

Exchange report Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Fall 2018

Study Programme

The course offer at Jagiellonian University is quite broad therefore you can mix and match them as you wish. To get the 30ECTS required, you should choose around 6/7 courses (the ECTS for courses vary from 3ECTS to 7ECTS).

The courses I took included American Constitutional Law, American Constitutionalism: Rights and Freedoms, Criminal Justice System in Poland, Fundamentals of Anglo-American and Polish legal systems, Introduction to Polish Penal Law, Refugee Law: International, European and Polish. Personally, American Constitutional Law was my favorite and I would strongly recommend it.

The only problem I had encountered after arriving in Kraków was timetable crash and therefore, I needed to switch up some of my courses and adjust my Learning Agreement.

Lectures are the only method of teaching and there are no Working Groups, at least that was the case with courses I took. As far as the level education is concerned, the courses offered for exchange students are simplified, pleasant and not that challenging.

Examination methods also vary depending on the course you are taking. Usually, you can choose between an oral exam or a written one. Written exams include, for the most part, essay questions, however I also took one multiple choice exam. For others, you also have an option to write an essay (up to 4,000 words).

The great thing is that the professors are really understanding and flexible as to the exam periods. When you need to take your exam earlier others, they have no problem with that even when you are the only person taking it.

Language

The academic staff's level of English is good enough and you should not encounter any problems. Communication with the locals on a daily basis should not be too problematic as well. However, it might be useful to learn some basic Polish words.

Finance and the conditions

Poland is a relatively affordable country, even for students. The price of a room in Kraków close to the city centre is around 1000zł (€250). Eating out in the restaurants or having drinks in the bar would not cost you much as well. To sum up, I would say that approximately 2000zł (€450, including renting a room) should be enough for a month.

Preparations and contacts with the faculty

From my personal experience, during the initial application it was rather difficult to contact the Exchange Coordinator in Kraków. One time I was been waiting three weeks for a response. However, during my stay I did not encounter such problems. If you have any questions, you can stay after classes to talk to lecturers or send them an e-mail. It does not take them long to respond.

Guidance/reception at the host University

Before the classes officially begin in October, at the end of September the exchange office organizes a meeting for all incoming Erasmus students. The staff provides you with all the information about housing, getting your student ID card, finances etc. During the 'Introduction Week', the International Student Association throws parties, meetings, trips around Poland and help the students accommodate.

Culture, free time and traveling

Even though you will be taking approximately 6 courses during your stay, you are going to have a lot of free time even during regular weekdays, which is great if you want to explore the city/country. Kraków is an absolutely beautiful place, especially during the Christmas time. There is always something going on and you will never be bored. I truly advise you to visit other places in Poland — Auschwitz Concentration Camp, Zakopane, Warsaw or some cities close to the Baltic Sea like Gdynia or Gdańsk.

When you decide to explore the country, you can choose between trains, buses (e.g. Flixbus) or you can even fly from one city to another. The tickets prices are really affordable and with your student ID card you get an extra 50% off.

Transportation within Kraków might be a little complicated because it really is a large city. What was helpful to all exchange students was the *jakdojade.pl* website, where you type in your current location and destination and it provides you with the options. You can choose between taking a taxi, an Uber, a tram or a bus. Again, the prices are not really high.

Since I was doing my exchange during the winter semester, I had the opportunity to celebrate 100th anniversary of re-gaining Polish Independence (11th November). Music festivals or any other celebrations are organized pretty much every weekend in the City Centre. During Christmas break, Kraków's Old Town transforms into a beautiful Christmas Market. However, I heard that the most spectacular one is organized in Wrocław so I would advise going there if you have a chance.

Poland is also pretty safe, neither I or any of my friends encountered any problems during our stay.