

## **Erasmus+ Report**

### **Jagiellonian University, Krakow (Autumn Semester 2019-2020)**

I decided to spend my semester abroad as an Erasmus student at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. I chose Poland as one of my picks, because, being Bulgarian, I wanted to spend my semester abroad in a country that I consider culturally close to my own. The fact that Krakow is a very international, vibrant and culturally-rich city, coupled with the interesting courses on offer at the university, made the Jagiellonian University an obvious choice. The relatively low costs of living in Poland and the chance to apply for a room in a student dormitory were also important considerations.

Unlike many of the other cities in Poland, Krakow is a very internationally-friendly city. While not everyone speaks English, you will notice that locals are used to tourists and Erasmus students. Nevertheless, sometimes it's a good idea to find other ways to communicate what you want/need and learning how to say "hello" and "thank you" is always a good idea. There are many museums in the city, so if you're a fan of those you won't get bored. Many of them are historical museums closely connected with Jewish history in Poland and the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp is close by and reachable by train.

There are also many cool bars close to the main square (Rynek Glowny) and in the Jewish District (Kazimierz). Prices depend on each bar/club, but going out is definitely cheaper than in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, something I noticed in myself and other people who went on exchange, is the fact that we ended up spending more money on leisure than we do in the Netherlands – partially because of the less intense academic schedule and the lower prices, which, ironically, push you to spend more carelessly. If you completely run out of money at the end of the month, a bar called Banieluka is probably a good idea and it's probably one of the most popular places among Polish people and Erasmus students alike.

Eating out is definitely less expensive than it is in the Netherlands and Polish food is definitely something you should try. In terms of grocery shopping, Carrefour and Biedronka are one of the two main places where I used to do my groceries in Krakow. There are also Zabka stores on pretty much every corner – those are open until 23:00 and are pretty much the equivalent of night shops in Groningen. As a law student at the university, your courses will probably be held at locations in the city center, so if you're not a fan of long distances, you can start looking early and find a place right outside the city center for a relatively low price. Prices vary considerably, but the maximum you'd end up paying is 350 Euro (and that's for a very nice place at the city center if you book last minute). Before finding a place (last minute) I applied for a place in a dormitory twice. They didn't require transcripts of records, statement of income, etc. and they never really disclosed what their criteria for awarding places is, in the absence of any of the above-mentioned

information. Personally, I was quite unsatisfied with the whole application experience and the fact that I had to look for a place so last minute, but definitely try to apply for a dormitory if you want to save money and socialize more easily.

The exams and courses at the university are generally easier than those at the RUG. Nevertheless, I had some courses that were very comparable to 5 ECT courses I've taken in the Netherlands in terms of the amount of information to be learned. Nevertheless, getting a 5/5, unlike a 10 in the Netherlands, is possible. The regular exam session takes place in February, but professors always organize early exams in January, so there are no problems in terms of coming back on time for the start of your next block at the RUG. There is usually no additional course books you will have to buy or books of legislation you'll have to take to the exam, so you'll save money on that as well. The one thing that I was dissatisfied with is that, depending on the course, some professors refuse to update students through e-mail and some organization matters are kind of outdated. Nevertheless, that's only the case for some courses and some professors. The courses I took were:

**Judicial cooperation in criminal matters in the EU** - This course was interesting and probably the most relevant to our programme. The teacher was really sweet and helpful and was always open to questions. The course had no final exam and required class attendance and active participation in practical assignments and class discussions.

**Monetary law and monetary policy** - Generally an interesting course, combining elements of law and some economics for beginners. PowerPoint presentations were super helpful and the professor always uploaded them in advance, so skipping a lecture was never a problem and studying for the exam could be nicely organized.

**International, European and Polish refugee law** - An interesting and well-organized course, which also had a lot to do with our program. The professor didn't upload presentations, so attending lectures was very useful. The exam consisted of previously disclosed essay topics, so writing the essays in advance was helpful in studying.

**American constitutional law** - I would definitely recommend taking this course, as it was very interesting, fun and informative.

**The Jewish self-government in Central Europe** - This course definitely pushed me to go out of my comfort zone and write a paper on a topic I wasn't too familiar with. Nevertheless, it made me more appreciative of Polish history and culture.

**The law of international commercial contracts** - The courses ended with a take-home exam, very similar to the papers required for Civil Procedural Law during year 2 at the RUG.

Overall, it was a nice experience and I was satisfied with the educational level at the university, as well as the level of activity demonstrated by the ESN section of the university.