

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE

AUSTIN GALLOGLY

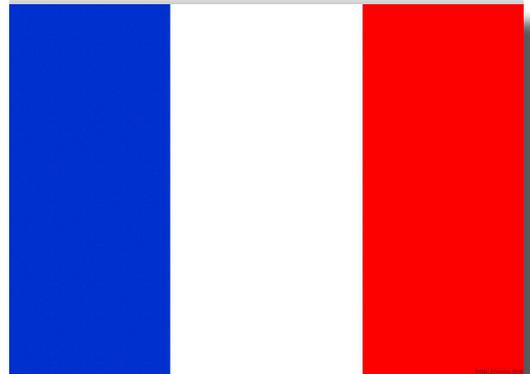
Program: Academic Program in Aix-en-Provence, Fall

Austin's Majors: Mathematics, French

Academic Life: During my stay in Aix, I studied at SUFLE, a French language learning program run through Aix-Marseille University. The program is for non-native French learners, and it focuses on teaching students diverse elements of French language and culture, from grammar and vocabulary to literature, philosophy, and phonetics. All classes are taught by professors, many of whom have also taught at the main Aix-Marseille University campus. As for my personal experience, I took (in addition to my language class) classes on French philosophy, literature & society, phonetics, and scientific vocabulary. The phonetics class in particular helped my pronunciation and aided strongly in my comprehension of the language. As for the classes themselves, most had between 15 and 30 students from different countries, backgrounds, and age groups, making for an amazingly enriching experience. Through my time here, I made friends from all around the world who also share an interest in the French language.

How Studying Abroad Changed Austin: It was hard to notice any changes while I was abroad (except for my French language skills), but I noticed a few changes when I returned to the U.S. First, I came back with a lot more confidence. In France, I interacted with my peers, professors, and the locals solely in French (my second language). If I didn't have a word for a concept I was trying to describe, I had to figure out a way to get my point across regardless. After that experience, communicating in English was a breeze, and thus my anxiety went down and my confidence went up. Second, I have a greater appreciation for world news and politics. Living in the U.S., it's easy to get caught up in American affairs and remain blind to what's going on elsewhere in the world, but since Europe is filled with so many different cultures, you don't have the choice to ignore what's going on outside the borders of your country. I learned a lot about what else is going on in the world outside of the States. Finally, and I realize it's a cliché, but I definitely gained a broader worldview.

France as a Second Home: It's hard to say that France became a second home because I was only there for a short period. Nonetheless, I did establish a routine, and by the end of my stay I was incredibly pained to have to leave. I left behind my school where I'd made so many friends. I left behind all the buildings whose traditional charm cheered me up when I was feeling down. I left behind my favorite bakery, where I must have bought over a hundred pastries (all delicious...). I left behind all the cultural idiosyncrasies that had irritated me at first, but that had come to make me laugh and smile by the time I left. I wasn't in France for very long, but Aix definitely left a lasting impression on me, and I know I will return.



Austin stretching on the summit of Mont Sainte-Victoire.

“ I came out of the semester a more humble and sympathetic person.”

