

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong
of Hong Kong. Going on
exchange to Hong Kong
has always been on the top
of my exchange list
because I have heard many**

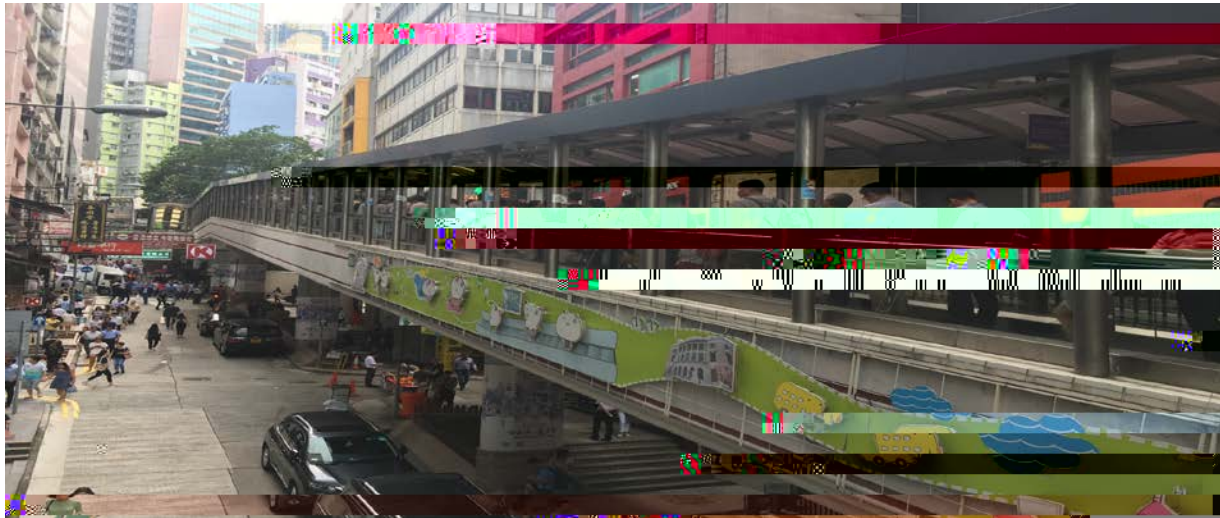


Preparation for Exchange

The weather in Hong Kong is so different than Vancouver. Especially, for the fall semester, I needed to have three seasons of clothing with me. Throughout the whole exchange, I did not feel like I needed to wear too many winter clothes except there were a few days where it was a bit chilly. Other than that, I wore mostly t-shirts. Especially in August, September and October, the temperature was extremely hot and humid that my roommate and I, we could not sleep without the air conditioner on. Even with that being said, a few winter clothes and a thicker jacket will be enough. For some reasons, indoor for Hong Kong is extremely cold. Whenever I go to the mall or even to classes, I must have jacket with me as the air conditioner was very strong. Especially going to class, it was a must to bring a jacket or else it was not quite possible to sit through a few hours under the strong air conditioner. It was quite easy to catch a cold in Hong Kong as outdoor was extremely hot while indoor was extremely cold. Therefore, it is important to bring some cold medicine because I did not know where and what kind of medicine to buy in Hong Kong. CUHK is on the mountain just like SFU except that CUHK has a lot of trees and bushes everywhere, so it is very easy to get mosquito bites. Bringing some mosquito

repellent will save you from a lot of stress and pain. If you did not bring them, make sure to buy some either in the Fusion store on Campus or other supermarkets. In addition to the mosquito repellent, bringing some sunscreen and an umbrella will be useful.

In Hong Kong, majority of the people use either cash and the Octopus card although very few actually use credit cards. The Octopus card is similar to the Compass card where we use them for paying for transportation. However, what is different is that it can be used as a method of payment in many other stores as well, such as 7-eleven, supermarkets, McDonald's, etc.

