

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

# THE VIRTUES OF STUDY ABROAD: VOLUME III

APRIL 2016



**“THE JOURNEY OF A  
THOUSAND MILES BEGINS  
WITH A SINGLE STEP.”**

**- LAO TZU**

This publication, *The Virtues of Study Abroad*, is designed to showcase the merit of study abroad programs – especially how they contribute to the personal growth of students.

The following student works are intended to highlight the various personal characteristics that emerge and are strengthened by an international educational experience. Participants were inspired to share what they value most about the opportunity to study abroad. They wrote about traits many other study abroad students also say they gain: courage, perseverance, empathy, enthusiasm, perspective, understanding, open-mindedness, engagement, curiosity and respect.

This publication not only discusses the potentially life-changing personal and educational benefits of study abroad programs, but also how the University of Oklahoma’s focus on international education makes these experiences possible. The variety and availability of programs speak to the degree to which educators and administrators value study abroad as an important component of higher education. Participation in such programs gives students the opportunity to practice inter-cultural communication skills, cultivate an openness to new experiences and engage in a style of learning that inspires curiosity and a lifelong love of learning.

We hope the following personal stories and observations resonate with those who have studied abroad, as well as prospective journeyers alike.

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1 [CONFIDENCE]

# BLESSING IKPA

**College Degree Program:** Criminology–Sociology  
**Study Abroad Program:** Italy

*"I chose to study abroad because I wanted to take control of my life again and push myself completely out of my comfort zone. I knew that I wouldn't see the personal growth in my life that I hoped for without this opportunity, so I decided a mere five months beforehand that I was going to Italy for a semester. I never looked back!"*







*"And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others." - Marianne Williamson*

As the plane prepared for landing, I looked out my window and instantly thought that I had made the biggest mistake of my life. When I stumbled through the line to officiate my presence in Italy with a bright, red passport stamp, I hoped I would somehow get rejected and be forced to go back to the comfort of the United States. When the bus made its way down the winding roads towards the speckled city of Arezzo, the phrase "cat got your tongue?" could not describe me better than in that very moment. From the moment we landed in Rome and through the entire two-hour ride to Arezzo, I had not made a peep. I could not believe that I was actually going to spend five months in Italy. From dreaming about this moment since freshman year to the preparation during my sophomore year, I was finally in Italy for my junior year. And I thought it was all a complete mistake.

The nerves ran their course the first few days in my new home (the nerves even caused me to sleep past an orientation I had the next day – oops!) and I remember calling my mother, voice shaking, saying "... I made it!" In my opinion, I made it through the most difficult part, which was

leaving behind the familiarity of Norman and my loved ones. Even with my brief hesitations, I was ready to make the most of my study abroad trip in Italy. I had dreamt about this moment ever since freshman year, but I had no idea my dream would ever become a reality. Myself, along with so many others, made this trip happen. My mom always told me to "go confidently in the direction of my dreams," and I was going to spend five months doing just that.

I never understood how the concept of love could be applied to a physical place until I lived in Arezzo for a semester. We arrived after the holiday season, but all of the lights were still strung around the city, and I could not believe that I had the opportunity to make a home out of Arezzo. The sense of feeling as though I had made a huge mistake in studying abroad completely vanished. Wandering around the streets of Tuscany with my newfound friends, I felt a sense of confidence. When I thought that I could not possibly study abroad and leave home for five months, here I was, living a completely new life hundreds of miles away. I was smiling more, eating tons of gelato, practicing my Italian and truly immersing myself in Italian culture. I could not walk out of my apartment without my heart bursting for joy every single day because I was living in the most beautiful place in the world (at least, in my opinion)!



I had days when I felt less than confident with being abroad. In choosing to study abroad, I turned down many opportunities. I would check social media and see what all of my friends were doing back at OU. I was consistently trying to live two lives – my life in Italy and my life at OU. But I knew that if I wanted to get the most out of my study abroad trip, I would need to devote my time to engulfing myself with everything I could about Italy, and Europe in general, before my time was up. Once I was able to put aside my life at OU for the time being, I fully became entranced with all that Arezzo had to offer me. My confidence grew because I realized I had the strength to create new paths for myself. I was able to leave behind the comfort of home in order to experience something even more spectacular.

I never felt more like myself than during my time abroad in Italy. I miss the days of sitting on the patio of my apartment with my roommates or (poorly) attempting to cook Italian cuisines. I miss the days of walking to my favorite restaurant, Bar Stefano, with my friends and chatting it up with the people who worked there. Arezzo became home because I took the time to make it a home. I learned that I had the ability to go anywhere in this

world, and make something new out of it. I could move away from home, make new friends, have new experiences and be confident that everything happens for a reason.

My biggest lesson learned while living in Italy was that I am completely in charge of my destiny. Many people did not believe I could actually live in a foreign country for five months and most people were waiting for me to fail. I was scared that I would also fail myself, and I would have to live with that failure. I believed in myself and believed in what I was capable of achieving. The little seed of confidence I had in myself when I first made my appointment to speak with the OU in Arezzo advisor fully bloomed during those five months abroad, and I did not even recognize myself when I stepped foot back onto American soil. I learned a completely new way of life, and I wanted to make sure that I brought these aspects into my American lifestyle. Like my mother always said, "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams" and you will never be wrong. She could not have been more right.



# 2 [ENTHUSIASM] SANGAY TEMPA

**College Degree Program:** Sports Management

**Study Abroad Program:** Kyungpook National University, South Korea (Exchange study)

*"Studying abroad was an opportunity that I did not want to miss at all; to be able to study abroad while studying abroad."*







As an international student, I am already studying abroad. From the very beginning of my time at the University of Oklahoma, I told myself that I did not want to stay in one place for four years, although I love living here with my weird and annoying friends. I had an opportunity that I did not want to miss at all – to be able to study abroad while studying abroad.

