

Report: Masaryk University (2018-2019)

Study period: 1st semester

From September 2018 until January 2019 I studied at the University of Masaryk which is located in Brno, Czech Republic. The University offers a large number of courses which are taught in English. The courses offered for the exchange students are not particularly difficult which allows the students to spend more time focusing on other activities. Most of the courses require 80% attendance throughout the exchange period. Additionally, the classes consist of small groups (maximum 20 people), and class participation is not as engaging as it is in RUG.

Courses

The courses which I completed at the host university were the following:

1. Privacy and Personal Data
2. Comparative Constitutional Law and Politics
3. Human Rights in Europe
4. Legal Philosophy
5. International Criminal Law
6. International Law in Tribunals and Domestic Courts

- 1) The course Privacy and Personal Data was only a 4 credit course. However, the requirements to pass the course were much more demanding than the other courses which were 6 credit worth. In order to pass the course we had to write 3 essays of 2500 words each and make a presentation for one of the essays. In my opinion, the course requirements were very high since, we did not receive a grade but instead we only received a mark in the form of Pass or Fail. Despite this, the course was interesting as I learnt a lot about the privacy laws around the world and the importance of the protection of personal data on the internet. However, I would not recommend this course.
- 2) Comparative Constitutional Law was a 6 credit course. Even though it is similar to the course which we had completed in the first year of LLB, I still enjoyed participating in the course. In order to pass the course we had to write an essay of 3000-4000 words.
- 3) Human Rights in Europe was a 4 credit course. The course required an essay of 2500 words in order to get a passing grade. The course was very interactive as the teachers engaged the students at all times. During the course we discussed many interesting cases decided by the European Court of Human Rights. I would highly recommend taking up this course.

- 4) Legal Philosophy was a 6 credit course and it was the only course which I had to take an exam in. Even though it was 6 credits, the course was very easy as we only had to take an exam which took 15 minutes to complete and a 5 minute presentation. Even though the course was very easy, we learnt about many interesting theories of philosophy relating to the law.
- 5) Both International Criminal Law and International Law in International Tribunals and Domestic Courts were 6 credit courses and they were taught by Professor Kateřina Uhlířová - who is an extremely experienced and passionate practitioner. The courses were very interesting and I would highly recommend to take them. Both of the courses were graded on the basis of an essay of 2500 words.

Even though the university gives you the chance to choose the courses you want, it does not always work out quite as planned. Due to the conflicting timetable and some courses being cancelled, I had to change my learning agreement 3 times which was very annoying.

Housing

It is possible for the students to live in student housing however, this is not particularly nice. The students that live in dorms have to share their room with a stranger and usually they also share the bathroom with 4 other students. However, the rent in the student housing is very cheap in comparison to Groningen as they have to pay only 150 euros. I personally did not choose to live in student housing and instead I rented a very nice apartment which I shared with 3 other people. The house was located in the city centre and I had everything I needed within the house which was nice since I did not have to spend money on buying anything. The rent was 300 euros per month including everything.

Financing

It is considerably cheaper to live in Brno however, it is not much cheaper from Groningen. The transportation was very cheap as I only had to pay 25 euros for 1 semester of unlimited use of public transportation. Also traveling in Czech Republic is very cheap as you would only pay 2-4 euros for taking a train to go to other cities. However, doing groceries is almost the same price as in Groningen but eating outside at times can be cheaper as you can have a nice dinner for only 4-5 euros.

Social life

The social aspect of Brno was not as exciting as in Groningen. There are many students in Brno however, it was quite challenging to find like minded people. I only got to know some great people

at the end of my exchange which was quite disappointing. In regards to the parties, most of them were organized by ESN.

In conclusion, I would like to say that overall my experience in Brno was not very exciting. The courses were very easy and I did not improve much academically. During my time in Brno I missed Groningen very much since, it was very difficult to move from a city which you are so integrated in to somewhere completely new.