

Washington College

4 CORNERS

International Programs Newsletter

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Why Are You Here?

I HAVE BEEN ASKED, a number of times since coming to Hong Kong, and many times back in the US, "Why are you here? What makes you interested in Asia?" I'm afraid that I don't have a simple answer. So instead here is a list of things that I appreciate in the Asian world and what I find fascinating about it.

- I love their collective cultural identity. It's so unique to my own, but also familiar in many aspects. Religion isn't dominant in the same way as in the more monotheistic Europe and Middle Eastern regions. Yes, they do have "religion" but many of those are more of a way of life, a philosophy so to speak, as opposed to a true "prayer-to-a-higher-deity" lifestyle.
- I love the food and music. The Japanese pop culture is hilarious from the Western perspective, but also informative as it takes everything to extreme, which can force us to question our own sanity. Why do they do it this way? Well, how do you think they view us?
- The presence of the United States as a de facto "residential" superpower is another variable. By any reckoning, the US is of central importance to all the East Asian states, and I want to be a part of that. I love my country and I want to facilitate its role in the world. I am learning to love Asia and want to help ensure the



cooperation of Asia and the US.

- Possibly the most important accomplishment of the ASEAN+3 process has been the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI). The CMI is now claimed as constituting the first step of East Asian monetary integration and a monetary union—an Asian version of the EU. What this means is that the world is becoming region-specific instead of globalizing quite like the theorists of the 1990s and early 2000s predicted. Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia and, to an extent, sections of the Mid-East are regionalizing. The US is being left out. Why is this and what can we do about it now and in the future?
- The fun of seeing the countries in this region interact: Sino-Japanese, Japanese-Korean, Sino-Korean (Since I deal with East Asia primarily)

(continued page 4)



J. PRESTON HILDEBRAND



Chip Cheerio Chaps,

AMY SHAW

I HAVE HAD QUITE A BIT OF EXPERIENCE traveling and living abroad, having lived in Germany for three years—my parents are a unique brand of kamikaze travelers who can knock out all the tourist attractions in a major city like Prague or Paris in a weekend. The whirlwind three-year tour of Europe gave me a taste of what I was to experience during my three-month stint at Royal Holloway, but being abroad with your parents is much different than going abroad by yourself and embarking on the unknown alone. And so, it was with equal parts excitement and nerves that I embarked on a plane to take me to Royal Holloway, with my camera in hand and half a mind to tell the English that saying “Cheerio!” was the same as saying “Raisin Bran!” or “Lucky Charms!”

Being able to fly in over London on a clear, sunny day was the perfect way to delve into my three-month stay. I was able to see London perfectly and snap a few pictures from the air as we flew near the London Eye and Big Ben. That was the moment that it all became real—that and sleeping in my new room for the first time, with a bell chiming the hours outside my window and a courtyard view of my castle-like dorm welcoming me in the morning. The first few days were incredibly confusing. Trying to set up my room and get the things that I needed to establish myself in a foreign place, while at the same time going out to meet as many new people as possible made for some hectic days before classes began—but it was a great way to engage in the crash-course process of assimilation into my life abroad.

It was immediately apparent upon arrival that when traveling, you have to learn to go with the flow and realize that the world does not revolve around you. Not everything can be planned out and accounted for in advance and sometimes even when you think you have everything figured out, life throws you a curveball. This lesson was especially impressed upon me when I attempted to get my course schedule from the International Relations Department at Royal Holloway. I had carefully chosen my classes, gotten them

approved by the heads of WAC’s History and International Studies Departments, signed up for them through Washington College weeks earlier, and been offered the courses I had chosen along with a place at Royal Holloway before arriving in England. It came as a shock therefore when I was unceremoniously informed that not only had I not been placed in the Environmental Sustainability course that Royal Holloway offered me weeks previously, but that the course didn’t even exist...I had been offered a course that wasn’t running that semester!

I was frustrated and worried about making sure that I had taken enough classes to graduate with a double major and minor, so I was told to go pick a new fourth class from a list of course titles sitting on a table off to the side. Flipping through the pages of courses that were being offered and trying to pick one without any idea of what would be covered in the class except for whatever minor insight was offered by the title, I picked a course at random entitled Gendered Communities. It turned out to be one of the best decisions that I made all semester, hands down. The professor was a brilliant Indian woman named Antara Datta who introduced us to gender studies in an intriguing and quirky way. She utilized the entire two hours of the first class to set a precedent for the rest of the semester by proceeding to play devil’s advocate and trick the entire class into blurring all the lines that we thought existed between sex, gender and race. As it turned out, Professor Datta was readily available, quick to respond to my e-mail, and someone who really helped mentor me during my time abroad from day one.

