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## My Time Abroad

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## **My Time Abroad**

Choosing to participate in Linfield's study abroad program was the single greatest opportunity of my life. The amount of memorable experiences I have from my semester abroad are innumerable, but each of them is more than I ever thought possible in the span of a mere six months. Never again have I seen any opportunity remotely close to being able to travel and stay in another country for the cost of a school tuition.

Something I often find myself telling others who ask about my experience is that it's one of the few times in my life that I was able to see so many places, monuments, and works of art that I've only ever read about in books. While abroad I traveled to the town of Bayeux and saw the Bayeux Tapestry that I just had just learned about the previous year in History of World Civilizations and in Paris proper I visited the Lapin Agile bar which was the namesake of the play I performed in the previous semester. It really does tie in to other things at Linfield in ways I never imagined.

Almost every day was filled with outings to museums, plays, operas, chateaus, or other interesting venues. Classroom study takes up only part of your day and the rest is filled with interesting first-hand experiences that have been set up exclusively for your group. This is not to say we had no free time. Another great side benefit was the ability to easily travel between countries during vacation time. I may have studied in Paris, but I also visited Germany, Holland, Belgium, and numerous other cities in France.

Living with a host family, studying with other international students, and immersing myself amongst Parisian culture all had a unique impact on me. I could not have asked for a better host family. They treated me like one of their own and the tears were genuine when we parted ways. I still remember each of them fondly to this day.

My particular semester abroad came under unique circumstances. Being abroad during the attacks of 9/11 definitely created some interesting experiences. I know that there is this misconception of the snooty French person, but during this time of American hardship they did everything and more to make us feel like we were at home. I remember one time in particular when a girl from our group visited a local pharmacy to for cold medicine. Once the grocer learned that she was American he told her not to

worry about a thing. He loaded her up with medicine and sent her on her way free of charge.

Trying to sum up my vast experiences while abroad into a scant few paragraphs is difficult because it doesn't do my study abroad experience justice. Having a degree from Linfield has certainly helped my resume, but during several interviews it has been key that I am able to talk about living in another culture and being able to view things from a different perspective. It's something that certainly sets you apart from those who've never seen what else is out there. I cannot urge you strongly enough to take advantage of this once in a lifetime opportunity.

-Craig Brenneke

