Personal information

Name: Rachel Song
Major: Communication
Name of host university: IE University—Segovia Campus
Period/Time of Exchange: Spring 2018

Practical Advice

Housing
Upon getting accepted, IE sends you an email with an exchange student guide PDF which includes information about housing. There are many options such as living with a host family, living in factory (on-campus dorm) or off-campus apartment/flat. I lived in a house with two housemates, which I found on IE University Housing Facebook Page. I paid 400 euros per month (excluding utilities).

Arrival
The immigration process was very smooth. Upon arriving in Segovia, there was an Orientation program, which wasn’t really helpful. However, 1-2 weeks after the school starts, there is a tapas night for all exchange students. I strongly recommend that you go to this, as this is where you will make most of your friends and meet other exchange students. There is a buddy program, but it really depends who your buddy is.

Academics

The University
IE University Segovia campus is very small so it is easy to navigate through. There are only 3 floors, so you will never get lost. All the offices and classrooms are very easy to find. There is a cafeteria right outside the school building, and a little café/food shop called “The Cave” on the ground floor of the school building. The school has many activities such as Yoga night or Salsa night as well as sports clubs/theater.

Courses
Before school starts, you receive a pre-enrollment timeslots in which you can enroll in any classes you want. After school starts, you get approximately 2 weeks to add/drop. This is done through the school campus website. I enrolled in 3rd year and 4th year Communication classes: Advertising Planning, E-Commerce, Organizational Skills, Applied Graphic Design, Crisis Communication, Branding, Spanish, and two 1-credit Seminar classes. It differs by class, but most classes relied heavily on presentations. Usually, I had one presentation and one final exam throughout the course.

Difference between studying at Cornell and at your host university
First, the classes in IE can get very long. The 6-credit courses sometimes last for 4 hours (9 a.m. to 1:50 p.m). Coming from Cornell where the longest classes are 1.5 hour, having long classes could get a little overwhelming.

The level of courses shouldn’t be too hard. However, most courses rely very heavily on participation and attendance. Therefore, the final grade can drop a lot if you do not participate/attend classes. The classes are very small so it is easy to interact and approach the professors.

Also, most classes incorporate a lot of presentations and group works. Different from Cornell where there are prelims, exams and essays, at IE, everything is group presentation.

Life Abroad

Language
All courses are taught in English and everyone in the school speaks Spanish, so there is technically no need to be fluent in Spanish. However, it is very helpful to know Spanish as you would need to manage your daily life outside the school (e.g. grocery shopping, talking to landlord, etc.) I had to take a Spanish class in school as Cornell has a foreign language requirement for all exchange programs.

Health and Safety
Segovia is a very safe city, so there is no need to worry about safety. There are also a lot of pharmacies on the streets where you can get any medication if needed. I personally did not have any problems regarding health and safety (except one time where I got sick after drinking tap water).
Overall exchange experience
I loved my time in Segovia. Although it is a small city and I sometimes wished that I was in a bigger city, Segovia itself brings along so many special moments. It has been the best semester of my college life. You will be able to meet so many students from different parts of the world.

Additional Tips for future students

Packing
I thought Spain was going to be warm all year long, but it did snow and got very cold sometimes. I wish I brought thicker coat and maybe snow boots.