

Exchange Report  
Institut d'études politiques, Strasbourg, France

I am a political science major with a minor in French and for my exchange I studied at the Institut d'Études Politique in Strasbourg (IEP), France during the Spring 2014 semester.

The time I spent planning for Strasbourg was relatively stress free. Though I've heard there can be quite a lot of bureaucracy involved in obtaining VISA etc. I was thankfully exempt from most of this administrative hassle due to my Irish citizenship. I remember being slightly worried because it took a long time for the residence application to be sent to me by email, but once I received it there was no problem in applying and obtaining a room. In terms of rooms, the best option seems to be the rooms with bathrooms at Paul Appell, the closest to IEP as well as to the city center. However, there have been

might therefore want to look into  
first two weeks in Strasbourg.  
they are given out randomly and  
from early, the payment system is  
month blocks. Therefore if you  
end up paying for the whole

In terms of finances, I opened a French bank account when I arrived, something I would suggest you do immediately as it takes quite awhile for them to send you the bankcard. Most stores, however, accept Visa so you should be ok with that.

There are no direct flights to Strasbourg as far as I can tell so if you're planning to do a lot of traveling by plane Paris would probably be the better option. However, you can catch trains pretty much anywhere from the city center and if you are planning on using the trains a lot you can purchase a *carte jeune* for 50 euro that gives you discounts on most journeys within France. There are some flights that leave from the nearby airport but they are limited and, aside from Ryanair, mostly expensive. To get to Strasbourg your best bet would be to fly into Paris, Frankfurt or another nearby city and then catch a train to Strasbourg. Once you arrive in Strasbourg the city has a network of trams that only cost 1.60 euro single ticket and leave directly from the train station or else you can take a taxi from the airport if you are arriving by plane. There is also the option of taking a train from the airport, which only costs a couple of euros, and then the tram, but this will take longer. I arrived by train from Paris and took tram C to Paul Appell residence with no problems.

Getting your room at residence is quite simple. You just go to the main office and they'll give you your room key. Then every month you pay your rent at that same office. You are also required to have room insurance that is provided by most of the French banks for around 20 euro. You should also apply to CAF (housing assistance for students) as soon as possible because it can take them quite awhile to treat your application.

At the beginning of the year the university offers a *stage française* for exchange students. I would recommend this even if your French is excellent as it gives you an opportunity to meet other exchange students. This stage also includes a few field trips around Strasbourg and guides you through completing admission forms.

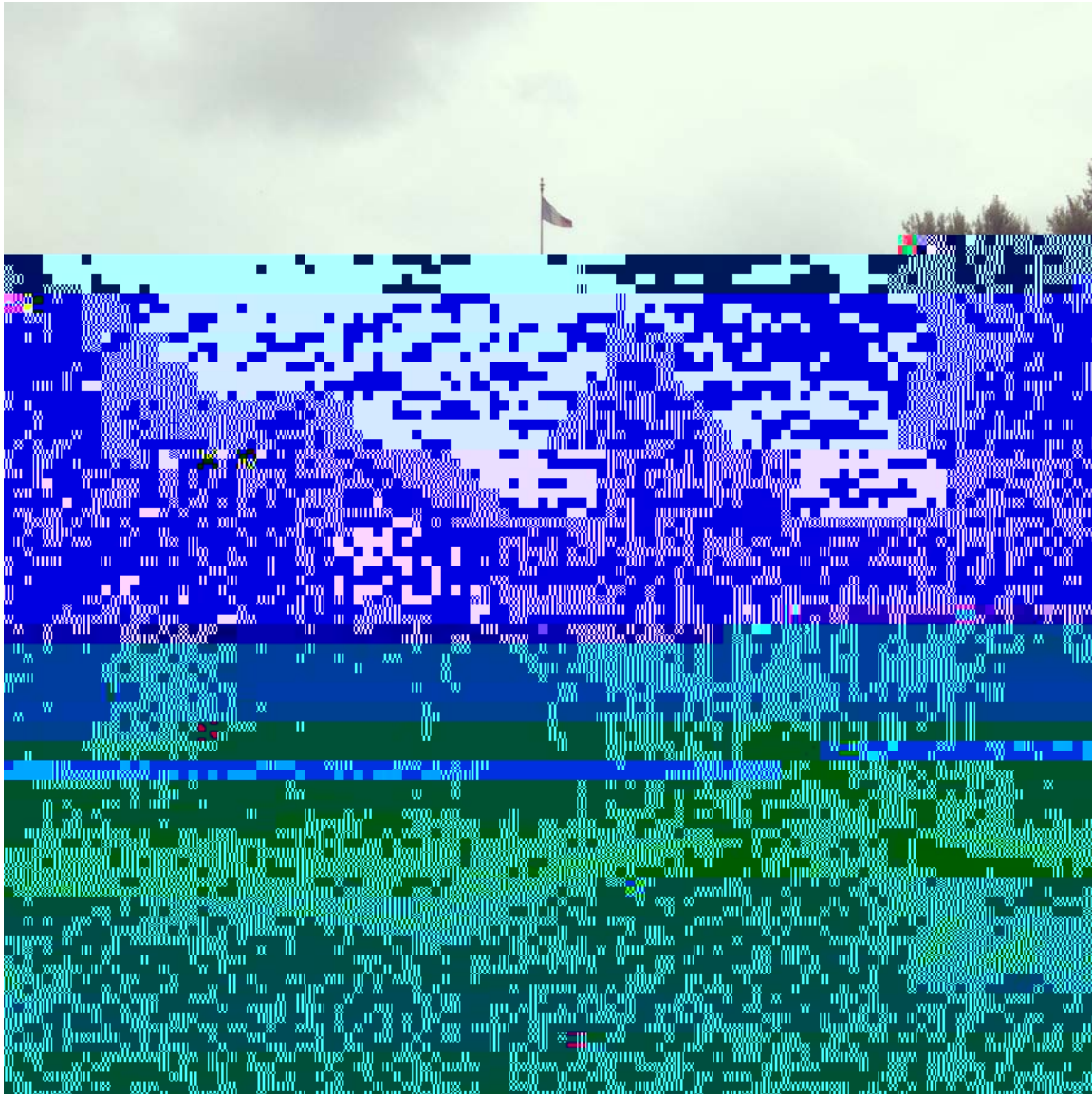
The first two weeks of classes you are given the opportunity to go and try out the different courses. You then register your choices online. The courses are for the most part lectures and aren't participatory. You just sit and take notes while the professor talks. You quickly have to learn to type down practically everything they are saying because many professors, especially in 4<sup>th</sup> year classes, don't use aides such as PowerPoint's or