One of the most important values that I gained from my study abroad experience in South Korea was my enthusiasm for traveling. I will share only on my enthusiasm about traveling because this was one trait that was sorely missing in my life. Studying abroad in South Korea turned the table to enrich my whole life experience.

Despite having been to three or more countries before Korea, I used to only travel for study purposes. There was no real fire burning inside my stomach for the passion of “traveling.” After South Korea, I learned that I have missed out on so much of what I could have learned and experienced from traveling. I always tell everyone that I traveled to more places while in South Korea for a semester than I have in two years of my stay at OU, or before that when I lived in the Netherlands for two years.

While in South Korea, I met a group of friends who loved traveling. We were about a 10- to 12-person group who always traveled together. In the beginning, I did not want to join them, which was just me being in my comfort zone. I wanted to lock myself in a room or do other things I loved doing like playing soccer. However, after seeing two of my friends travel from one end of South Korea to another with just a rucksack bag and a tent, I was jealous of all the cool things they had done and places they had

visited. Their stories inspired me to start traveling. So, I decided to give it a try and join them.

Every weekend, we traveled to different places within South Korea. We traveled to Goeje Island in the southeast of the country and climbed up to one of the highest peaks in the northern part of the country. On the way to the peak we spent our nights in a tent in the middle of the park (it was legal) and by the sea. The feeling of waking up to the view of the sea was just marvelous. We visited the capital city of South Korea (Seoul), popular places like Busan and more interesting places like Gangnam. While traveling, I spent nights in a jimjilbang, where we enjoyed pools and saunas of different temperatures naked (gender separated), without anyone bothering us, and slept with a towel and block of leathered wood as a pillow. I have never experienced time passing quicker than my stay in South Korea. I loved traveling and I wanted to travel more. Now that was not who I used to be.

I started hanging out with my friends in the bar, which I would never do before, and having a great time either sitting or playing volleyball by the sea with people I traveled with and people who formed a big part of my life. Without traveling I could not have met these people or have gotten to know these great people so close. I realized that traveling does not only let you see places, but also gives you the opportunity to connect more closely, as I got to know all of my friends better through conversation and time spent together. We can always learn from others. I am glad that I was willing to step out of my cave and explore the world and connect with people.



Not only did I travel within Korea, but I also decided to join my friends in the Philippines during our week-long break. Before I realized, my enthusiasm for traveling suddenly exploded, and I have been to so many places and enjoyed so much great time. As expected, I did not only travel while in South Korea with the friends I was comfortable with, but also by myself afterwards. From South Korea, I traveled to Bangkok by myself and stayed there for a week. I couchsurfed and stayed with a Thai family for three days, where an elderly lady cooked authentic home Thai food, while they also gave me tours to places that tourists normally do not get to see.

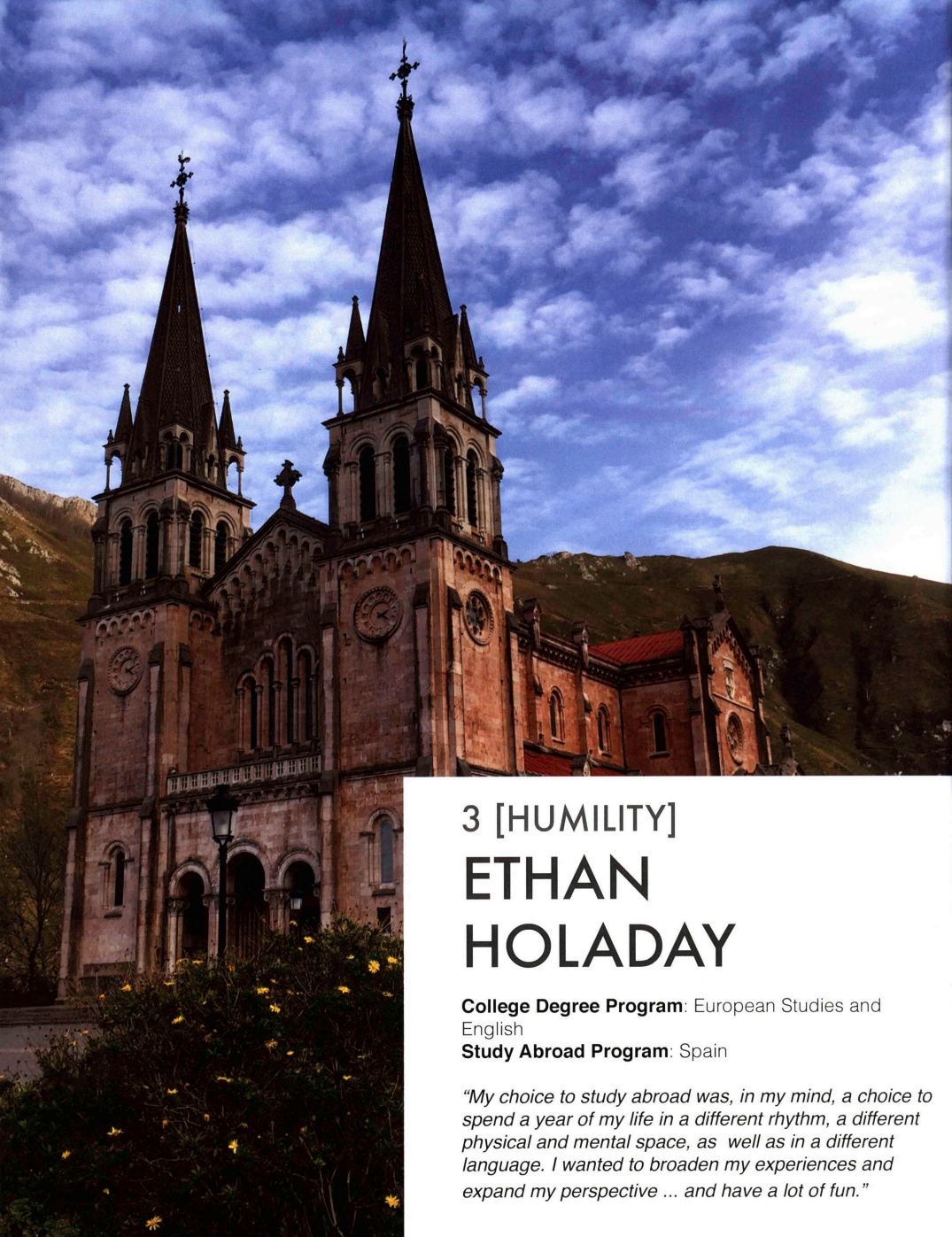
After Bangkok, I went to Kolkata in India for my visa renewal, although I could have gone to Delhi where I have been before and where I was more comfortable going. When I came back to OU, despite my bank account being very thin, I went to New York City with my great friend here. One thing is for sure: if I had not gone to South Korea and developed my enthusiasm for traveling, there was no way in the world that I would have gone to New York City, Bangkok or to the Philippines. And best of all, I love traveling, and it has given me so much opportunity to learn and to get closer to friends.

