

SFU Exchange Report
Charles University
Prague, Czech Republic
Spring 2010

I am a fourth-year English Literature major who had the absolute pleasure of participating in
Despite many warnings from my departmental
advisor, I decided to go on an exchange for the last semester of my degree. I suppose you could

So why did I decide to go on an Exchange?

One of the reasons I came to SFU was t

like movie theatres, fast-food chains, and Starbucks however: anything remotely North American will be priced as if you were in North America.

ACCOMODATION:

Oh the student dormitories.

You love them, you hate them, but you have to admit it is pretty fantastic being able to say that you live by a castle. Perhaps the best way to help you decide if you are going to live in the dorms in Prague is to consider the following:

PROS of Living in the Student Dorms	CONS of Living in the Student Dorms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The people: you are in extra-close contact with all of your friends and plans: someone is always willing to go out (usually at all hours of the night)• Breakfast is provided every morning• You live in walking distance of the Castle and Petrin Park arguably two of the most important sights in the entire city• Theoretically, a maid cleans your counters, floors, bathroom, and changes the garbage everyday• There is internet access and a laundry facility both of which are fairly inexpensive• who will keep you updated on cultural activities, free tours, and discounted opera/ballet/theatre tickets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The rooms are small, the walls are thin, and the beds are itty bitty

NOTE: If you are thinking of moving out of the student dormitories at *any* point during your stay, I recommend letting your program coordinator know immediately (as in *before* pay a cancellation fee (as I did).

ARRIVAL and ACADEMICS:

The ECES program was especially catered to North American students arriving in Prague for the first time and the first three weeks were dedicated to sight-seeing, getting to know the city, and a two-week intensive Czech language course. Transportation from the airport to the dorm is arranged by the program, so as long as you fly into Prague on the

again, you will make most of your friends on the first 2 days. So go out even if you are jet-lagged and tired!

Regular classes begin once the language-intensive course is complete. I only signed up for three classes, which gave me plenty of time to experience Prague and travel on the weekends without jeopardizing my academics. The classes themselves were absolutely amazing. All of my professors were extremely intelligent, witty, and quirky Czechs with a enthusiasm for teaching. They were easily some of the best professors I have ever had the pleasure of working with. The small class sizes and informal atmosphere creates the perfect environment for in-depth class discussions and debates. It is in your best interest

most rewarding student dialogue of your undergrad career. The workload and reading lists were certainly on par with SFU courses for my upper division English Literature courses. The only noticeable difference was in the marking scheme. Most people did not receive anything lower than a B-. As long as you were passionate about your topic and original in your argument your professors would look upon your paper favorably.

WORDS OF WISDOM (before you hop on a plane)

- Attend a pre-departure session and take notes you will want to bring these with you
- Find out if anyone else from SFU is going to the same Foreign University as you are and see if you can meet up. You can help keep each other motivated and you

which they will refuse to speak with you regarding your paperwork until the 30 days have passed)

- Expect to invest over \$400.00 in the VISA process (translation, postage, and miscellaneous expenses)
- Photocopy everything, especially things that you have sent in the mail. If you can, even photocopy the envelopes before you express post them. Keep records of when you send things and when they are due to arrive. Tracking numbers are important.
- Be patient and optimistic. Despite the fact that I mailed my application in on exactly the same day as another student (and she received her VISA two weeks

- **DO:** Keep in touch with the friends you meet abroad; you never know you might be back sooner than you think!