CGIS: European Union Summer Program in Amsterdam, Netherlands and Brussels, Belgium

Handbook Supplement

Spring 2018

University of Michigan
Center for Global and Intercultural Study
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WELCOME!

Dear Students,

Congratulations on your acceptance to CGIS: European Union Summer Program! Learning objectives for this course include exploring and studying the EU as it undergoes change and adaptation due to migration, changing membership, and globalization.

In addition to daily lectures, students will directly apply lecture information to tangible experience by attending events and excursions relevant to the course topic as well as site visits relevant to the cultural history of the Netherlands and Belgium.

It is often said that the person who fails to plan plans to fail. Part of the success of your upcoming journey is in the planning and preparation before your departure to ensure a positive beginning and outlook. The materials provided in this handbook are important before you leave as well as upon arrival. Read through the information carefully, take notes and make a list of additional questions, if necessary.

Bring a hardcopy of this handbook with you to Amsterdam.

Reading through this handbook will hopefully prepare you for an effective transition and adjustment to the new cultures and society you are entering as a short-term visitor and participant. The better prepared you are the easier it will be for you, your family, and friends.

It is our goal to provide a quality program experience that will help you meet your learning goals while at the same time exposing you to new languages and cultures. We hope it is your goal to use this experience to develop a greater sensitivity to and appreciation of cross-cultural similarities and differences while at the same time gaining valuable academic experience.

Welcome to the program!
ACADEMIC PLANNING
REGISTRATION

As a U-M student participating in a CGIS program, you will be enrolled at U-M at the same time that you are taking classes in Amsterdam. Once your registration appointment for Spring term opens, register for: STDABRD 399 for 3 credits.

This course may be eligible to fulfill distribution or concentration requirements, but because it is not offered on campus, it is not automatically approved to fulfill requirements. Therefore it is very important to talk to your advisors before you leave to see how the course you take will fit into your program of study; speaking to an advisor insures that you know any special requirements you must meet for your concentration, if the course will fulfill distribution requirements, etc.

Talk with your general academic advisor about how the course you take will fit into your overall academic program. General advisors can approve classes as exceptions to fulfill certain degree requirements (such as distribution). You will need to complete the Advisor Approval Form, which is available in your MCompass student account.

PASS/FAIL

Students may take the course Pass/Fail during the program. Please refer to the section on Pass/Fail on the CGIS website for details. Remember that you should not request certain courses to count as Pass/Fail, such as those that you have approved to count toward major/minor requirements; it is therefore recommended that you consult with an academic advisor before requesting a course to count as Pass/Fail. Note that the deadline to submit the proper form to the CGIS office is within 1 week of the start of classes.

GRADES AND CREDITS

Grades for the course appear on the U-M transcript in standard A-E format, and students earn a total of 3 credits for the semester. LSA students will receive in-residence credit for their coursework and the grades they receive will be calculated in to their overall GPA.

Students from other schools/colleges should consult with an advisor in their home unit to determine the policy regarding these grades and GPA.
YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Most students expect at least three things from their term abroad: a unique academic experience, a chance to interact with people from other cultures, and the opportunity to travel. The program is designed with these expectations in mind, but the onus is on you to make the most of the opportunities available. Before you leave, it is helpful to identify your expectations, consider them thoughtfully and prepare yourself for the ways that you can take the best advantage of your time overseas.

Before leaving for Amsterdam, learn as much as you can about the Netherlands and Belgium – and about Europe in general. The more you know about EU politics, economy, art and history, the better. Read European newspapers and magazines on the Internet, even before you leave the U.S. At the same time, brush up on your knowledge of American history, politics and culture. Europeans, in general, are very politically conscious and may know even more about your country than you do! The more informed you are, the easier it will be to discuss your background with your newfound friends and colleagues.

When you first arrive, you will probably find it difficult to set your priorities and find a balance between your responsibilities as a student and your desire to be a tourist. There will be some time for you to travel on weekends/evenings and to discover other places, but you should expect that most days will be very thoroughly programmed. These ventures do play an important part in anyone’s term abroad. You may even choose to arrive early or stay later than required in order to explore independently. Should you choose to do so, please purchase additional GeoBlue insurance ($1.10 per day).

GETTING INVOLVED

How are you going to fulfill your expectations of community involvement and interaction with locals?

The program is short, but students can have daily interactions with locals throughout your daily routine. How else could you make Dutch friends?

It will be a bit different than at home, so think about your hobbies. What types of clubs and activities are you involved in the US? Check out event websites to see what activities you might be able to join while you are there. And don’t put it off! Before you know it, you will be on the plane returning to the U.S.

