IT University Travel Report

Host University: Georgia Institute of Technology

Study Programme: Digital Media and Design

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Exchange Agreement

Courses studied abroad:

LMC-3710 Principles of Interaction Design
LMC-2720 Principles of Visual Design
LMC-4813 Special topic: Mixed Reality Design
LMC-3314 Technologies of Representation

Exchange Period: Spring 2018

Your stay abroad

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

Personally, I really enjoyed my time at Georgia Tech. It has honestly been one of the best decisions I have made. Initially, I was hesitant about exchange in America, but the experience is really what you make it to be. Regarding my courses, I thoroughly enjoyed them all and would recommend them to anyone who wants to take a break from the more practical and theoretical courses at ITU, and want to endeavor into the more creative aspects of design. In each course, there was space and opportunity for me to play around creatively - this includes spending a lot of time in the Adobe programs - I have realized that this aspect of what digital design is something I enjoy and want to focus on implementing in future projects back at ITU. The LMC-2720 course is definitely the most creative out of the lot and definitely the most different to my current DMD program. In the beginning, it reminds you a lot of an art class, learning the basic principles of drawing, colour etc. But then the course moves towards more project based work - working with NGOs on poster designs and brand identity for other organizations. But as the title states, you have to have an interest in visual design. If you enjoy the back-end of a lot of projects, then this course is not for you.

In regards to the amount of work - the courses I chose gave me plenty of room to do well in each of the classes. On a weekly basis, the workload is completely different to ITU. There are expectations that you have something done for every class (the amount then depends on the class). LMC-3710 was a great course, the teacher was fantastic, but it was also very demanding. It was project-based, but there was expected progress for every class, and she will check up on it. LMC-3314 was the class that had the largest workload on a weekly basis, but completely manageable.

My final exams were all very simple and easy to manage, and I didn’t really feel that stressed. I think part of
that was due the fact that students final grades are based on work you do throughout your semester. Yes, the final exam can count for more, but if you don’t do well on it, then hopefully you’ve done better on other things. I think this is the aspect that stresses people out at Georgia Tech, especially in other degrees, because they have to do well on everything they do. However, if you take the courses I did, don’t stress. As long as you make an effort, then you will be fine. I was lucky, because I enjoyed all of my classes and the projects that I was doing.

Social
I thrived socially at Georgia Tech. I mostly credit this to living at the International House. In this dorm, you have your own room, but live in a house of 40 students, mixed between being exchange and full-time Georgia Tech students. It is a socially demanding place to live, so if you aren’t up for spending time with people 24/7, then find somewhere else. Living there was ideal, because I was surrounded by people who also wanted to get to know each other. Generally, Georgia Tech students (who I met from class), have their own things going on, so they don’t invest in relationships with exchange students, as they will be leaving in a semester. And since you won’t be taking classes with Freshman students, most Georgia Tech students already have their friends and don’t look for more. This is why I-house is important, because everyone who lives there, has a desire to meet people and wants to organize events and make sure they do things all the time. Also, they have committees (Film, music, sport, culture etc.), that have a large budget that has to be used on things - so they are forced to plan events. This means that you are provided with plenty of fun, socializing and free food.

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?

I always knew that I wanted to go on exchange during my studies. And I actually looked at Georgia Tech before I was accepted to ITU, the partnership was one of the reasons I chose to go here. ITU is quite a small university, and I wanted to see something new, meet new people, experience a culture and place that is different to Copenhagen and Denmark. Personally, I also really wanted to experience campus life. In this regard, Georgia Tech was the obvious choice. It is a huge university, has plenty of amenities and opportunities right in front of you. I would say that my experience exceeded my expectations, but I think it is largely due to my attitude going into it. I made sure that when I was at Tech, I wanted to make it what I had imagined. My focus was to have a great time, while studying some different subjects to what I am used to. I got to explore Atlanta, a surprisingly, vibrant city with so much culture. I spent a lot of time on campus during the day (which you do, especially with my schedule), exploring, eating, and enjoying campus (the CULC - Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, is my favorite building). And then I just met so many great people that made the experience what I wanted to be.

Please describe what you got out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?

Academically, I got to try courses that were very different from ITU. Not only were the courses different in their content, but we were taught in classrooms, with fewer students, with weekly assignments. The teaching method was refreshing to what I had gotten used to back at ITU, but it also did make you feel like you were back in high school. That is the great thing about universities in Denmark, they treat you like adults, which they lack in the US. I definitely think my courses have opened me up to the realization that I am a lot more creative than I thought, and I can apply that creativity wherever I want in future projects.

Personally, I made lifelong friends. On my Visa, after we finish our studies, I have 30 days to spend in the states before I leave. In this time, I planned a trip with people I had met on my exchange. I travelled around with them for a month, travelling across the US. It was the most amazing experience, I can go home saying I have seen so much more of the US that I had ever imagined.
**Arranging your stay**

**Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:**

It was a tedious process. There are a lot of things you have to keep track of before you can leave. This includes applying for courses (I had pre-approval of courses before I left, but they all changed and I had to reapply when I got to Tech), applying for a VISA, getting a TOEFL Test, booking flights, sorting accommodation, and searching for grants to help with the finances. Give yourself time to sort all of these things out, it’s not possible to wait until the last moment.

**What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?**

I spent a lot of time emailing back and forth with my SAP advisor who was in charge of the exchange process, and also my advisor at Georgia Tech.

**How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?**

We are given an extensive document from Georgia Tech, that describes all that needs to be done before you leave, and how you will do it - including applying for accommodation. In the document, they specifically mention the application process for I-house.

**Expenses and Financing**

**Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad**

It is quite expensive to live on-campus, but it is worth it in my opinion. Around 30-40 000 DKK were spent on accommodation for the entirety of the semester. And don’t expect it to be cheap, on-campus the prices are very similar to home. Also, the closest supermarket to Georgia Tech East Campus, is Publix, which reminded me of Føtex prices.

**Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?**

I applied for many grants and received a grant of 10 000 DKK from Karen & Olga Nybyes Fond ([http://www.nybyesfond.dk/](http://www.nybyesfond.dk/)). Also, remember to apply for ITU’s travel pool. Luckily, at Georgia Tech, tuition is paid, which saves a lot of money.

**Recommendations for other students:**

The best advice I can give, is to make sure to keep a balance between your studies and socialising, doing things that make you happy. Don’t get tricked into thinking that you can’t have both. Also, make sure to save some money and make an effort on finding grants - you want to have the funds to go experience. Additionally, Georgia Tech Campus has a lot of events and activities that go on at school - often they give free food and t-shirts - take advantage of this! You can go a week not having to pay for dinner, because the clubs give you free pizza.