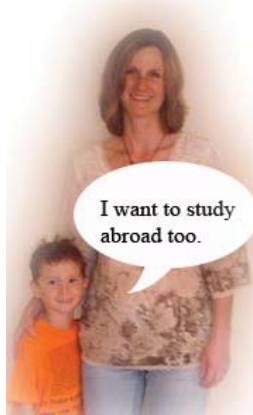


Where will you go?

FALL 2007  
EDITION

# Eastern Illinois University STUDY ABROAD NEWSLETTER

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Wendy Williamson  
and Leo (Son)

Every time I travel abroad, I learn something interesting about another culture, I realize something profound about life, and I glean something new from myself.

This past September, I visited Germany for the first time in my life. Even though I have a few German friends that are very warm and friendly, I had never perceived Germany to be a warm and friendly place. This is probably because the first thing I ever learned about Germany, as a country, was that it was once run by Adolph Hitler, leader of the Holocaust which resulted in the killing of somewhere around six million Jews during my grandparents' generation. Consequently, I always thought Germany (as a nation) would be militant, reserved, and maybe a little cold.

I learned that I was way off track with my understanding of the people, and my sense of direction in the country, when I tried to take an international train to Hamburg, Germany, and part of my German route was shut down for repairs. While I was scheduled to only change trains about 4 times, I ended up changing trains about 6 times; connecting in a few cities I didn't plan on visiting and taking a bus through part of the process. Thankfully, I'm a seasoned traveler, and only had one piece of small luggage to carry besides my laptop, so it all worked out in the end with a lot of help from friendly German people along the way. All of this, and I didn't speak more than 5 words of German; although, I really want to learn to speak it now!

It was during this trip when I realized that life is full of turns and surprises, but always works out in the end. The best thing anyone can bring on any journey that involves planes or trains is a light suitcase, a lot of patience, and extra time and money for unexpected surprises. Being a person who likes to plan everything, these unexpected surprises have been good for me to let go and see things as a traveler rather than a tourist.

"The traveler sees what he sees. The tourist sees what he has come to see." ~G.K. Chesterton



Smart Police Car in Hamburg, Germany

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EIU student, Rowdy Fredrikson, studying abroad in Vaxjo, Sweden

## MEMORIES ABROAD *By Alana Toolie*

Today, or yesterday, shall I say, I left the best place I've ever been in my life...Cape Town, South Africa. I didn't want to leave; in fact, it wasn't until my mom called me on my cell phone at the airport that I started feeling true excitement about going home.

As I was boarding the plane, I thought about some amazing people that I met, and some amazing people that met me. I said goodbye to my friend Karli, and that was awkward; I will miss her. I said goodbye to Nora, and we finally found solid ground.

Before I knew it, I was on the plane, and Africa was behind me. In front of my seat was a built-in computer monitor, and on it was a map. For the first time in 5 months I saw myself between Africa and home, torn between the two. Even departing, I was with Africa, and Africa was with me.

Adrienne, Karli, Phomi, Shumi, Ida, Lungi, Yonta, Rudo, Kay, and Dionne are all individuals who from the first day I met, I felt were all exceptional young people. It's hard to believe these are the people who have taught me so much about myself,

about life, about everything. It suddenly occurred to me that I am going home. I'm in Frankfurt Germany, I'm 21, I'm different, I'm a senior, I'm new, I'm excited...I'm "PROUDLY SOUTH AFRICAN"!

When it was time for me to catch my connecting flight, I finally saw people like me, black people. I was the only one on the Lufthansa flight from Cape Town to Frankfurt. I think a lot of people are going to Chicago, which is a non-stop flight. These five months I will never, ever, forget!



Alana on Safari in Africa.

When I came "home," my American way of life appeared different, and foreign, almost like I was a citizen of my host country, and came to America to study abroad. Nonetheless, I seemed to focus on what happened when I was abroad, instead of on what happened when I came home.

Although the transition back to the USA was difficult, I seldom talked about it. Now that I've readjusted to my American way of life, I sometimes forget about those moments of epiphany. On occasion, I remember them again, and think about how they are impacting my present and future.

I am thankful for the resurfacing of those lessons learned in Cape Town. It is the intangible memories that are the most valuable, and can truly be named eternal keepsakes. My eternal keepsakes came from my study abroad experience, I hope to hold on to them for the rest of my life.



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT *By Farhan Aziz*

Tia Micks, Elementary Education Major and Sophomore, studied abroad Spring 2007 at Vaxjo University in Sweden. Tia decided to study abroad the second semester of her freshmen year to expand her horizons. Because of special scholarship she received, she went tuition-free. The Office of Study Abroad (OSA) interviewed Tia about her experience, and this is what she said...

**How did you decide on Vaxjo, Sweden?** I decided on Vaxjo, Sweden for a couple of reasons. It was nice that the majority of the population spoke English while at the same time I was able to learn and take classes in Swedish. It was also suggested by someone working in the study abroad office, and I was able to get a scholarship for free tuition.

