IT University Travel Report // Victoria Frivold Olsen

**Host University:** New York Institute of Technology (NYIT)
**Study Programme at IT University:** Digital Design & Kommunikation
**Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad:** Study Abroad
**Courses studied abroad:** Media and Culture, Content in Design, Digital Imaging
**Exchange Period:** Autumn 2013

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**My stay abroad // What it was like to study at NYIT**

In an effort to supplement my education with subjects that I didn't only find personally interesting, but who also fine-tune the skill set necessary for improving my professional profile, I choose to study the three subjects; Media and Culture, Content in Design and Digital Imaging during my semester abroad.

Content in Design and Digital Imaging both challenged me on a creative level and both subjects managed to combine a fun and interesting approach to academics. We got to work on projects that forced us to go out and experience and discover the city, and taken the fact that these were individual projects, the outcome was very personal and representative for my semester in New York.

Media and Culture was unfortunately not that relevant for the focus I have chosen for my education at ITU as it was very concentrated on the television culture of Americans, but we got to have some interesting discussion on the topics presented in class as my perspective on e.g. television differs a lot from a lot of my American peers' perspective.

Studying at NYIT has been a good experience. But in my eyes, the academic level doesn't match ITU. On a positive note this only provided me with the possibility to actually enjoy the city and have fun as well. Which is also a big part of a semester abroad.

**My stay abroad // My initial motivation for going abroad and how the stay met my expectations**

The reason for why I decided to do a semester abroad was that I wanted to test the strength of my academic rigor. I strive to challenge myself and to vary my educational experience through exposure to different teaching methods and learning strategies.
My expectation was that a semester as an exchange student would challenge me on a cultural level as well as on a personal level. Also, based on previous experience with the combination of education and foreign cultures, I had an expectation that a semester in New York would contribute positively to my current understanding of the field of practice I operate within.

It's safe to say that my stay has met every single expectation. The city of New York has fascinated me for several years so deciding on this city, as the destination for my semester abroad was easy. I wanted a semester where I could experience something new, where I could get some new inputs, and to me, New York is the perfect city to accommodate such a desire. My semester has been challenging, eye opening, highly valuable and especially motivating for future endeavors. I can only recommend it!

**My stay abroad // Personally and academically outcomes**

My semester abroad expanded my academic horizons, especially on a creative level. I got to work a little more in depth with adobe compared to what I have been able to previously, and I got to take the time to really understand the criteria's in regards to designing for print.

Studying at NYIT also provided me with the opportunity to significantly improve and fine-tune my fluency in the English language -- a skill I consider to be highly important for future endeavors.

My short-term goals focus on the completion of my Master's degree at ITU in Digital Design and Communication, specializing in Service Design. I believe that my education at ITU in combination with my semester abroad at NYIT, will provide me with a solid foundation for a successful professional career.

On a personal level I now find myself to be better at time management and efficiency. In order to get the most out of a semester abroad, I found myself to be way more productive and focused than what I am used to being back at home.

**Arranging my stay // A short description of the process of arranging my stay**

Everything takes time!! Be prepared for frustration! And remember to start early! There's a lot of paperwork and bureaucracy involved in the process of making a semester abroad happen.

When you are arranging it all yourself, there's a lot of planning to be made. There are application deadlines to think of, a TOEFL test needs to be arranged, you have to schedule a meeting at the embassy, you need to arrange for a place to stay once you arrive and so on and so on. And also, there's a lot of waiting involved.

In my case, I wasn't too fortunate with how my applications were processed at ITU, so at one point I came close to changing my mind about going. You are making this happen on your own; so don't rely on getting that much help from others.
Arranging my stay // Resources and people I found helpful in planning my stay

Luckily there are people out there who have been through this before. I found great help in another ITU student who had been in New York a year before me. She helped with inputs, guidance and inspiration. She was really a great asset. So my best advice would definitely be to seek out other students who have been through a similar process.

I also turned to EDU events for help. If I remember correctly they have one big event each semester where they introduce different destinations for those interested in studying abroad, and where you get to talk to and listen to students who have completed a semester abroad themselves.

The international office at ITU has also been able to answer a couple of questions along the road. The same goes for the international office at NYIT.

Arranging my stay // How I arranged practicalities such as accommodation

I started my semester by crashing on a friends couch until I found an apartment. Housing in New York is expensive and it definitely takes time finding a place to live. I started browsing online about a month prior to my arrival, but found that it was much easier to deal with accommodation as soon as you were actually present.

AirBnB and Craigslist come in handy, and facebook groups for Danes in New York can also be helpful.

Expenses and Financing // Expenses connected to my stay abroad

New York is expensive. Enough said. But at the same time, it is worth every dime. I didn’t apply for a whole lot of scholarships, but there are a lot of scholarships for master students going to America, so it should definitely be possible to get some of your expenses cover. But yet again, start early. There are a lot of deadlines to comply in regards to scholarships, so don’t hesitate to start researching as soon as possible.

Recommendations for other students

Just do it!