

# Study report University of Calgary

## 1. Study program

From January 16<sup>th</sup> until April 24<sup>th</sup> I have studied at the University of Calgary in Canada. I have taken four courses: Legal Theory: International Law, White Collar Crime, Criminal Process and Canadian Legal History. I was already in my Master's program when I went, and therefore I wanted to take courses in Canada that would be of a high enough level to suit my Master level. Therefore, I had to take courses that were of level "500" and up.

## 2. Language

My English was not too bad when I went to Calgary, but especially in the beginning I sometimes had trouble understanding everything that was said in class. Especially when people have an accent, talk fast or talk very soft, I would miss some things. This got better of course after a few weeks, but the language was certainly something I struggled with now and then. Also, the law classes were very small: it was not unusual that we were with only 7 or 8 people in the classroom. Many courses therefore require participation in class such as discussions, answering, etc. This I found sometimes hard. I really had to force myself to speak up in class and it always went alright, so I would recommend to just do this too, even though it might be scary.

## 3. Finance and other conditions

Canada is pretty expensive. I was warned for this, so I saved enough money. However, it could be annoying to see the prices and be shocked. Especially groceries and alcohol are very expensive. Eating at a restaurant or pub is instead not that expensive compared to the Netherlands, but similar. Living on campus was a bit expensive: around €600-650,- per month.

## 4. Preparation and contacts with the faculty before, during and after my stay

Before departure, I had contact with the University of Calgary and this went quite alright. They responded and gave some advice when asked. I also asked if I could get in contact with other international students in law and therefore one of the coordinators send out an email to the other exchange students. This made it possible to get in touch with a few other people who were going to Canada for the semester, so I would recommend this if you don't know anyone beforehand. Your grades however may take a while. I had to wait for over a month for one of my grades.

## 5. Housing

I stayed on the campus of the University of Calgary and this was really nice! It is kind of expensive (more expensive than living off campus) but I found it worth it. You're really close to the faculty and can walk to class and you meet a lot of people on campus. Almost all the other exchange students lived on campus. You have different housing buildings on campus and I stayed at Cascade, which was the best I think! I hung out with my flatmates a lot (we were with 4 in total) and there were often parties at Cascade at other apartments.

## **6. Culture**

Canadians are really nice! This was one of the best things about Canada. Everyone is very polite, friendly and interested. They will hold the door, ask you where your accent is from, offer a seat, etc. You will also see every now and then some Aboriginals in the train for instance. Their position is difficult and their history kind of sad. Canadians acknowledge this but also have trouble with the problems they cost nowadays.

## **7. Free time**

For me, the studying was very time consuming. The semesters are very short in Calgary but also very intense. Sometimes I felt like I had to choose between my study or some exploring. Especially since English is my second language and I have no background in Canadian law, I had some trouble with keeping up with the work load. However, I passed all my courses and the minimum grade was a B- so you don't need to be too worried about your studies, because as long as you do what you need to do, the professors are not that strict on the quality.

## **8. Travelling**

Calgary is really close to the Rocky Mountains (Banff National Park is the closest), so I went for weekend trips to the Rocky Mountains. You can also go skiing very nearby which is beautiful in Canada. Especially ski area Panorama is amazing! In February you will have a week off (reading week) and this week I visited a friend in San Francisco. I have also driven to Vancouver which is on the West coast. Lastly, I went to national park Jasper for four days, which is like Banff National park but bigger and less touristy. Unfortunately I didn't go to the East Coast (Toronto, Montreal, etc.) but I must be beautiful too and very different from Calgary. Calgary itself is nice and you have some great nightlife, but it is not a very pretty city. Some parts are, but overall it is not a pretty or romantic city, partly because everything is really new. However, the nature is amazing and very close.

## **9. Other**

If you are also planning on going in the winter to Calgary, make sure you prepare for the cold. It was a great experience, but you need to bring warm clothes to survive minus thirty. The upside of the cold is that in the mountains it looks like a huge frozen winter wonderland. I have never seen anything like it and it was one of the most beautiful nature wonders I have seen. Just make sure to dress for the weather. Good to know: inside the buildings it is very warm in Calgary. Their heating systems are a lot better than ours so I was very surprised that it was always warm inside the buildings, especially on campus (which buildings were all very new).