

IT University Travel Report 2021

Host University: Hanyang University, Seoul Campus

Study programme at IT University: Global Business Informatics (GBI), 5th semester

Exchange Period: Fall semester of 2021

(Tina Tu Trinh Nguyen, ting@itu.dk)

Feel free to write to me if you have any questions.



Your stay abroad

What was it like to study at [the university] (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?

Due to the current situation with Covid-19, almost all my courses were online, except for one which started out being online, but later became offline. The study life at Hanyang is different compared to ITU, at least compared to GBI. Attendance is mandatory and the grade system is based on a curve. Your grades are based on attendance, participation, midterm, weekly assignments, and the exams (however, it varies from courses whether there are assignments, exams etc.) Because participation plays a role in the grades, the lectures are much more interactive compared to ITU (or maybe its just compared to GBI), as students are participating much more. Given that there was Covid-19, the social life on campus was not there, it was not possible to live at the dorms either, but the buddy program held some online events. Because of Covid, you have to push yourself to be social – a good idea is through the places you live, e.g by living in shared houses. In the beginning the government only allowed 4 people to be together, but they loosened up a bit towards the end.

Courses

I applied for the *division of international studies* and got the below courses. There are different rounds of application for the courses, but do not be stressed if you do not get all courses at the first round. I only got one in the first round but ended up with five courses in the end. One of the courses that I chose was not possible to get, so I also applied for a pre-approval of the new one in the beginning of the semester, and got it approved by ITU. If it is urgent, and ITU do not respond right away, make your classmates from DK call them, and ask them to respond to it.

Hanyang University	IT University of Copenhagen
IT, Globalization and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- International Business- International Organizations
IT-enabled Supply Chain Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Digital Strategy
Electives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Debate and argumentation- Business and environmental ethics

International business: The international business class covered every possible aspect within international business. Every week we had to read one chapter (but there is no need for this) and did weekly assignments, which was 5-6 questions from the book. There was a midterm and exam – basically just had to do some financial analysis, SWOT etc. on a company. The teacher was Korean, and it was a bit difficult to understand him. This was not an interactive course. It was just the teacher reading through the slides, which was why it was a boring class.

International organizations: This course as the title indicate is about different organizations, such as UNICEF, UN, EU etc., and their history and their function. This professor is Danish and spoke great English. There was a midterm (a quiz with 100 questions), an exam, and a group presentation. He has a lot on his slides, and it gets really heavy to listen to. If you are into IO's then it will be nice, but to me this was a boring class, too.

Digital strategy: This was one of my favorite classes. It was divided into two parts: half of the semester included the teacher talking about different topics related to digital strategy, the other half of the semester included different CEO's/Managers from various companies, such as IKEA, Erricson-LG, SSG, Schneider-Electrics, who came and held a presentation about their focus on digital strategy. Our exam and midterm were focused on IKEA, and the reports were handed to the CEO of IKEA Korea as well. The professor is Korean but spoke perfect English because he came from the US. The professor is an adjunct, so he owns his own company besides being a professor, thus he might be a bit busy to respond to your emails right away. A very easy course to get a good grade in.

Debate and argumentation: This demanded a lot of participation, as I had to participate in four debates(1 solo debate, and 3 debates with one or two people), provide feedback to other's debate, and provide speaker feedback. It was a really good way to practice public speaking and how to debate on the spot (you only know the topic prior to class, and have made research on that, the statement will first be announced in the debate). Because of the high participation, there was no exam or midterm, but 4 small quizzes during the course. Subjects that I had to debate on was: advocate for sex-robots in South Korea, advocate against increasing financial incentives to tackle Korea's demographic crisis, advocate against prohibiting creationism in science classes in schools, and advocate for polygamy. The professor is from Canada and spoke perfectly English.

Business ethics and environmental issues: This course was the most interesting, as it addressed relevant issues in today's world (climate change, surveillance capitalism etc.) It was an interactive course, where we talked about the rights and wrongs related to different issues, e.g should we ban smoking when in fact it is bad for your health? And if so, should not we ban junk food then? We worked in a group to write a 15 pages report, which we had to present, but there was no final exam or midterm, but there were 3-4 quizzes during the course. It's the same professor from the debate and argumentation course.

In overall, the courses are more demanding in terms of time spent on them, e.g. weekly assignments, preparations etc., but the courses were not difficult at all. The only really demanding was debate, the rest you did not really have to prepare for.

Motivation

Originally, I had applied to go to Singapore, but it got cancelled rather late. But because of Covid, I was eager to go abroad and experience something else. My motivation was in general to experience the work ethic and culture in the developed parts of Asia, and because Hanyang was one of the only one with a late deadline, I managed to apply to this school.