As I traveled, my enthusiasm to see the world was not only from my own perspective, but I started

## STUDYING ABROAD IN SOUTH KOREA TURNED THE TABLE TO ENRICH MY WHOLE LIFE EXPERIENCE.

seeing it from the lens of my peers I traveled together with, as we see the world from different angles. I have made traveling an important part of my life today. I want to see more places, meet different people and learn more about others through experience.





3 [HUMILITY]

# ETHAN HOLADAY

**College Degree Program:** European Studies and English

**Study Abroad Program:** Spain

*"My choice to study abroad was, in my mind, a choice to spend a year of my life in a different rhythm, a different physical and mental space, as well as in a different language. I wanted to broaden my experiences and expand my perspective ... and have a lot of fun."*





One of the most prominent and valuable characteristics of my study abroad experience in Spain was that multiple times every day I felt like a complete idiot. To be fair, I am quite the klutz in general, and I certainly have my fair share of slips of the tongue and awkward interactions in my natural habitat. But on most days I can manage to pass as a normal, fully functioning member of society. In Zaragoza, Spain, however, this general rule was met with a four- to possibly ten-month exception.

It is tempting to begin this paragraph with a moderate, face-saving phrase like, “this mostly has to do with language.” That would be disingenuous – it all has to do with language. From ordering a coffee to giving an in-class presentation about the geopolitics of Hungary, every time I was required to open my mouth or use my ears there was a high probability that I would be forced to recognize my incompetence. Sure, slight differences in manners and customs can take some getting used to (I assume this is what is meant by the term “culture shock”). However, I think if I was capable of fully understanding and responding to the censure and instruction sent my way in these situations, I could take it all more or less in stride. Instead, I stumbled and stammered – often.

Even when I understood the literal meaning of what someone said and when I could manage a grammatically-sound sentence myself, actual understanding and effective communication eluded me. A memorable exchange came about once while I was trying to buy something at a

newsstand. When I asked (transliterated), “Can I have a bag of chips, please?” The man behind the counter answered cheekily that I could not just have them, but he would be happy to sell them to me.

## I AM A FIRM BELIEVER IN THE OLD PLATITUDE THAT FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNLOCK NEW WORLDS OF PEOPLE AND IDEAS.

In another more prolonged, less humorous incident, the vagueness of the directions I received and my inability to respond quickly to questions ended with me sitting opposite a worker in the Office for the Documentation of Foreigners who repeatedly told a person at the other end of the line, “He does not understand hardly anything. I said ‘table’ and he did not know what I was talking about.” Now I can look back and laugh. But at the time, being ridiculed, patronized and wrangled into making three unnecessary visits to the same bureaucratic office over three afternoons was not terribly amusing.

One of the reasons for these persistent difficulties is that I had not spent very much of my social time with native Spanish speakers. Most of my good friends were other exchange students.

One upshot of this social arrangement was instead of becoming accustomed to hearing and speaking the casual local vernacular, I ended up speaking a type of exchange-student-ese. It is a simple, direct language approximating Spanish but spiced up with all sorts of grammatical and idiomatic errors of French, Italian and German provenance.

If I had the chance to go back in time and have a second chance at my first semester, I would not be tempted to change a thing. The friendships I made with other exchange students were so very special and marked in a remarkable, positive way by our relative lack of language skills. Unlike other kinds of friendships built upon bases of common interests or a shared sense of humor, my relationships with other exchange students were built upon an absurd shared situation: being a fool in a foreign land.

It is impossible to take yourself too seriously for the very reasons I have described. I am not denying that there is a great deal of collective embarrassment toward our awkwardness in communicating with each other and the world around us. But when the red in our cheeks begins to fade, a good chuckle and a knowing smile tend to follow. And maybe this is just evidence of my rose-tinted romanticism, but I think the necessary simplicity of our language forces us to get to the root of our sentiments. It makes us nicer, more sincere people and better friends.

In all likelihood, I will concentrate more this coming semester on addressing my incompetency. By weaseling my way into Spanish social circles and spending more of my time reading and listening to Spanish, maybe I can take some steps toward becoming a little bit more normal, a bit more fully functioning as a member of the society I find myself in. I am a firm believer in the old platitude that foreign languages unlock new worlds of people and ideas. It would be a shame to let this terrific opportunity to get a firmer hold on the keys slip through my fingers. However, to lose that sense of ridiculousness – or humility, to put it more nobly – would also be a shame. I hope I always keep in mind that to some extent I will always be a fool in a foreign land. The important thing, I think, is that out of your awkward deeds and halting gibberish you manage to produce kindness and decency. And maybe, if you are lucky enough, you can let some friends in on the fun at the end of the day.