writing on boards. There is a dropbox for the second year and first year students containing the notes for most of the classes that is shared on the Facebook group for IEP students. This is extremely useful, as the courses haven't changed that much over the years. There isn't very much work involved in the courses and for the most part 100% of your grade is based on your exams at the end of the term. Exams are therefore very stressful.

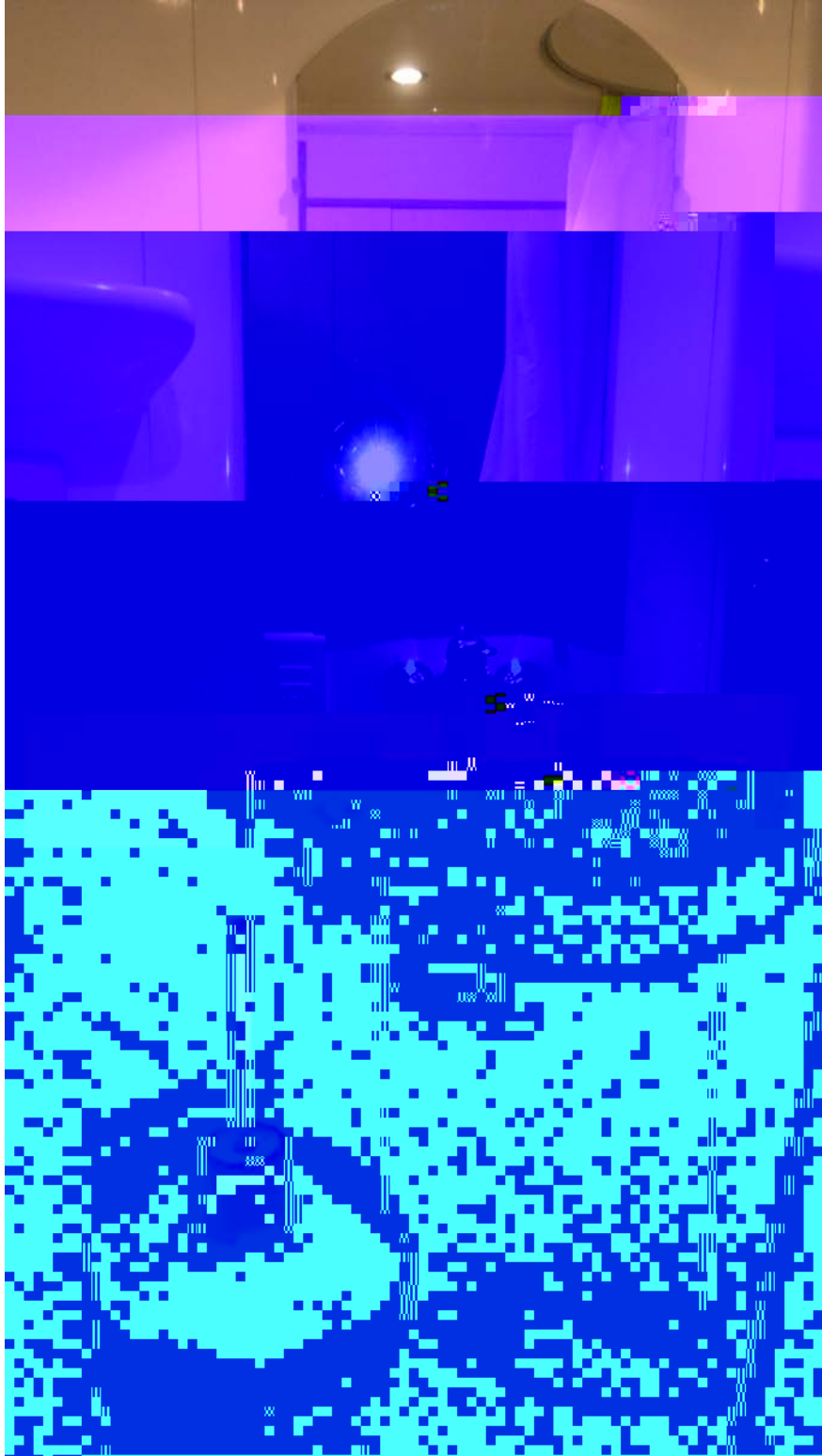
Most exams are oral though some courses have written exams. For the oral exams you go in and are given a question. You are then given 10 min or so to reflect on that question in the back of the room while another student presents to the teacher. The presentation is expected to be somewhat organized though the teachers will ask you questions to prompt