I was surprised by the low level of English that people spoke in the stores and restaurants, so I recommend getting to know some Korean. I did not attend any Korean classes, but I still managed. Of course, everything is possible with a translator. The safety in Korea is really high, so you feel very comfortable. An example is, that if you were in a café, you could leave your laptop etc. on the table when going to the toilet. My Korean buddy and her friend even left their computers at one café, and then went to another café nearby to get some dinner, and when they got back, their things were still there. Let alone the Koreans are very polite and kind.

Personally and academically gains

GBI is a bit meh when it comes to the cultural aspects, and despite that the course language is English, everyone is Danish, so its not like the English language is being used that much. So, both personally and academically I was exposed to more English which only made my English capabilities stronger. Along with that, you meet many different people and it is a great opportunity to hands on learn about their cultures as well. A gain from being abroad and away from home is that you can and should get this just-do-it attitude, no one's know you, so do not shy away from exploring. Also, doing things alone results in good and maybe better (culture wise) experiences as well: my friend went to Jeju island by herself, she got lost on where to start on her hike, a Korean couple in a car saw her, asked if she needed help, they went together on the hike, all conversations were through translate, and she ended up being set up to have lunch with one of their nieces in Seoul. This is only one of many examples on how you get a different perspective on things when going abroad. Academically, I have learned to work with other people from different backgrounds, e.g in one class we were 8-9 people in one group.

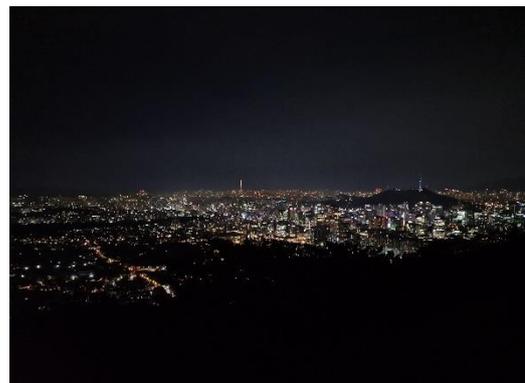
Arranging your stay

I stayed at H-stay because the place looked decent, and I wrote to someone from another travel report about it. If you want to stay there, opt for the deluxe rooms. In my standard room, I was not able to control heating and A/C. On each floor there is a kitchen, and for those living in the deluxe rooms they can use the bigger kitchen on the first floor, where there are a sofa and tv as well. For those living in the standards, they were only allowed to sit in the sofa, but they could not use the kitchen table our sit on the chairs, but I guess it depends on the behavior of those living there as well.

For arranging the stay, I use the other travel reports here, the Hanyang Newsletter, and just the internet.

Expenses and Financing

Expenses included flight ticket, vaccines, insurance, accommodation and then just food, clothes, and diverse stuff. In general, the price level is lower in South Korea compared to Denmark. However, groceries, especially fruits and such, are expensive. The place I stayed at, we had to pay for our rent in cash. Although there are ATM's to withdraw money from in the convenience store, I will recommend doing it at different bank branches instead, as the fee is lower, and it is possible to withdraw a higher amount. Because I only had a few months to prepare to get to South Korea, I did not take the time to apply for scholarships. But look at legatbogen.dk, they have a lot of scholarships.



And remember to apply for the Travel Pool at ITU.

Recommendations for other students

If you are into hiking, I highly recommend taking advantage of that while in South Korea. They have some of the greatest mountains over there. There is a stamp-book for mountains in Seoul that you can get at the tourist information centers as well. I recommend downloading the app 'Meet-up' and search for Climbing In Korea. They schedule different events, such as mountain-trips where you can meet up with different people. For instance, they hosted a trip to DMZ (demilitarized zone between North and South Korea), which I participated in. It was completely worth it, and extremely cheap (60,000 won) for a two-day trip with hotel and sightseeing (surfing, DMZ, temple, food, transport to and from).



Bukhansan mountain



Suraksan mountain

If you are spending a lot of money (mostly 30,000+ won) on e.g. shopping or groceries or else, you can ask for a Global Tax Refund when buying stuff at the stores. You just need to remember to bring your passport for it.

Remember to get a credit card (!!). I only had my debit card, and there were a lot of times, where it was not possible to use my card, or where it was denied.

Apply for the Buddy program! A really great way to know a local Korean. I was really lucky with my buddy, and we became really good friends, to the extent that her mom drove me to the airport.

If you need space in your suitcases, use vacuum seal!

After 2021, it is mandatory to pay for the Health Insurance, so you will get a bill every month, but do not pay them. If you are staying less than half a year, you can apply for the health insurance exemption.