4 [OPEN MINDEDNESS]  
**CATHERINE  
BRIM**

**College Degree Program:** International Business and Accounting  
**Study Abroad Program:** Spain

*"I decided to study abroad so that I could make lifelong friends, develop my language skills, and explore a new culture."*



Before leaving the United States I had many different expectations about Spain, which contrasted with the reality that I encountered. I envisioned Valencia to be old fashioned and vastly different from my life in the United States, and was surprised to find myself in a lively and urban city with rich history and culture. While I enjoyed my experiences abroad and came to love Spanish culture, I had to work at being open minded about my surroundings while I was there. Certain elements of the Spanish culture were fascinating and exciting, such as local markets, beautiful historical sites, and amazing food. However, other things were at first very frustrating, such as stores and schools being closed during the afternoons for siestas, relying on public transportation to get everywhere, and having to wait 45 minutes for your check after dinner.

## BY STAYING OPEN MINDED... I LEARNED NOT ONLY ABOUT MYSELF BUT ALSO THE WORLD AROUND ME IN A SHORT SIX MONTHS.

At the beginning of my journey in Spain, I was overwhelmed by my surroundings. Countless things about the Spanish culture seemed peculiar, such as kissing strangers on the cheeks, eating dinner at 10 p.m. and not putting eggs in the refrigerator. During my first visit to my professor's office hours, I became uneasy when he greeted me by kissing me on the cheeks, something that

I was completely unprepared to experience. This was followed by a thirty-minute conversation in Spanish, where I stumbled my way through a discussion about different elements of architecture in churches throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. I had many other awkward encounters with Spaniards as I continued learning the cultural norms over the first month, and as a result of all of these encounters, I became uncomfortable with the Spanish culture. At first, I was not confident that I had made the right decision moving to Spain. However, instead of becoming discouraged, I decided to try my best to be non-judgmental about the differences and to fully immerse myself in the Spanish culture.

By staying open minded, surrounding myself with new people and stepping out of my comfort zone, I learned not only about myself, but also the world around me in a short six months. Over time the strangeness of the country became more familiar, and the abnormalities seemed fewer and farther between as I grew more accustomed to my new home. As a result, I began to admire the beauty in the differences between the Spanish lifestyle and those of the United States. I grew to appreciate siestas for a few hours in the afternoon each day. They allowed me to be more focused in my late afternoon and evening classes as well as gave me the opportunity to relax during the day. I developed a taste for the local food and enjoyed spending long dinners with my friends because we were able to connect and spend quality time together. The nuisance of not having a car ended up being a nice change, because I was able to enjoy my surroundings, watch the local people and have some physical activity at the same time. I even found myself being late to class and meeting times, because nothing ever started on time anyways, so what was the point of rushing around everywhere?

At the end of my six months abroad, I fell in love with Spain and all of the things I first found overwhelmingly different, which would not have been possible had I remained narrow-minded while living there. I learned that just because things are different does not mean they are inferior or wrong. If I would have remained closed-minded while I was there, I would have never learned all of the great things that Spain had to offer and I would never have fallen in love with my second home.

# 5 [PATIENCE] LAUREN FORESTER

**College Degree Program:** General Management

**Study Abroad Program:** New Zealand

*"When I was fifteen, I met New Zealander, Mitchell Green, who quickly became one of my greatest friends. My adoration for Mitchell, my desire to explore someplace different than the rest of my peers, and my lack of bilingual abilities ensured that New Zealand was the perfect place for me to study abroad."*







"Here we go, my first class of the best semester of my life," I thought as I strolled into my classroom in New Zealand. I looked around the room trying to pick out who would be my first Kiwi friend. A girl in the third row, with long light brown hair, had a seat available right next to her. That is where I went.

"Hello! How are you today?" I smiled as I sat my notebook on the desk. The girl peered up at me expressionless and speechless. Did I say something wrong? Did I forget deodorant this morning? Did my American accent offend her? The girl, who was supposed to be my very first friend in this strange new place, proceeded to gather her things. She got up from her seat and moved a few spaces away from me. I was stunned and embarrassed. I sat down alone. No one came in to rescue me. No one said a single word to me in class. This was the start to the best semester of my life.

Too many thoughts raced through my head. Where do I go from here? I am usually so great at making friends. What is wrong with me? How do I get them to like me? Fortunately, I easily formed friendships with my fantastic roommates. Unfortunately, we were all American exchange students yearning for friendships with New Zealanders.

No one talked to me on my thirty-minute walk to school. No one would have a conversation with me before or after class. That was the case every day, until I met Rebecca.

"Hey, are you from America?" Rebecca asked me with a blank stare.

"Oh, yeah," I said. "How would you know?" I had not said a single word to this girl and she was actually talking to me!

"You have a Five-Star notebook and you can only get those in America," she said.

Our conversation continued and I was doing everything in my power to keep my excitement from pouring out of my facial expressions. "Be cool," I told myself, "just keep your cool, Lauren."

We parted ways and I was confetti. I sprinkled my happiness on everyone I encountered that day. I had made my very first friend from New Zealand and I could hardly wait until I could see her again the next week.

Seven excruciating days later, I arrived to class early, ready to see my new friend Rebecca. I waited for her to walk through the door. Nothing. She did not show. The next week went by with no Rebecca. My hopes and dreams of our friendship were crumbling in front of my very eyes. Just when I thought all was lost, 21 days after our first meeting, Rebecca walked into our classroom. She was not my friend instantaneously. I met her a few more times before we exchanged numbers. I met her a few more times after that until we studied together. We eventually even had dinner together. Rebecca came to my birthday party, she shared her love of Instagramming food with me, she came to my going away party and she gave me a supremely special going away present.

