

Erasmus Exchange - Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Autumn 2019

Study Programme

Within the Law faculty as well as related faculties in fields such as international relations and sociological studies the choices which the Jagiellonian University offers is very wide. The choices between different courses differ from being a very particular topic to being very expansive. Unlike the University of Groningen the courses differ in the amount of ECTS which can be obtained such as sometimes only 3 or 4 ECTS and other can be up to 7 ECTS. I found it refreshing that therefore you could take different sizes of courses than the ones which are offered in Groningen.

The courses which I found most interesting and which were available were; Refugee Law: Polish, European and International, Introduction to Polish Penal Law, Criminal Justice System in Poland, International Law of Sustainable Development, Jewish Self Government in Central Europe from the 10th Century, and Constitutional and Legal History of Central Europe from the 10th Century

Furthermore you should pay attention to the fact that the courses which might be available in the course syllabus will not be there upon your arrival. Luckily the International Office as well as most professors will aid you in the process of changing these courses.

I found the courses which were offered very different than how they were taught in Groningen due to their versatile style. Some might be completely in the form of a working group whilst others might be completely made up of lectures. This could also be seen from the form of examining. This could be in an oral examination, essay writing, multiple choice or even in the form of a project. I learned a lot from these different styles since they challenged you in new, and different ways.

Over all I did not find the level to be too hard compared to Groningen especially due to the open minded and helpful attitude which most professors had which made it enjoyable to follow their courses.

Language

The level of English in general in the university is quite high in my opinion. I found that both the contact you had with the professors as well as the materials they gave to study were of a high level. In some cases there was some searching for the right English terms but then again this only occurred sporadically and moreover did not affect my learning curve during my exchange in any definite manner.

Finance and Conditions

Poland is in some cases quite a different country then the Netherlands in financial aspects. Especially when it comes to food or travelling Poland is very cheap. I advise you to try a lot of the Polish cuisine as it is very tasty and also not that expensive at all. Also the possibility

to visit a lot museums with student discount makes a very fun activity.

Regarding finding an apartment I would pay attention and look carefully at all the requirements from some agencies since they might add some hidden fees which makes your initially cheap apartment become a lot more expensive towards the end. There are plenty of choices however and you can find something that matches your budget for sure, either closer or further away from the city with or without roommates.

Preparation and Contact with Faculty

In general I found that the contact which I had with the faculty went quite smoothly, sometimes you had to wait quite a few days before getting answers, especially in periods when they were more busy than usual but in general you got your answer within a week. Also physically visiting the international office always helped a lot in cases which were more time sensitive.

Guidance Reception at Host University

The guidance and reception at the host university were somewhat differing throughout my residence in Poland. Especially in the beginning most professors would answer very soon and help out in any way they could, and likewise for the international office but during busier times alike the exam period sometimes the support fell away a bit. But as I mentioned before going to international office always helps out quite a lot.

Culture Free Time and Travelling

During my time abroad there were definitely a lot of time-frames in which there was a lot of free time for travelling. In general most courses take half a year which means a lot of time to prepare for your exams, and also more free time to explore the country and what it has to offer.

In general Poland truly surprised me with its beauty as well as its culture. The Polish people are friendly and the deep history which the country has truly makes it worth travelling around. Cities which were definitely worth visiting were Gdansk, Wroclaw, Warsaw and Zakopane. Every new region as well as city shows a whole new side of the country which makes travelling a fun activity. But not only does Kraków give a great opportunity to travel around Poland due to its central location you can easily go to Budapest, Prague but also explore Ukraine or Slovakia. Also check out the international trips which are being hosted by TimeTravels which offer amazing journeys to St. Petersburg and Lapland.

Lastly I recommend not using the train during travelling as this is often not to reliable, but would very much recommend Flixbus. It is very cheap and almost always on time to bring you wherever you are travelling. Also airbnb is often a very cheap option to keep in mind when needing accommodation