Marc Southwell
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**Host University:** Georgia Institute of Technology.

**Study Programme at IT University:** Digital Media and Design

**Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad:** Exchange Agreement.

**Courses studied abroad:** Literature, Media and Culture + Computational Media.

**Exchange Period:** semester: Autumn. Year: 2013

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**Your stay abroad**

**What was it like to study at Georgia Tech (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?**

The choice of courses was a bit difficult, because once we arrived at GT, a lot of the courses we wanted, we weren’t eligible for. This can easily be fixed by updating which courses you’re eligible for, so you know, before you travel to America. With this said, I feel like I got in to some interesting courses, and I can see why the DMD-courses (at ITU) and the LMC-courses (Literature, media and communication, at GT) have a direct exchange program.

The academic level at GT was different to the level at ITU. At GT you have to study a lot to keep up, but if you do, you’re almost guaranteed to pass your course at the end of the semester. This worked out fine for me, since I knew with two months left that it was almost impossible for me to fail a class, so I could focus more on enjoying myself, then studying for the exams.

The Social life and Campus was greatly connected. Atlanta had its rough neighborhoods, so you could definitely tell that GT tried to make the campus as safe for students as possible. I never felt unsafe, so it clearly worked for me. Basically campus was a small community in the middle of Atlanta, and you could spend half a year, just walking around campus and talking to people, everyone was so friendly and outgoing.
What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?

Going abroad was my initial motivation for applying for ITU in the first place. I've always wanted to study in America, and ITU could offer me that. So it's actually been my motivation from the start, to apply for the exchange program. And it COMPLETELY met my expectations. The only bad thing was the process of applying and getting all the things ready for going. That was so tough and tiring, that I almost didn't go, so I hope in the future that this process can be re-evaluated.

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?

I feel like I learned a lot about being practical at GT. Instead of a theoretical approach, they were very aware of actually producing a product and having thoughts about how things are used in real life. I like this approach and have brought this home with me, to think about for all my future exams. Academically GT was not that concerned about what theorists said about certain stuff, it was more up to the individual student to have their own opinions and take a stand on different design terms.

Arranging your stay

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

It was, as mentioned, tough to arrange a lot of things before going to GT. Finding a place to live was hard as well, if I hadn't gotten into I-House I'm not sure where I would have ended, because you have to live on campus to get the full experience, and it was hard knowing where to apply for. But I think the price was fair and I-House turned out to be the best place to live as an exchange student.

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

Rikke Ilona Ustrup was of great help to me throughout the whole process.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

I was suggested to apply for living in I-House, and I got in through their website.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

The expenses were manageable with SU, but only because my tuition was paid for by ITU.

Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?
I apply for 10 scholarships and got none, so for me it was a waste of time, but that might be because of my applications, I don’t know. I will definitely recommend it to others, because even the smallest amount can pay for, say, a trip to a different part of the country you are visiting.

**Recommendations for other students:**

Start preparing a good amount of time in advance, and don’t be afraid to find consulting with prior student to where you are going. Talk to the people that are going with you, about how they arrange themselves. ENJOY every second of the time you are there, and try to be social on campus by joining a club or engaging in student activities!