Even though I struggled immensely to make friends at school, patience allowed me to make some of the most incredible friends I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. I hope that patience will allow others to experience the unfathomable friendship I found in Rebecca.

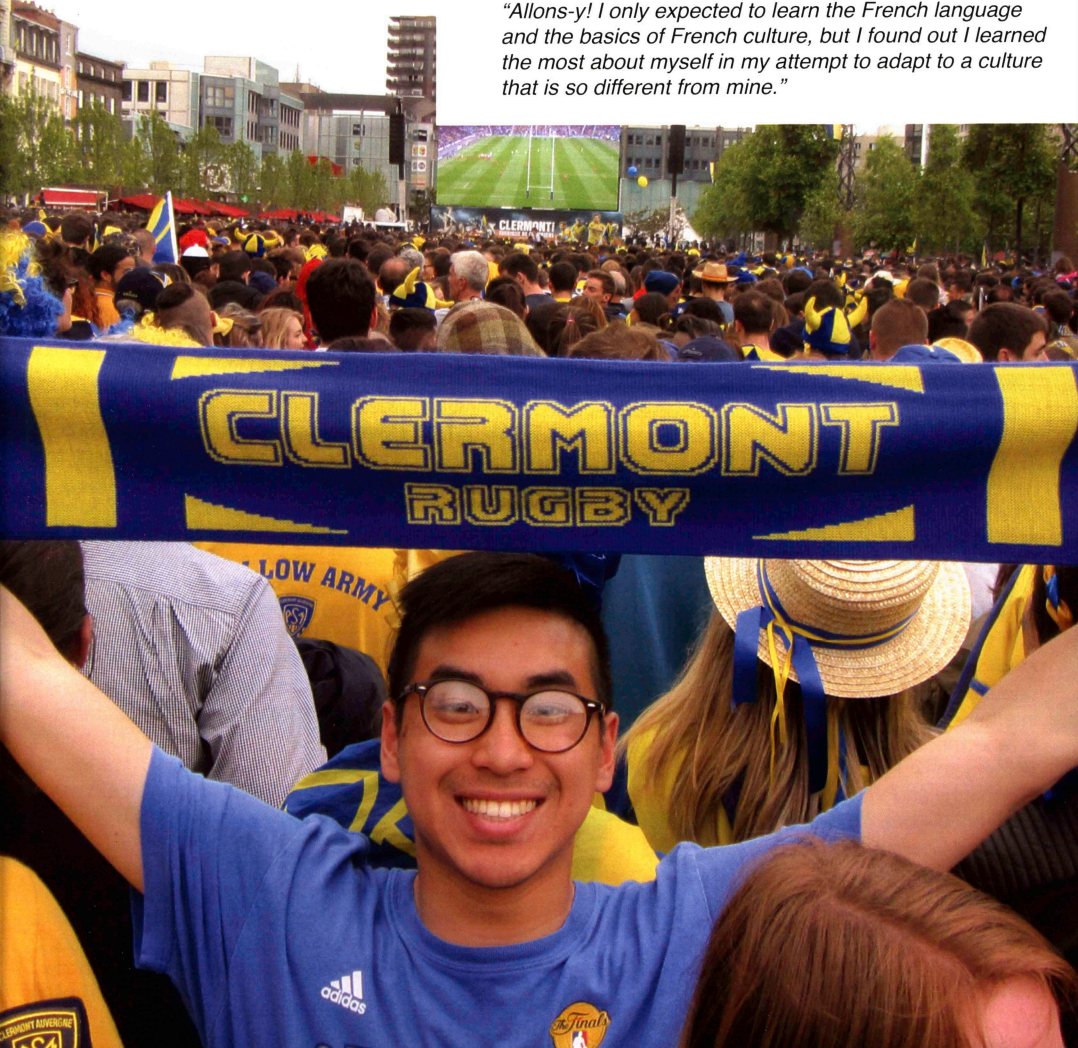


6 [PERSEVERANCE]

# DEREK NGUYEN

**College Degree Program:** International and Area Studies  
**Study Abroad Program:** France

*"Allons-y! I only expected to learn the French language and the basics of French culture, but I found out I learned the most about myself in my attempt to adapt to a culture that is so different from mine."*



Ici! Ici! C'est Montferrand! This chant meaning "Here! Here! Is Montferrand!" is one of the chants proclaimed during ASM Clermont Auvergne Rugby matches in support of ASM.

Imagine yelling that out with 50,000 people in the city-center of Clermont-Ferrand during the European Rugby Final. Then, weeks later, imagine doing the same, this time with 30,000 people who decided to go to Place de Jaude again, despite a torrential downpour.

I did not know Clermont had essentially one of the top two rugby clubs in all of Europe. Rugby is king in Clermont-Ferrand and soccer (football) is secondary. It turns out Clermont lost both the European Rugby Championship AND the French Rugby Championship. I witnessed both losses on a giant screen in Place de Jaude. I never imagined the emotions on the faces of fans after each loss – defeated but hopeful for the following season.

During and after each game, I was able to interact with other ASM fans alike. I felt like I was a true Clermontois (someone from Clermont-Ferrand in the Auvergne region of France). What had not clicked until those moments, despite having already lived months there, was the similarity between the Clermontois and myself.

The struggles to win the rugby matches were not the only embodiments of the resiliency of the Clermontois I noticed. The majority of people do not know where Clermont-Ferrand is located. I bet it would be safe to say many people know about Bleu d'Auvergne. Bleu d'Auvergne would not be internationally distinguished if not for the dedication and toil put into making it. I would say a majority of people, who operate a vehicle have heard the name Michelin before. Michelin is a company that is international and has existed since 1889. Then there is renowned thinker Blaise Pascal and Gaul leader Vercingetorix. Pascale was instrumental in math and philosophy and Vercingetorix is a name of pride for the French – one of few leaders who successfully impeded Caesar's Roman Empire.