terms of administration) and I will never again complain about exams at SFU being worth 35% of my grade! I'm really happy to have this opportunity and I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. If anything I'd to remind you that even if academically things don't go well on the exchange you'll gain so much more in terms of the experience and the knowledge that comes from experience, that there is no way the exchange can be a waste.

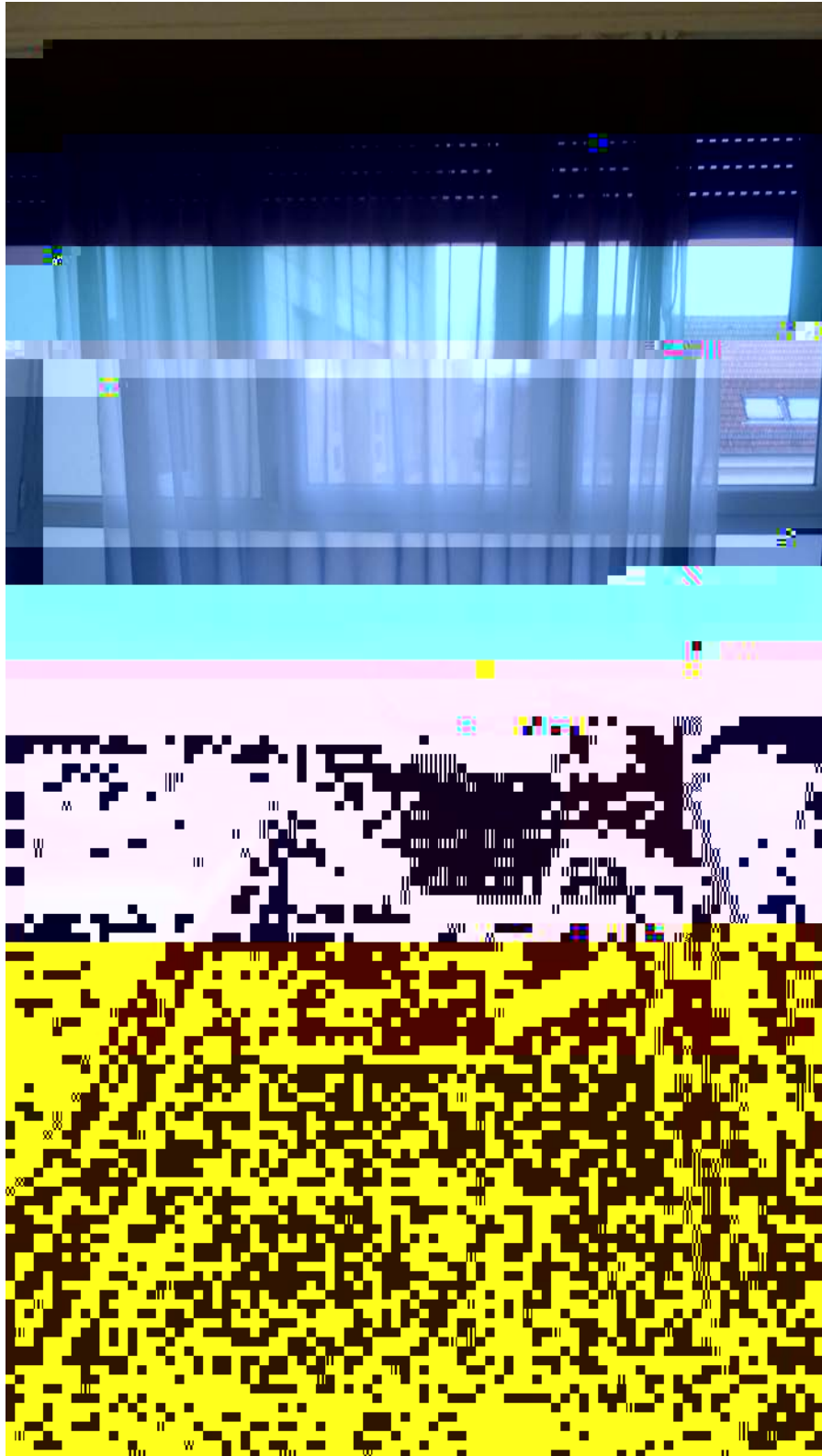
Bon voyage and enjoy!



