

Education Abroad Returnees of the Month March 2018

Frederick Washington

1st year, Pre-Commerce

UVA London First: Global Cultures in a World City, Fall 2017

The inaugural UVA London First program launched in Fall 2017. This program provides a cohort of incoming first year students the unique opportunity to spend their first semester as UVA students studying abroad in London. Fall 2018 will see a new group of first years in London, as well as the launch of UVA Shanghai First: Globalization in a Chinese Setting.



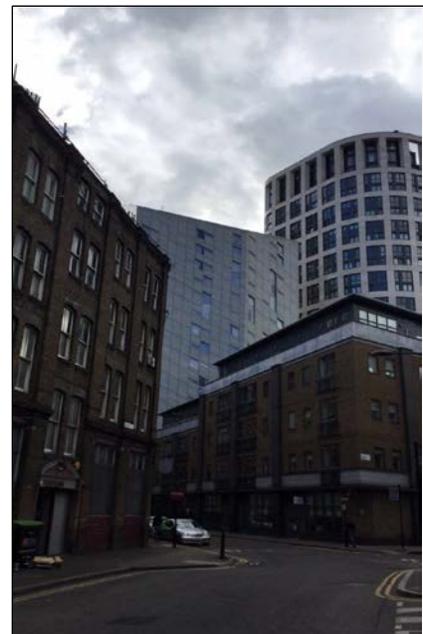
Most interesting class and why? Did you take classes in connection to your major or electives?

My most interesting class was “Global Cultures in a World City” taught by professor Michael Levenson. All of the students in UVALF (UVA London First) took this engagement and another as part of the program, along with three classes of their choice offered by Regents University. Professor Levenson enabled students to contribute their own perspectives and experiences to the class discussions, creating an environment in which students could better understand the readings by making connections with authors, characters, real-life situations, etc. The class was much more discussion-based with students presenting ideas to one another, rather than listening to lecture from a professor, which was a lot more preferable for me at 10am on Mondays and Wednesdays. This class, however, doesn’t really coincide with my major. I took two politics classes and a religion class from the Regents University

selection. As a pre-comm student on the global commerce track, none of the classes that I had to choose from counted as prerequisites for comm school. However, this shouldn’t discourage any pre-comm students from joining the program. You can still cover all of your comm-school prerequisites in following semesters, as I along with other UVALF alumni are doing right now.

How was education abroad different than anticipated?

The UVA London First program was actually easier to adjust to than I anticipated. Starting off your college career in a vast, thriving city, that you actually want to get lost in, is no ordinary experience. I didn’t go into the program with any particular expectations; you kind of don’t really know what to expect, even if you have been abroad before.



I would say the experience was different than I anticipated in the aspect of cultural immersion. I didn't expect to interact with Londoners as much as I did, and you can learn so much from people and their culture through conversation. There are just certain things that you can't learn from the internet or a book; you really just have to meet natives in their environment, and listen to perspectives and maybe alter your own perspective based on what you may hear. I just didn't expect to learn more outside of the classroom than I did inside, and that's no insult to the classes- they were amazing.



Number one way the experience contributed to your growth

The number one way the experience contributed to my growth was that it really taught me responsibility. Whether exploring the city or taking a weekend trip to Budapest, for example, I really had to be responsible. Being aware of my surroundings, knowing how to conduct myself in different situations, and successfully navigating my way through Europe were responsibilities that I had to take on for myself.

Favorite local hangout, and why?

My favorite local hangout had to be the Globe. The Globe is a pub that's right around the corner from Regents University, on Marylebone Road. It was generally the place where I would meet up

with friends and begin my night. There are so many pubs in London, but the Globe had a really nice vibe. It was busy on Friday nights with a constant buzz of conversation throughout. It was an amazing place to meet people and get to know them.

Most interesting/delicious cuisine tried

British cuisine doesn't have a particularly high reputation, but I would say that I really enjoyed an evening of mince pies with coffee. This may not count as food food, but it was definitely a food highlight while in London..

Most meaningful experience abroad

My most meaningful experience while abroad was a weekend trip that I took to Morocco. Basically, there were long layovers on the way there and back, so to sum it up, a friend and I flew from London to Marseille, France, on an early Friday morning and spent the day in Marseille. That night we flew from Marseille to Fes, Morocco, and spent the night in Fes. We stayed in Fes Friday and Saturday night. Sunday morning, we flew to Munich, Germany, and spent the night. Monday morning we flew from Munich back to London, arriving at campus

just in time for our 10am class. We spent 3 days in 3 different countries. This experience is the most meaningful because I was able to see so many different cultures, and ways that people interact, in such a small period of time. I was able to develop organizational skills: how I was going to get where, when, and what I would do with the time I was given. I was able to interact with people in their native land, and learn so much from them. You can imagine how tiring a weekend like this may have been, but honestly, the experience was way too extraordinary to let being tired deter me from having an amazing time. An experience like that may sound overwhelming to some, but those are the types of opportunities that are important to capitalize on while abroad.

Sum up the experience in three words:

Extraordinary, mind-opening, lit

Anything else to add?

There's a world out there that's not UVA, not Virginia, not the US. Get out there when you're given the opportunity. Whether you like your experience or not, there's so much to learn from it.



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