No, I did not make it to rugby finals, develop a renowned recipe, sustain a company through economic collapses, contribute to the intellectual

# PERSISTENCE. THAT IS ALL IT TOOK FOR ME TO MAKE MY EXPERIENCE IN CLERMONT ONE I WILL NEVER FORGET.

community or stop an army. What I gained from my study abroad was a sense of adaptability. Prior to studying "à l'étranger" in Clermont, essentially all of my friends, who had previously studied abroad, painted a picture of study abroad that was idealistic. I did not expect integrating myself into foreign society to be a cakewalk, but my first two weeks adjusting to Clermont were the most stressful weeks of my life.

From not having Internet for a week to not knowing how to register to the university, obtain an ID and enroll in classes, my problems compounded upon each other. I did not have the same support system or wealth of knowledge I had back in Norman to help me cope with my situation.

Long story short, it took me two weeks to realize my level of enjoyment while in Clermont-Ferrand depended upon my ability to accept my situation and make the best of it.

By the end of my study abroad, I had met other international students and local French students, who I remain in touch with almost on a daily basis. I would not have been able to make these international connections if I had stayed in my dorm room or did not get out of my bubble. Relationships take work and I received what I put into each relationship – friends for life.





Another important time of growth for me, which pushed me outside of my comfort zone on numerous occasions, was my two-week spring break. I pushed my body to the limits of exhaustion for the sake of exploring. From staying with strangers in AirBnBs and learning to trust other travelers in hostels, I had to grow comfortable with the fact I would be traveling in countries where I had not visited before, with no Internet for Google maps, staying with strangers and knowing I would have to eat alone on many occasions. That last part was the most terrifying part of traveling alone.

During those two weeks, I found out so much about myself. I discovered I love to use paper maps as opposed to directions on a phone. I think it is a skill people have taken for granted. I confirmed that I despised eating alone. The reason for that is because I see experiences like study abroad as experiences that need to be shared together. Shared experiences give you another perspective on what you did. Most importantly, though, I discovered I could successfully make it through two weeks in four different countries, learn something from each country and feel more liberated to do it again.

Though I was traveling, my heart remained in Clermont-Ferrand. I missed the quirks of a small, modernized French city. From sitting at a bar and having a drink with friends while speaking French to the occasional cross-examination from a local because I looked different, I realized I began to understand some distinguishing characteristics between French and American society. I consider

the pace of life in America a hectic, results-oriented one. In France, many people, particularly students, sit and talk to their friends at a café or they go to the park and just relax.

Little by little, I chipped away at the frustration that took hold of me at the beginning of my stay in France. I overcame my insecurities of pondering the consequences of “what ifs” and I just did. I let myself worry about what could have happened AFTER I took action. Granted, I never did anything questionable, but I had held myself back because I was too scared of the consequences.

The highlight of my study abroad was when I went paragliding on the day after finals. This, like so much during my stay, did not come without its own problems. My friends and I had previously scheduled three different days to paraglide off the volcano, Puy-de-Dôme. Each time, it was canceled due to unfavorable weather. Finally, three days before I was to leave Clermont, paragliding worked out.

Persistence. That is all it took for me to make my experience in Clermont one I will never forget. I think about Clermont almost every day. I made mistakes, but I learned from each of them. I found a lesson in everything I did. I put in effort to make friends and memories. I almost gave up after those first two weeks, but I am glad I did not.



7 [PERSPECTIVE -  
A PHOTO ESSAY]

**ZEESHAN  
MALIK**

**College Degree Program:** International and Area Studies  
**Study Abroad Program:** Hungary

*"Studying abroad in Hungary was not just another trip abroad, but it was a chance for me to discover a whole new world, and thereby discover myself."*

