IT University Travel Report

Host University: Parsons, The New School for Design

Study Programme at IT University: Digital Design and communication

Courses studied abroad: Graphic Design 1

Exchange Period: July 2018, three weeks intensive study

Your stay abroad

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

The summer course at Parsons is called a three weeks intensive course and it really was but it was in a good and challenging way. The course focused on Photoshop, InDesign, and Illustrator and taught the basic techniques in these programs but the class also took place in studios with physical materials, which was interesting and consistent in the same way, that we are taught design and to be creative at ITU.

The course was separated into two, a morning and an afternoon class. In the morning class we were taught in a studio where we were challenged to be creative and work with physical materials and in the afternoon we worked in Adobe creative cloud. This was a very interesting way to learn and you get a deeper understanding of Graphic design and its roots.

The two professors that were teaching the course are very competent and have been in charge of the course for many years and they are very dedicated to it – you can always get the help and guidance as you need and they are willing to spend time helping you after the classes. Furthermore, they try to take the studies out of the class, so we had a one-day trip to collect materials for projects in the classroom and saw an exhibition in the city.

The campus was divided into several buildings. Both my morning and afternoon class was taking place in the same building, but it was easy to walk, as it was only a few blocks that were parting the buildings.

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

My initial motivation for taking the course Graphic Design was to be taught the tools in Adobe Creative Cloud. My expectations were fulfilled as I was taught the basic techniques in these programs. I was taught a lot of different tools in the programs, which helped to get started but we had individual assignments so I could work on my own, be creative and challenging myself.
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?

The studio time in graphic design definitely taught me to be more creative and open-minded in order to develop a concept as I had a more playful and learning-by-doing approach. I will find that useful in my future studies at ITU which can be used in the early phases of developing a concept for example when brainstorming or sketching. Furthermore, I have achieved some skills in Adobe Creative Cloud, which I can use in presentations or in assignments.

Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:
The process of arranging my stay was very comprehensive as there are a lot of steps to get through. I started to plan my stay around four months in advance. I will recommend starting before if you want to avoid spending time during your exam period. At first, I applied for a pre-approval at ITU and since the course only accepts 16 students, I took a change, signed up and paid for the course before my pre-approval well knowing that I could get my money back. After receiving my confirmation letter from Parsons, they sent a long questionnaire that also kicks started the student visa process. The visa process is time-consuming and costs around 3000 DKK. I had some problems when I applied for the visa where I could not continue to the next step in the process. The international student office at Parsons was very helpful and always answered my emails within 24 hours, where I got the same answer that my page was updated and that I could continue. So if there are any problems in the process I can really recommend getting fast help from Parsons.

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?
I found a lot of help in talking with ITU students who have previously attended the course, which made the process easier. Furthermore, I traveled with two fellow students and we spent time helping each other so that Parsons or other previously attended students only would get the same question one time and not three. We helped each other a lot and it was so nice not to be alone in the comprehensive process.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?
I traveled with two fellow students and there are a lot of accommodation opportunities in New York. Unfortunately, we were very unlucky, as we had arranged a stay in an Airbnb apartment, which was canceled 3 days before arriving in the States. This is definitely not an ideal way for anyone.

According to play tickets, July is high season, so if you are between 16-25 years old, I will recommend looking at SAS young because we were lucky to get some easier plane tickets.
Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad and did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?
First of all, it is expensive, but it is always expensive to travel. Besides for paying a tuition fee, the student visa is expensive and it is expensive to stay and live in New York. I applied for ITU Travel pool and SU Udlandsstipendium. It is time-consuming but I will recommend applying for some grants. With that in mind, it is an experience so, in my opinion, the money is more than well spent!

Recommendations for other students:
As I had said before it is time-consuming so I can recommend starting the application process early especially if you are not interested in spending time on it in the exam period – but don’t stress too much I will ensure you that you have time. Especially the visa process can be confusing but then ask previously students, Parsons or ITU because there is a lot of help to find here.
I can really recommend Graphic design and studying in New York but the weekdays are intensive. If you never have been in New York then book some days before or after the school to explore. You also have the weekends to do it but New York is a big city. If you plan to be both a tourist and to study in the three weeks then I will ensure you that you need a vacation after that.