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Getting Settled In

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Emily Culley Getting Settled In. 1/26/16

National University of Ireland

So I survived my first week of classes!! People say that coming to Ireland wasn't going to be nearly as difficult because I was going to be going to an English speaking country. Little did they know I would be attending a bilingual university! Navigating a campus that has building and theatre names such as O'hEocha, Áras Na Mac Léinn, and Áras Ui Chathail can be pretty difficult! I can barely even pronounce where I live (Cúirt Na Coiribe), partially because I hear it pronounced differently every time, and partially because it sounds funny when I say it. Hopefully I get the hang of it soon! The good part about going to a bilingual school is that I have already met a couple of students that speak Irish! They are really interesting to talk to because it seems to be something that they are very proud of and know a lot about.

The classes I have officially decided to take are The Development of the Castle, Gaelic Peoples: Identity and Culture, Modern US History, Celtic Mythology, Religion and Folklore, and Service Learning. The way they do classes here will be something for me to get used to as well. In almost all of my classes I will have a midterm essay worth about 30% of my grade and a final essay worth about 70%. In my castles class, I have an exam at the end of the semester worth 10% and a final essay worth 90%. There are also only very small reading assignments for each class every week and not really any continuous assessment, which explains why the Irish students can go out on weeknights! Also, I was told to shoot for getting a 65-70% in my classes because that would equate to a high grade in the US. I will find out in May if I like having my classes set up this way or not. But I don't have classes on Friday, so WOOHOO!

On Thursday, we went bowling and out to some pubs! The nightlife in Galway is unlike anything I have ever seen. Most of the students go out on weeknights and Shop Street is usually completely filled with only college aged students going out to the clubs and it is crazy! Anyway, on Thursday I found out that as Americans, we stick out when we are just standing places and people like to show off for us. Two girls enjoyed talking and dancing with us in one of the pubs, a guy told me he had no clue where Oregon was, but that he lived in Chicago for a little bit (people with thick accents here pronounce Oregon as Argin), and one guy sang the whole Fresh Prince of Bel Air theme song when someone asked about his life story. It is a really fun environment to be in. Galway is a great place to come if you're out to find some good craic!

Emily