**BUDA HILL  
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY  
OLYMPIC PRIDE**

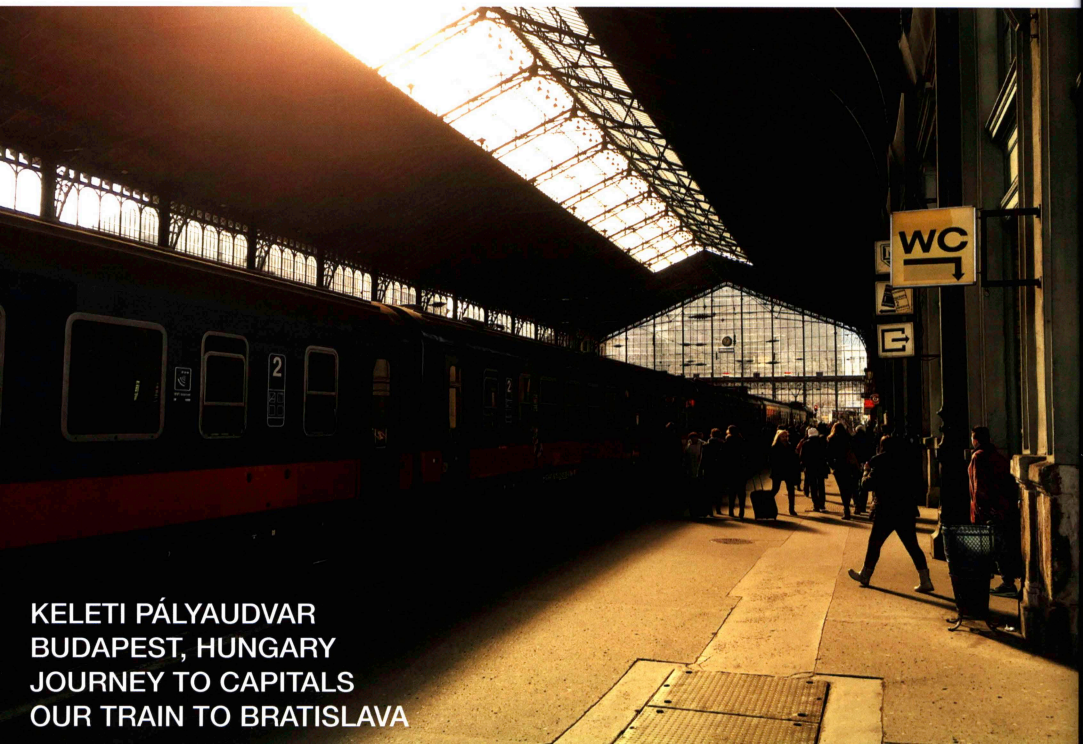




SZÉCHENYI CHAIN BRIDGE - BUDAPEST, HUNGARY



**DIÓSJENŐ, HUNGARY  
TRADITIONAL HUNGARIAN BREAKFAST**



**KELETI PÁLYAUDVAR  
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY  
JOURNEY TO CAPITALS  
OUR TRAIN TO BRATISLAVA**





ANYONE FOR THE TROLLEY?  
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

**KEBAB MENÜ**  
1 050 FT  
NAGY KEBAB MENÜ  
1 450 FT

KEBAB MENÜ  
1 050 FT  
DÖNER KEBAB  
850 FT  
EXTRA NÖGELI 1 150 FT

**DÜRÜM MENÜ**  
1 000 FT  
NAGY DÜRÜM MENÜ  
1 200 FT

DÜRÜM MENÜ  
1 000 FT  
DÜRÜM MENÜ NAGY  
1 200 FT

**CSALÁDI MENÜ**  
1 550 FT  
2 350 FT  
2 500 FT

CSALÁDI MENÜ  
1 550 FT  
CSALÁDI MENÜ 2 350 FT  
EXTRA CSALÁDI MENÜ 2 500 FT

**KEBAB TÁL MENÜ**  
1 550 FT

KEBAB TÁL 1 TÖB BARLAVA 1 TÁL  
1 550 FT

**DÖNER BOX**  
850 FT  
1 000 FT  
1 300 FT

**PIZZA MENÜ**  
590 FT  
890 FT  
990 FT  
1 490 FT

PIZZASZELET 1 ITAL 590 FT  
PAROS PIZZA MENÜ 790 FT  
EXTRA PIZZA MENÜ 890 FT  
EXTRA PIZZA MENÜ 990 FT  
SZUPER PIZZASZELET MENÜ 1 490 FT

**PIDE MENÜ**  
750 FT  
EXTRA PIDE MENÜ 990 FT

**MENÜKÖZ  
VÁLASZTHATÓ  
ITALOK**

SÜLT  
TEJESÍTÉS  
390 FT-os

BARLAVA  
250 FT

OSZLÓ  
PALACINTSA  
450 FT-os

**SALÁTA MENÜ**  
790 FT



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BUDAPEST, HUNGARY**



**THE ROYAL PALACE OF VISEGRÁD  
VISEGRÁD, HUNGARY**





A FAIRY TALE AT PLAY

# BUDAPEST CASTLE



THE SEAT OF AN EMPIRE



**ESZTERGOM BAZILIKA  
VIEW FROM THE SLOVAKIAN BORDER**



**HŐSÖK TERE (HEROES SQUARE)  
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY**





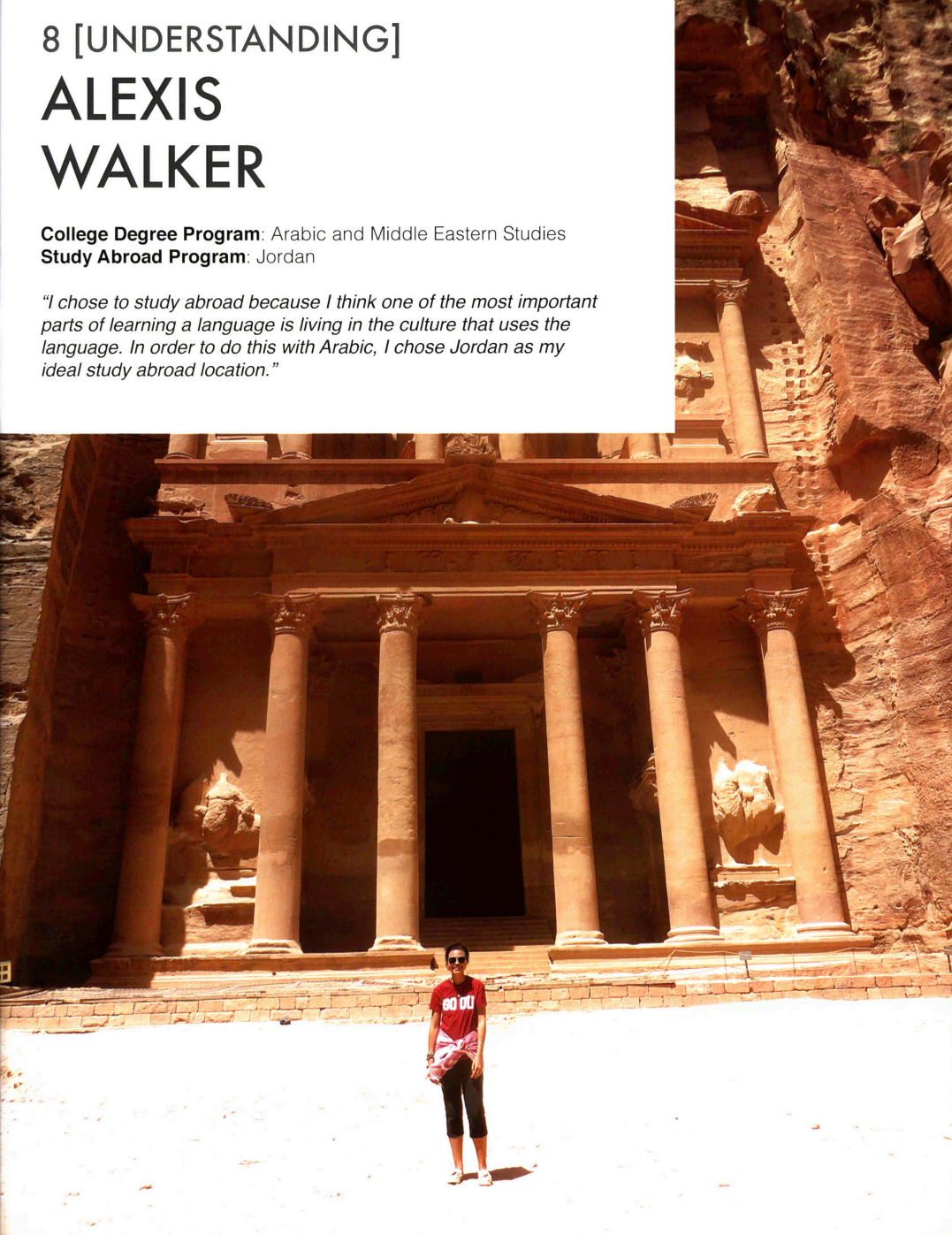
## 8 [UNDERSTANDING]