**What anxieties did you have before you went on your trip?** I had so much excitement it was hard to worry about anything, my main concern was getting homesick. Especially being a freshman at Eastern, I was concerned that I might not be ready. However, there were always so many things to do and so much to explore and people to meet. I really didn't have time to miss home too much.

**How were the classes? More challenging or less challenging?** The classes were a lot different than what I was typically used to. The way they are set up took a while for me to get used to but when I figured out how my schedule worked, I actually preferred that way of doing things compared to ours. I thought it was a laid back atmosphere and school was very important. However, I didn't feel too much stress. There were always retakes for tests if you needed.

**Do you have any advice for somebody who is thinking about studying abroad?**

I noticed a lot of the exchange students hung around together which is nice, and I was friends with them too, but I would suggest to really getting to know people native to where you are. You can really learn a lot and just get to know as many people as you can because they are willing to help you and give you tips which will come in handy for classes, traveling, site seeing, grocery shopping, pretty much everything you do abroad.

**Any favorite memories you would like to share?** While in Sweden, I traveled north to Kiruna where the famous Ice Hotel

is located. It was a 24-hour train ride and I only stayed one night. It was totally worth it though. The hotel is made entirely from ice and snow and they have to rebuild it every year after it melts in the summer time. It was such an amazing thing to experience such as sleeping on a bed of ice, in animal skins, and ice sculptures surrounding me. I have never seen snow so deep or snow flakes so big. It was incredible.



EIU Student Tia Micks in Sweden during Spring 2007

## FILM REVIEW: PAN'S LABYRINTH *By Phil Sasser*

As a multi-billion dollar industry, it is easy to see how film has become the most common form of entertainment in the world and an insight to many perspectives on a plethora of topics. As college students, we are overcome with joy at the thought of Brad Pitt fighting with his shirt off or Cameron Diaz overcoming comedic obstacles to find her one true love, however, it is time to learn that there are fantastic films out there that do not succumb to the 'Hollywood' theme of famous actors and generalized plots. These films can be found, not just in America, but all over the world. When given the chance, international or foreign films are just as compelling as Hollywood. Even without a 'big Hollywood name actor/actress' carrying the movie, a great amount of entertainment can be found in films from all over the world.

These foreign films are gaining much recognition and are even competing for Academy Awards. Last year, the awards

for Best Achievement in Cinematography, Best Achievement in Makeup, and Best Achievement in Art Direction were all given to a foreign film: Pan's Labyrinth. This film was also nominated for another 3 awards, including Best Original Screenplay. The film was written by Guillermo del Toro, an internationally acclaimed Director, Writer, and Producer (Hellboy, Blade II, Mimic).

Pan's Labyrinth is a drama-fantasy, set in Spain, 1944. Ofelia, a pre-teen girl, is taken by her mother to live with her new step-father, a corrupt Captain of the Spanish Army. The film is set just after the Spanish Civil War, with revolutionaries left hiding deep within the forests. Ofelia's step-father, Captain Vidal, is in charge of 'disposing' of these revolutionaries. Ofelia wanders into the labyrinth that is next to her home and meets a faun. The faun tells her she is a princess and he has been waiting for her return. In order to become a princess again, Ofelia must complete 3 tasks given by

the faun. The film then follows Ofelia as she completes her tasks, and does so with amazing cinematographic effects that are visually outstanding.

Ofelia's encounters with the faun are intertwined with the struggles that are taking place with her pregnant mother, Captain Vidal, and the revolutionaries. This film gives an incredible look at how the fantasy and reality can become so involved that is impossible to tell them apart.

Pan's Labyrinth is a great example of how a foreign film can have just as big of an impact on audiences as a Hollywood film. This film gives a good sense of the history of Spain after the Spanish Civil War and also a fantasy world that adults will enjoy.

What makes this film even more impressive is that it does not star any famous actors, and requires the reading of subtitles, unless you can speak Spanish. Pan's Labyrinth is a film that when given the chance, can compete with the very best.

## INSTITUTION HIGHLIGHT SOGANG UNIVERSITY

*By Justin Lopez*



Seoul, South Korea may not be the first location you think of when you decide to study abroad. But why is that true? As an EIU student, you can take advantage of an amazing opportunity to study at Sogang University, an extremely affordable, highly regarded institution.

You may be wondering, "This all sounds great, but how can you take classes in South Korea without being knowledgeable about the Korean language?" No worries, with over twenty subjects and more than eighty-eight different types of courses all taught in English, the options of study are extremely

varied. Courses like Popular Music in American Culture, Islamic Religion Tradition and Culture, and Understanding of Modern Business are just a few examples of the different types of courses taught in English that are available to all EIU students.

Besides taking courses, what else is there to do in Seoul? Sogang offers many unique opportunities to Study Abroad students.

**Taekwondo:** Through training, students will overcome their inner weakness and develop their spirit. Students acquire not only the techniques but also the inner strength that the art emphasizes.

**Samulnori:** Samulnori is a type of music that consists of only these 4 musical instruments: Janggu, Kwaenggwari, Buk, and Jing. Samulnori originated in Nongak to pray for good harvests. Students learn how to play this type of music and how to find Korean spirit inside traditional rhythm.

**Calligraphy:** Students can learn the art of writing Korean characters and letters with a specially designed brush and ink.

