your own meals. Plan to budget around 250 Euro a month for food. This amount varies depending on how much you eat, whether you prepare food yourself or eat out, what type of food you like, etc.

For those who do not like to cook, there are plenty of small Imbissbuden located in Bonn. They offer such snacks as Döner Kebab (a Turkish dish similar to gyros), Falafel, Oriental Pizza, and of course Wurst mit Pommes (sausage with french fries). For the less adventurous, there is the university Mensa (cafeteria), which a few different branches throughout the city. Thanks to government subsidies, they offer filling food at a remarkably low price.

University of Bonn Meals website: www.studentenwerk-bonn.de

SHOPPING

Because of a long tradition of laws written to prevent abuse of workers and unfair competition, German stores have rather limited hours in comparison with those in the United States. All stores are required to close by 8:00 p.m. Monday to Saturday, though some supermarkets may remain open until 10:00 p.m. Most stores close even earlier, typically at 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Some local and small shops even close during the lunch hour for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. With the exception of restaurants, a few pharmacies, bakeries, and flower stores, all businesses are closed on Sunday. Shops in the train station do remain open though and many 24-hour gas stations have substantial food sections.

When shopping for groceries, it is advisable to follow the German practice of taking along your own shopping bags, since practically all stores charge for them. You will receive information on grocery stores near your dorm from other residents and the International Office during the orientation period.

You are responsible for your own food/meal costs while abroad. In the city center (Innenstadt), there is a department and grocery store under one roof called Kaufhof, but their prices tend to be high. The budget conscious grocery shopper will find better selections and cheaper prices at stores such as Aldi, Lidl, Hit, Coop, Plus, or Pennymarkt. Even if you choose to shop at these stores (and most students do), part of the fun of being in Germany is to buy some items at specialty shops (Fachgeschäfte), such as bread at your local bakery (Bäckerei), meats at the nearest butcher (Metzgerei), fruits and vegetables at the market (Markt). Monday through
Saturday, a "farmer's market" is held at the marketplace (Marktplatz) in the Innenstadt. Here you will be able to find great fresh fruit and vegetables.

TRANSPORTATION
International Summer Course students may purchase a public transportation card for Bonn or a ticket valid for the whole region, including Cologne. This means you may board all buses, U Bahn cars, S Bahn trains, and certain specific DB (Deutsche Bahn) trains free of charge. Until you purchase a card, you will need to pay for your fares individually. If you get on a bus, subway, or train without a valid ticket, you are guilty of Schwarzfahren (riding illegally) and are subject to a fine upon being caught in the act. There are officials (Kontrolleure) who come aboard rather often to check all passengers' tickets.

Bicycles: Traveling by bike is often quick and easy. You may want to look into buying a used bicycle, for they are usually reasonably priced. Be aware of Germany's strict laws governing bicycle travel. German law requires that all bicycles have working headlights. In addition, bicyclists have to follow ordinary traffic laws, and they are somewhat different than U.S. laws (on right of way and passing, for example). If you bring your own bike, be prepared to make adjustments to it so that it will be legal in Germany.

The used bikes you can buy in Bonn may be suitable for short trips but less good for long distance travel. And there are plenty of great places to bike around Bonn. For example, Köln to Bonn is about a 2 to 3 hour bike ride. There are also mountain biking opportunities in Siebengebirge. You must be cautious about bike theft. If you plan to bring or get a bike, it would be wise to bring a lock with you, as they are more expensive in Germany. Also, make sure to wear a helmet at all times. Since helmets are expensive in Germany, you should plan on bringing one from home.

Trains: For train transportation, you can purchase a BahnCard valid for one year. There are various options, but the BahnCard50 will give you a 50% discount on almost all train tickets for travel within Germany. Additionally, BahnCard holders receive a 25% discount in Switzerland and Austria. The student price for the BahnCard 50 is 100 Euro. You can find more details at the Deutsche Bahn website www.bahn.de.

Explore your transportation options once you are in Germany. A Eurail pass may turn out not to be the cheapest form of transportation, although it may be the most flexible and convenient for your particular plans. Make sure to investigate your various options. Other options are renting a car, the various special fares offered by the Deutsche Bahn system, and Mitfahrerzentrale / Mitfahrgelegenheiten (ride sharing service).

SAFETY
According to the State Department Travel Information on Germany, "Germany has a low crime rate." Crimes of property, however, do occur. Keep your bike and dorm room locked at all times. When you travel, keep your passport, train tickets, and money in a safe spot, preferably in a money pouch next to your body. Violent crime is much less common in Germany than in the United States. Even so, you should always let your common sense dictate your behavior--for example, avoid walking alone in unfamiliar areas after dark if doing so would make you feel uneasy.
HEALTH
Feel free to ask the staff of the International Office if you want a recommendation for a doctor or a referral to psychological counseling. There are many clinics and hospitals located throughout the Bonn area. Hours may be limited, so do call ahead for an appointment, or check their hours before you go. Many doctors are English-speaking, and the International Office maintains a list of English-speaking doctors. Listed in the paper every day is the number of the doctor who is on 24-hour call in case of an emergency. Pharmacies rotate being open 24 hours a day, and at night the addresses of the nearest open pharmacies are always posted on the front of every single pharmacy. Look there if you need help during non-office hours or weekends.