# ALEXIS WALKER

**College Degree Program:** Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies

**Study Abroad Program:** Jordan

*"I chose to study abroad because I think one of the most important parts of learning a language is living in the culture that uses the language. In order to do this with Arabic, I chose Jordan as my ideal study abroad location."*



I was given the amazing opportunity to study abroad in Amman, Jordan, last summer. It was my first trip out of the country, if you do not count a cruise to the Caribbean I took when I was around 10 (I have found most people do not). I was nervous and feeling a bit out of my element, considering that I am not exactly what anyone would refer to as adventurous. It is not that I do not enjoy adventure per se, but it is more that I am the kind of person who waits for the little walk sign guy to light up before I even think of crossing the street. I have been studying Arabic and Middle Eastern studies for the past three years. Luckily, studying these subjects has ended up providing me with the key I needed to unlock my adventurous side and allow me to immensely enjoy my time in Jordan. This key happened to be one of understanding; understanding the culture and understanding the language when studying abroad.

As one might expect, the culture in Jordan is vastly different than the culture in the United States. Understanding these differences was essential in every interaction that I had in Jordan. When I was in Wadi Rum, a giant red desert in southern Jordan, I committed one of my first cultural faux pas. We were told since the area was more touristy, we were allowed to wear shorts. Now,

after wearing long pants and skirts in 100-degree heat for a couple of weeks, I was fairly ready to take advantage of this opportunity. After changing into shorts, I noticed that, while appropriate in the United States, the shorts I had brought might not fit in culturally in Jordan. I made my way to one

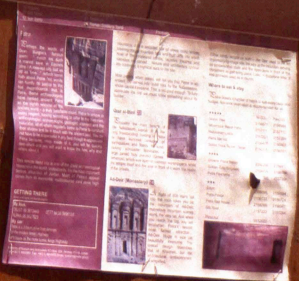
**BEING IN  
JORDAN IS  
SOMETHING  
I WILL NEVER  
FORGET AND  
I HOPE TO GO  
BACK SOMEDAY  
SOON.**





THE BEST  
COFFEE  
IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST  
RECOMMENDED  
FROM  
AUSTRALIA.  
TRY YOUR  
Coffee

VIVE JORDANIA



of our guides and asked her if my shorts would be alright. She said when they said shorts, they meant knee length and mine were too short. I completely understood where she was coming from so I immediately went back to my tent and changed into a pair of pants. After I came back, the guide thanked me for being conscious of the culture. Understanding that even casual dress expectations were different culturally saved me from offending our hosts in the Bedouin camp.

Language was also an essential element when it came to understanding. Consciously, I knew that I would need to use my Arabic while living in Jordan, but unconsciously I felt like I might have been expecting people to communicate telepathically. Obviously, that did not happen and I was thrown into situations where my understanding of the Arabic language became necessary. One of my favorite memories came from a situation where a misunderstanding became an understanding of the beauty of people. I was sitting in the back of a taxi and my friend was up front with the taxi driver. The driver was trying to say something to both of us. I was at a slightly higher level of Arabic than my friend, but grammatically, I was stuck. I believed the driver was trying to say that Muslims, Christians and Jews were always fighting and would never get along. However, when I asked him if that is what he was saying, he emphatically shook his head no. The next thing we knew, he had called a friend who spoke both Arabic and English. After talking on the phone with the friend, we realized he was saying that no matter if you are a Christian, a Muslim or a Jew you are still the same - people who, despite the fighting, believe in something bigger than themselves. Just having that extra bit of understanding changed a taxi ride into something profound and beautiful.

Being in Jordan is something I will never forget and I hope to go back someday soon. Understanding the culture and the language made me really appreciate the opportunity that I had been given by the University of Oklahoma. The Middle East is an area that is widely misunderstood and stereotyped, but going there with an eye towards understanding allowed me to fully experience its beauty and uniqueness firsthand.



# BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY

Visit the Education Abroad office at the University of Oklahoma to speak with an advisor and begin planning your study abroad experience. Study Abroad 101 sessions are held throughout the academic year. OU offers many study abroad opportunities including a variety of programs at our centers in Arezzo, Italy; Puebla, Mexico; and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

OU also offers summer Journey programs across the globe led by OU professors with linguistic, historical or political expertise in the given area. The cost of such programs is generously subsidized by multiple scholarship options, including the Presidential International Travel Fellowship, which OU President David Boren created to make international travel and study abroad opportunities available to more students.

Go to [studyabroad.ou.edu](https://studyabroad.ou.edu) to begin your journey!





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- Derek Nguyen - 14-17
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