Affordability is of course, always an issue. The Office of Study Abroad does everything it can to keep costs down. One great aspect of Sogang is that it is part of the Exchange agreement with EIU, which means you pay EIU the tuition and fees and everything else is paid to Sogang. This makes it a lot more affordable than studying in Korea on a non-partner program.

This exchange program works well for the general education credit and the following majors: Business, Economics, English, Political Science, and Physics.



## BEYOND YOUR HOST-COUNTRY

*By Michelle Lashely*

There are many factors to consider when deciding which study abroad program is right for you: cost, courses and the often overlooked tourist, local attractions. Since study abroad promotes the joyous union between work and play, I have set about to write an article highlighting some various attractions of western European countries.

If you travel to Europe, you are a plane or train ride away from mega-urban areas filled with theatres, clubs and museums. Each location heralds hundreds of historical attractions and young adult hot-spots. All of the highlighted countries can easily be traveled to and from, once you are centrally located.

When in Great Britain... Explore the pub culture of London, which doesn't mean drinking beer to excess. Sit back, relax and soak up the eccentricities of the people and culture around you. Enrich your mind by venturing to one of the numerous theatres and museums that line the streets of London proper. Get your postcard pictures from the London Eye. Take a Dramamine and experience London by water in a boat ride up and down the Thames.

Go east and soak up the Roman hot-springs bath in Bath. Experience the ultimate spa experience by taking a dip in the ancient waters at Thermae Bath Spa. Take a pilgrimage to Canterbury, and tour the Canterbury Cathedral historically famous in its own right but, publicly made famous by Geoffrey Chaucer in the book Canterbury Tales. Become a bread maker in Oxford or a professional punter (not a football punter) in Cambridge.

Go north to Liverpool and have your own magical mystery tour visiting the hometown of the Beatles.

Go further north still to Edinburgh, Scotland buy a kilt, walk the Royal mile from Edinburgh Castle to Holyrood House, or you can brave the unknown and try a bit of Haggis ... after all, when in Scotland!

Get inexpensive tickets via Flybe or Ryanair and jaunt over to Northern Ireland. While in Belfast City take a Memory Lane Tour and see where the Titanic was built, look at the murals dedicated to the Irish Troubles or travel north to County Antrim. In County Antrim visit the Giant Causeway. This large stretch of staircase-shaped rocks is the result of cooled lava from volcanic eruptions that took place over 65 million years ago. Or, visit Bushmills Distillery to get a present for your dad, older brother or uncle!

Once back in England, go south to Portsmouth and take the Brittany Ferries to Normandy, France and walk along the D-Day beaches, visit the numerous museums dedicated to the American, British and Canadian forces that liberated France. Or for those artists, go to Giverny and visit Claude Monet's House and gardens. To get your work out, try walking up the hundreds of steps, which lead to the 1,000 year old gothic Abbaye du Mont Saint Michel.

If the Parisian joie de vie is on your itinerary, take the Chunnel from London to Paris to see Notre Dame de Paris, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the Arc de Triomphe, the underworld of the Catacombs, Versailles, Sacré Coeur, the Moulin Rouge, Montmatre and the list could go on.

Use your International Student Identity Card and travel from Paris to Germany via Euro-rail or Rail Europe. When in Germany visit the capital Berlin. Touch the remains of the Berlin Wall, walk through the Brandenburg Tor and visit a Starbucks or you can visit the Reichstag (the parliament building of Germany). Visit what remains of Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, which was damaged during World War II bombings of Berlin, and serves as a symbol of the destruction of war.

Get a "ticket to ride" to Hamburg where the Beatles started their career. Visit the Cologne Cathedral, which boasts of being one of the finest church buildings in the Christian world. Another city of attraction in Germany is Munich. Visit the internationally famous Hofbräuhaus Beer Hall. You could also visit the BMW headquarters and museum. There you will learn the history of BMW as well as meander through the displays of BMW models.

Hop on a train or "hire a car" and you can take a trip to the Alps to visit Neuschwanstein Castle, the fairytale castle of King Ludwig II. Don't forget to visit the home of the Von Trappe Family Singers, in Salzburg, Austria. For a serious, reflective adventure visit the some concentration camps, which are still strewn throughout Germany.

The tourist attractions in these countries are endless. There is something for everyone—the nerdy historian, the architect, the artist, the musician and the business person. So, while picking out an institution who will accommodate your academic needs do not forget to choose a place that will allow you to experience the culture outside the classroom.



### *Office of Study Abroad*

Wendy Williamson, Director  
Farhan Aziz, Coordinator  
Michelle Lashley, Graduate Assist.  
Justin Lopez, Peer Advisor  
Phil Sasser, Peer Advisor  
Alana Toolie, Peer Advisor  
Stacey Eyman, Office Assistant

1207 Blair Hall  
Eastern Illinois University  
600 Lincoln Ave.  
Charleston, IL 61920  
Phone: (217) 581-7267  
Email: [goabroad@eiu.edu](mailto:goabroad@eiu.edu)  
<http://www.eiu.edu/~edabroad/>

# Study Abroad



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