READING ABOUT YOUR DESTINATION:

Before you leave, doing some research about your destination will allow you to further immerse yourself in the experience, and to understand the context of events and interactions you may observe abroad. Here are some articles that could be a good place to start:
“5 Reasons Why Amsterdam Works So Well for Bikes.”

“To Hold Off the Right, New Dutch Coalition Partly Embraces It.”

“Hundreds march for Catalan independence in Brussels.”

“EU readies sanctions on Venezuela, approves arms embargo.”
http://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics-eu/eu-readies-sanctions-on-venezuela-approves-arms-embargo-idUSKBN1DD0UN?il=0

“European Union gives impetus to joint defence plan.”

Press (Dutch news in English): http://www.dutchnews.nl/


BEFORE YOU DEPART

Preparing to study abroad involves careful consideration and planning for the academic experience as well as the financial and personal responsibilities you will face while abroad. This often requires a number of meetings and completion of tasks well in advance of your departure. Home campus staff will work closely with you to provide guidance and advice on what these tasks include. This will include providing readings, paperwork and information related to the program. We will also have pre-departure meetings to cover important information, allow you to meet your future classmates and address any questions or concerns you may have prior to departure.

PACKING

Once you have completed all of the preliminary paperwork, arranged your flight, and attended orientation, you have another important task to complete --- PACKING! You have to decide what goes to Amsterdam with you and what stays here in the United States. For some people, it is not such a difficult decision, but for others, it is torture. Whether you fit into the first category or the second, read this information carefully.
HAND LUGGAGE AND IMPORTANT DOCUMENTATION
The following items must be carried on your person during the flight to Amsterdam:

• Passport
• Airline ticket and itinerary
• Cash, credit card, etc.
• Health Insurance Card
• Any prescription medication

You are strongly encouraged to have the following in your hand luggage:

• The equivalent of $100 in local currency to cover initial arrival expenses
• EU student handbook and all important documents from the program

CARGO (CHECKED) LUGGAGE
When you are packing, you should keep in mind that many airlines only allow one suitcase (of limited size and weight) and one carry-on for the flight free of charge. You should contact the airline for its particular restrictions. Travel light; you need much less than you think. You will certainly return to the United States with more than you take with you. Remember that you must carry your own luggage to and from Amsterdam!

PACKING FOR THE WEATHER
The average high temperature in May is 62 degrees Fahrenheit in Amsterdam. Temperatures will be getting steadily warmer at this time of year, but please pack layers and prepare for cool nights.

PACKING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PAST STUDENTS
The one thing that most past study abroad students will tell you is “don’t pack too much!” This is a common mistake and often means that students have to pay extra (and hefty) luggage fees or aren’t able to bring back purchases or souvenirs from the Netherlands and Belgium if there is no room in your suitcase.

DO

• Laptop (but only if insured!)
• Adapter (converts plug)
• Umbrella or light rain jacket
• Comfortable shoes
• Small bag/backpack for traveling (carry ons are much smaller in Europe)
• Specific brands of cosmetics or toiletries (including deodorant) that you might not be able to get in Europe

DON’T

• Hair dryer, straightener or curling iron (even with an adapter, they tend to fry or break)
• Valuables
ARRIVAL

Arrival in a new environment can be overwhelming! The program staff will attempt to make your transition as painless as possible, but please remember and anticipate that the first few days will be tiring and probably a little emotional for you. The combination of travel and jet lag will also wreak havoc on your body when you first arrive. Remember that Amsterdam is 6 hours ahead of the East Coast of the U.S.! Despite your inclination to take a nap and succumb to the exhaustion when you arrive, the best thing to do on the first day is to force yourself to stay awake until the evening. This should help you sleep through the night and get adjusted to the new time zone.

Your program faculty will give you specific arrival instructions. We recommend that you contact home to let everyone know that you’ve arrived safe and sound. However, we do not recommend telling them you will contact them at a specific time, as flights are often delayed.

HEALTH

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE
All University of Michigan students are required to be covered by GeoBlue health insurance while abroad and are automatically enrolled by CGIS. Please refer to GeoBlue website: https://www.geobluestudents.com/ for more information.

EMERGENCIES
Contact your local program/on-site staff immediately if you are the victim of crime or need emergency assistance. Please also contact the University of Michigan to let us know of the situation as soon as you are able. The University of Michigan Department of Public Safety has a 24 hour number which is (734) 763-1131. They will then contact the necessary on-campus offices, including CGIS, to respond to your situation. You may provide this same 24 hour number to your parents should they experience an emergency and need to get a hold of you while you are abroad and are unable to contact you directly. To contact GeoBlue in the event of an emergency, call 1-800-257-4823 or globalhealth@geo-blue.com.