*Place de la République, Strasbourg, France*



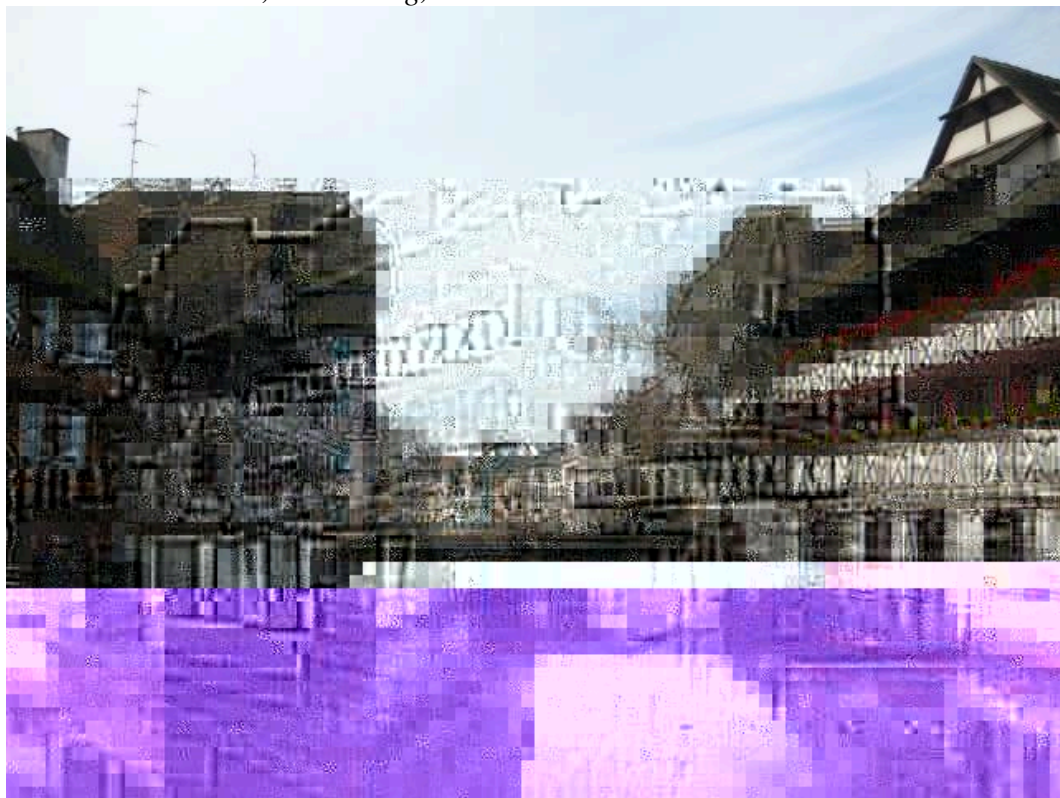
*Bathrooms in rooms at Paul Appell*



*Rooms at Paul Appell*



*Me at Petite France, Strasbourg, France*



*Petite France, Strasbourg, France*