

A semester in 'Pragadise'

General information

I studied at the University of Economics in Prague, Czech Republic during the Fall semester of 2016.

Preparation

After getting accepted to this university, they send you a couple of e-mails regarding applying for courses and asking for some personal information. An advantage of choosing this university is that there is no need to spend too much money on taking an English exam, as the university assumes that you have the required level of English. They also offer you to stay at the dormitories. I chose for this option as many other Exchange students stay here and it is therefore easy to get in touch with other people. Furthermore, I paid approximately 110 euros per month, but the rooms are very basic. If you decide to stay at the dorms, make sure you keep an eye on the deadlines, because I missed the deadline for my deposit, which caused some trouble. Moreover, there was no need for me to get new insurances, as this was already covered by my own insurance company.

Arrival

If you want to, you get assigned a buddy by the university who will contact you in advance and is supposed to pick you up at the airport upon your arrival. I really recommend this! I arrived 5 days before the start of the semester, which was a good idea, because many people are moving in already at that time and it is your first chance to meet other Exchange students before the semester takes off.

The university has an introduction week, of which I did not attend all activities. Your buddy will help you out by getting the essential stuff such as your transportation and university pass. The rest of the week includes some lectures, city sightseeing and university tours. I chose to explore the city with some friends, but the lectures might be worth attending. After the introduction week, there is an Ice Breaking Weekend, which is not mandatory, but I recommend going there as it is only for Exchange students and you get the opportunity to meet a lot of them.

Courses

I took too many courses, as I wanted to be able to drop one if it would turn out to be a horrible course, but I kept all of them and so I ended up with a useless amount of 33 credits. I advise you not to take courses on Wednesday morning, as the famous N2N parties take place on Tuesday. Also, it is recommendable to take Fridays off, because this gives you an extra day for a weekend trip. A final tip is choosing intensive courses as you can finish them earlier than your other courses.

2RO181 Basic Spanish for Economists I (3 ECTS)

I chose this course, because I always wanted to learn Spanish. The course is at a very low level as it teaches you the ultimate basics and is therefore not hard to pass. The teacher is a good one and really cares about everyone's pronunciation. For a good start in learning Spanish, I would recommend this course.

5HD280 From Kafka to Havel: Introduction into the History and Culture of Czech Lands (3 ECTS)

It seemed interesting to learn more about Czech Republic, but I regret taking this course. The first half of the course is all about kings and emperors and the teacher comes up with dozens of names and dates, which makes the lectures very tiresome. The second half consists mainly of presenting Czech as a beer nation. I already gave up this course after the first lecture, but surprisingly passed my midterm without studying, so I decided to keep it and this resulted in one of the most easily obtained ECTS ever.

5HD450 Chapters in History of the Cold War (3 ECTS)

History is something I am really interested in and the Cold War is big enough to be covered in 13 lectures. The teacher knows a lot about this subject and the fact that she is married to an American results in a high level of the English language, something which does not apply to every teacher. She made the classes interactive and always had a video or pictures to show us. One of my favourite classes.

2SM271 International Relations for exchange students (6 ECTS)

International Relations is worth 6 ECTS, due to the fact that the course also has a seminar, besides a lecture. We had to give a presentation, write a term paper and we had group discussions. The teacher is British and has a very good sense of humour. The course is not that difficult, but the topics covered are very interesting.

5EN254 Introduction to Game Theory (4 ECTS)

My most mathematical and therefore, as I am an econometrist, my favourite course. The beginning is quite boring, as the teacher takes 3 classes to explain the Prisoner's Dilemma, but afterwards it gets more difficult. The level is in my opinion not that high, but still high enough to make 30% of the class fail the course. If math is not your thing, this is not your course. The teacher definitely knows what he is talking about and makes the classes more interesting by awarding bonus points and letting the students play small games against each other on the blackboard in front of class.

3BE315 Logistics (5 ECTS)

This course was a total mess. We had 4 different teachers who sometimes covered the same topic. We had to write a term paper, but we were totally free in choosing a topic, and the head teacher did not seem to care at all. We were told that everyone would pass before we even had had our midterm, which made it easily obtained credits. It was one of my more boring courses though, and Thursday 9 AM is not my favourite moment of the week, but the seminar is unfortunately mandatory.

2OP354 Supply Chain Management – in English (3 ECTS)

This course was definitely the easiest. 40% of your grade consisted of attendance, which made the course almost impossible to fail if you attend every lecture. Supply Chain Management is an intensive course, which consisted of 5 lectures of 5 hours and a final afterwards. Although I was unable to keep my attention for 5 hours straight, the teacher did quite well. She works at a supply chain company and therefore has a lot of knowledge and came up with a lot of examples. I definitely recommend taking intensive courses.

2SE272 World Economy – for exchange students (6 ECTS)

This course covers all trends within the development of the world economy with a special aim at the European Union. The teacher is really good and knows what he is talking about. His lectures are really interesting, although 3 hours straight is too long in my opinion. This was my hardest course. The midterm as well as the final were more difficult than I expected, and I really had to study for them. But 6 ECTS is quite a lot, after all.

Finances

Czech Republic hasn't adopted the euro, but still uses the Czech crown (1 euro is approx. 27 czk).

Subject	Costs (in euros)
Rent	370 in total
Travelling	200 per trip
Social life	100 per week
Mobile phone	8 per month (Vodafone)
Public transport	30 for 3 months
Groceries	30 per week

Daily life

Prague is a beautiful city with a city centre, which is on the UNESCO Heritage List. There are wonderful sightseeing possibilities such as the Charles Bridge, the Prague Castle and the Jewish Quarter. It is a vibrant city with over 1 million inhabitants, so there is always some festival or party going on. Prague has multiple clubs where you can party almost every day of the week, such as Roxy, Chapeau Rouge and Radost FX.

In comparison to Western European prices, Prague is very cheap. Where else can you order 0.5 liter beers for a converted amount of €1,- or a pizza for €5,-? This makes your costs of living a lot less than in Rotterdam and you are more eager to do things, because everything is so cheap. Prague's location in Central Europe makes it perfect for weekend trips to for example Vienna, Krakow and Budapest.

Furthermore, the university's Buddy System (for Exchange students only) organises a variety of events, such as trips and the weekly N2N parties. These parties, which take place every Tuesday are really worth attending as most of the Exchange students go there every week.

It is a cliché that everyone always says that it doesn't matter where you go on an Exchange, because it will always be awesome. An Exchange will always be great, due to the circumstances you are in, the people you meet and the trips you go on. But the fact that Prague always has events to attend, parties to go to and low prices result in an unforgettable experience and the reason why I specifically recommend Prague. Overall, the level of the courses is lower than in Rotterdam, which creates even more time to enjoy your stay in Prague.

If you got any questions after having read my report, feel free to contact me through Facebook (Mees Poppe).