HEALTH CARE
While abroad, take responsibility for your physical and emotional well-being. Especially during the first few days, when you are making the transition to your new environment, try to adjust to the change in time zone and be sure to get the proper amount of sleep. Pay attention to your diet and be sure you are eating nutritiously. Get plenty of exercise, even though it may be difficult to find athletic facilities comparable to what you are used to at home. Your effort will pay off! Don’t isolate yourself. You may have to work to build new friendships but new relationships are part of your experience abroad and important to your emotional well-being.

HEALTH CONCERNS
Most students who study abroad do not consider the potential effects that an overseas experience can have on physical or mental health. Fortunately, it is unusual for students to struggle with
health issues overseas. However, it is always a possibility, so it is highly advisable to be prepared before departure.

**Before** you depart for Amsterdam, you should:

- Schedule a medical check-up. As you may not have access to regular appointments overseas, it is wise to make sure you have a clean bill of health before departure.

- Make copies of any important health records, and make a note of how to contact your physician or therapist from overseas.

- If you do have a pre-existing mental or physical health condition, check in with your physician or mental health professional to discuss the possible stresses that could be caused by study abroad. If you require medication, discuss the best way to ensure that you will have a sufficient quantity for your stay. **Please note:** It is illegal to ship some medications internationally.

**DRUGS AND DRUG USE**

*Illegal drug use and possession are serious crimes abroad. Many countries have implemented severe penalties for suspected drug related criminal activity. Arrests may include months of pre-trial detention, and convictions carry severe sentences, including lengthy terms of incarceration and in some cases, the death penalty.*

If you are arrested, you are subject to the laws of the country where you are arrested, not US laws. If you need legal assistance, contact the program staff and the US Embassy or Consulate. A consular official can get you a list of local attorneys, let you know your rights under local laws, and contact your friends and family, if you wish. **Consular officers cannot get you released from custody nor pay your legal fees.**

**ALCOHOL**

It is expressly understood that program participants are held responsible for their actions at all times. Being intoxicated will not be accepted as an excuse for behavior that violates community standards, nor will it lessen a participant’s accountability to the program. Disciplinary sanctions will be imposed for infractions of the alcohol policy, including, but not limited to:

- Excessive use of alcohol (some signs are: slurred speech, impaired motor coordination, loud boisterous behavior, staggering, vomiting, vandalizing property);
- Disruptive behavior linked to alcohol use;
- Behavior detrimental to the University, which is linked to alcohol use at the University or elsewhere.

If you are taking medication that is considered a narcotic or other controlled substance, be sure to take the medicine in its original container and a copy of your prescription. This goes for any prescription medications you bring with you.
SAFETY TIPS
Take responsibility for your own safety with the following precautions:

In Your Housing:
• Be sure that doors and windows are closed and securely locked.
• Don’t give your keys to anyone.
• Never admit anyone unknown to you.
• Exercise caution with new acquaintances. Remember that you are entrusting them with the personal safety and the possessions of yourself and fellow residents.
• Hide documents and valuables in different places in your housing.
• Keep travelers checks and their counterfoils in separate places.
• Make copies of your passport and credit cards. Keep one set on file in the Program Office.

On the Street
• Use the same common sense that you would use in any large city in the United States. Be aware of your surroundings and avoid areas where you are likely to be victimized.
• Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.
• When out with a group of friends, try not to draw attention to yourselves by loud conversations or arguments.
• Never keep your passport, Eurail or other tickets, or birth certificate in your wallet or handbag, and avoid carrying large quantities of cash. Wear a money belt to protect important documents and cash.
• Never pick up stray packages--on public transport, near station lockers, in museums or elsewhere. Instead notify a driver, policeman or security guard about the package.

Safe Travel
• Keep all valuables on your person while traveling. If possible, carry minimal cash and separate your cash from your credit or debit cards.
• Keep an eye on your belongings at all times, and never accept packages from strangers. Pick-pocketing is a widespread problem, especially in Europe, and foreigners are often a prime target. Stay constantly aware of your surroundings.
• In general, do not bring extremely valuable possessions with you. If you have an irreplaceable item, it might be best to leave it safely at home.

Consular Affairs
• Make at least two copies of your passport. Leave one at home and bring one with you. You might also consider scanning your passport and mailing a copy of it to yourself. Once you arrive in country, leave your passport in a secure location except when traveling. Do not carry it around all the time!
• If your passport is lost or stolen, notify faculty immediately. You will have to go to the U.S. Embassy in Amsterdam to apply for a replacement.
CONTACT

TELEPHONE NUMBERS
Police 112
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