COMMUNICATION
Telephone: When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences www.timeanddate.com/worldclock. To make an international call to the United States, dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the United States country code (always “1”) followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number. To call internationally from the United States, dial “011”, the country code, city access code (if necessary) and the phone number. Country and city codes can be found online at www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html. Some of above steps can vary if you are using a calling card.

The German telecommunications industry, long a monopoly enterprise, has only recently been opened for competition among providers. Rates vary considerably, depending on time of day or destination of phone calls, and on the provider chosen. The following internet sites give price comparisons: www.teltarif.de.

It is often cheaper for a call to originate in the States than in Germany. You might arrange specific times for your family and friends to call, or ask them to call you right back if you initiate the call. You can reduce the cost-per-call by using calling cards or a “Vorwahl,” a number you dial before the number you are calling which reduces the cost. “Vorwahl” numbers can be found at www.billigertelefoniieren.de. Also consider getting an AT&T, MCI, or Sprint calling card, which will enable you to charge calls to the United States, usually at a somewhat lower rate than the regular German cost. Calling cards are also useful for traveling because they can be used anywhere. Internet telephoning is a new and inexpensive way to call home as well.

Many students prefer a cell phone/mobile phone—or “Handy,” as the Germans say. Depending on the provider, there are various contracts and you have the choice between Pre-Paid-Calling Cards and contracts of different lengths. Consider the duration of the contracts before you sign them! There are several stores for mobile phones in Bonn where you can get advice – most of them located around the Marktplatz.

Mail: Many branch post offices close during the noon hour and by 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. The main post office (Hauptpost), however, is open during the Mittagspause and closes at 8:00 p.m.

Parcels mailed from the United States to Germany will require a customs declaration form, and what gets written on this form may have powerful consequences for the terms and conditions of delivery in Germany. Enforcement of the customs regulations by the German postal system is sporadic and often arbitrary, but at times it can be a major hassle. The customs declaration form asks for the content(s) and dollar value of the package. If a high value is listed (more than $25
or so), the package is certainly subject to German customs duty (*Zoll*), and you are obligated to make an additional payment when taking delivery of it. In such a case, you may receive a notice from the German postal service directing you to pick up your package at the special (and inconveniently located) *Zollbahnhof*, where the customs clerk may require you to open the package and show the contents.

The simplest way to avoid the potential hassle of customs clearance is to write on the customs declaration form that the package contains Personal Property and is of No Value. Besides Personal Property, it sometimes helps to indicate that the contents are Used Items, or that they are Gifts. This is not an option if, for example, you want to insure the contents of a package and must declare a value. And whether you are mailing from the United States or from Germany, you would be well advised to insure a package if it contains a very valuable item (a camera, for example), especially if you name it on the customs declaration.

You should not have parents send you medications through the mail. If your parents have to send medications, they should send them separately, in an extra package, rather than putting them together in one big box (with clothes, for example).

**Email:** Students are advised to bring along a laptop computer to facilitate writing papers and internet access. If you have a laptop, it is highly advisable to carry it along with you on the plane when coming to Bonn. Computers shipped from the United States, particularly brand new equipment, have often been held up by the German customs authorities who have required students to pay a stiff customs duty to import the equipment. Moreover, equipment shipped by mail has sometimes arrived in damaged condition. Be aware that IBM PCs are very much favored in Germany, and there is correspondingly little support for Macs.

For students without laptops, there is free access to e-mail and the internet through the university computer lab (*Rechenzentrum*) and in a lab in the university’s main building, where you can also print documents. However, the lab hours are limited and only a few printers are available. Past program participants have suggested that students should pool their resources in groups of three or four, buy one printer, and share it (almost all newer laptops will have no problem meeting the power requirement, but printers often require a separate converter). As an alternative to the computer lab, some students have patronized cybercafes near the university.

Please note that you may need an Ethernet cable in order to connect in the housing. Your *Hausmeister(in)* will have additional information for connecting to the internet via your room login ID. Please note that you may not have immediate access to the internet and may have to utilize a nearby cybercafé.

**Skype:** Skype is a free, downloadable software application that allows users to make live video and voice calls over the internet: [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com). Skype users can also add money to their account and can then use the service to call land lines and cell phones internationally at very low rates. Additionally, Skype also provides an instant messaging function as well as file sharing.
Student Testimonials

The quotes below are comments from past participants; they reflect various students’ experiences and are included to provide different perspectives. IAP does not endorse any specific view expressed in this section.

Bonn is an amazing city, especially since it used to be the capitol of West Germany. The city has excellent public transportation, a beautiful car-free downtown, festivals year-round, many parks and museums, the Rhine River, and seemingly endless cafes, bakeries, and small shops. I really liked the size of the city; it was small enough that I felt like I knew it well, but big enough that there was always something to do.

How much your language skills improve, depends a lot on how much you put into it. If you make an effort to be immersed in German and avoid speaking English, you’ll learn so much more.

Spend your free time exploring! Bonn, nearly Köln, offer plenty of sights, sounds, and tastes.

The workshops were a nice alternative learning experience to the normal classes. The German classes were fun and the right level.

The classes were small and well organized.

I liked that it was an intensive class but did not have much outside homework. That allowed me to learn a lot about German language and culture as well as improve my speaking, listening, and writing skills, but also allowed me to have enough free time to experience German culture first-hand, by walking around the city and talking to people.