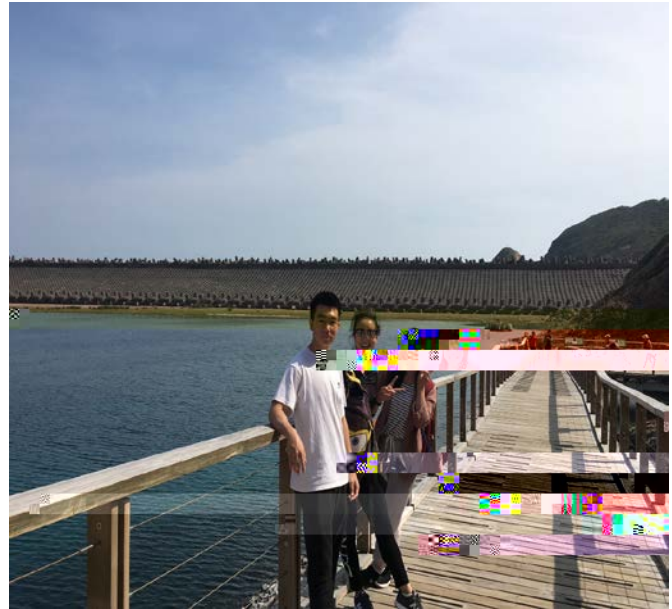


During Exchange

I highly recommend students to take the taxi instead of the campus scuttle bus to their temporary hostel when they arrive Hong Kong. There are a few shuttle buses but seats and standing place are limited so it will be difficult to get all the luggage on the bus. In addition, the bus or the bus driver does not tell you what the next stop is. You can bet on counting the stops but sometimes they do not stop if no one getting off or getting on. So the best option is to take the taxi on the very first day.

One of the most painful things about exchanging at CUHK is the course selection. The preselection process does not guarantee that classes can be successfully enrolled. In fact, very few actually got all the classes that wanted or needed during the preselection stage. I got accepted into two of the classes during the preselection whereas some of friends only got one. For the rest of the classes, I must wait until the add/drop period during the beginning of September when most of the classes were already full. In addition, I had to compete with everyone hopefully to get to the top of the waitlist. It was extremely stressful for me as I needed those courses to graduate by the next semester. Therefore, I highly recommend students to preselect some back up classes as well if they have any. I went to department to explain my situation during the add/drop period as my waitlist number was almost impossible to get into the class although actually the number of dropping was pretty big. The department told to me submit the add forms to i-centre during the department approval period, the week following the add/drop period. Although submitting the form to i-centre, it was necessarily to go to the department the next day to ask if they have received the form because i-centre did not submit my forms to the department. The finance department advisor just helped me added the courses I needed on the

spot within five minutes. Actually, the department and the professors were being very understanding and considerate about the exchange students. One of professors had even told the department to enroll the urgent exchange students first. It is true that the selecting process might be frustrating and painful, but do not worry, at the end of the day, everything will be fine. The departments reserved some seats on purposely for those who really needed the class but can not successful enrol in them. For the SFU who needs to transfer credits back, you can always email the SFU advisor your course outlines a head of time to get a rough evaluation but do it as soon as possibly as it will take up to a week for the advisor to reply. If you are not enrolled in the class, either get it from the professor or ask the CUHK advisor to send you the course outlines.



Lectures were similar to the one at SFU except professors would have make up classes if the class was cancelled for any reasons even dur to public holidays. So, there is no getting around of taking more classes on a day with more public holidays because there will always be make up classes.

Getting around Hong Kong is very efficient because the MTR will basically take me to all the places I wanted to go. It connects all over Hong Kong and there are MTR entrances and exits everywhere as well. Especially for students, we could apply for a student Octopus card which is 50% cheaper than the regular fare price.

There are a lot of hikes with beautiful sceneries in Hong Kong that gave me a different vibe of the dense and busy city. In addition, I love exploring the streets of Hong Kong which is so different than Vancouver because everywhere I go, I can shop and hunt for street food and milk tea. In Hong Kong, I can never shop and eat enough.

Reflection

My biggest takeaway from the exchange is learning to be independent. I have never left home before and always rely on my parents on everything. However, exchange has given me the opportunity to make my own decisions and to trust myself. One of the most valuable experience of going on exchange is to expand my international network by befriending local and other exchange students. My advice to other exchange students is make friends with both local and exchange students. The local students will really take you to places and give you tips about Hong Kong whereas the exchange students are willing to explore the city with you and even travel to other countries.