I also discovered that when abroad, sometimes you have to forgo homework and studying just because you are in another country. Part of the experience is being able to go out and see and do things that you would never be able to do at your home university. That was how I discovered Windsor—home to the Windsor Castle and an official residence of the Royal Family. On the day that I went, it was an amazingly stunning blue-sky-with-nary-a-cloud-to-be-seen kind

“It was immediately apparent upon arrival that when traveling, you have to learn to go with the flow and realize that the world does not revolve around you.”

I'm Off to London



of day to go exploring, and my friends and I wandered through the adorable little boutique Mom & Pop shops with hundreds of flowers draping from balconies, shop windows and the front of pubs. There was a particularly incredible old-fashioned sweet shop with hundreds of clear glass jars full of candy and ridiculous chocolate bars in all sorts of flavors—ginger crunch, strawberry shortcake, orange surprise, bananarama and absolut blackcurrant to name a few. I remember wishing that I could work in that shop, because then EVERY day would be delicious!

The friends that I made while abroad were one of the reasons that I enjoyed myself so thoroughly at Royal Holloway; it is important to integrate yourself with the “natives” while abroad! There was a mix of girls on my floor from all over the world; some were international students studying abroad like me, and others were freshmen experiencing college (or, in their words “uni”) for the first time. Funnily enough, it turned out that one thing we had in common was

not just that we were diverse, but that we shared a love for *Glee*. Nearly all the girls on my floor were Gleeks (glee fanatics...glee+geek=gleek!). As a result, whenever we got a chance we hooked someone's computer up to a website that would let us watch the latest episode and crowded around the laptop in the middle of the hallway (so that nobody could get by) to laugh, sing along with and yell at the characters.

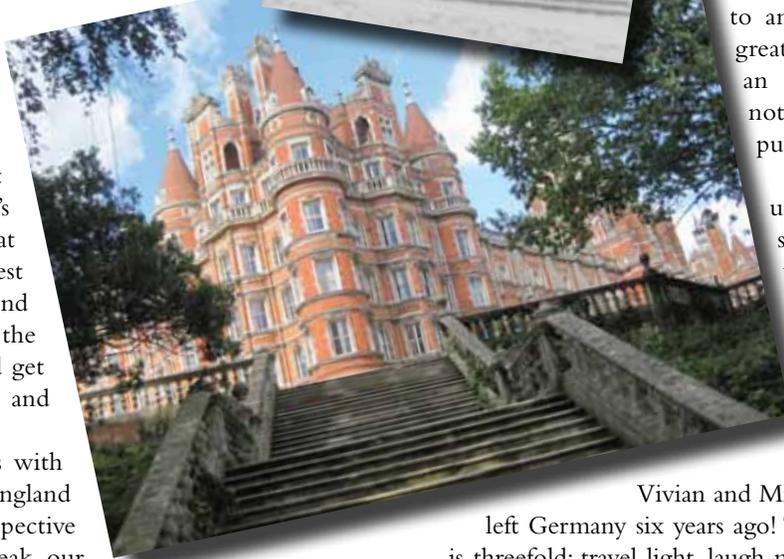
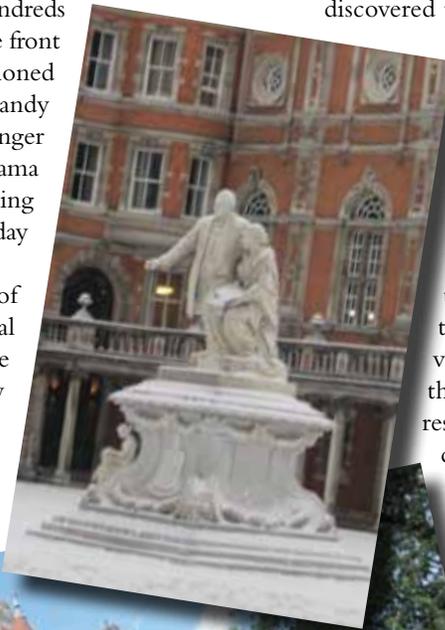
The girls I became friends with on the hall introduced me to England by providing an insider's perspective into a culture that might speak our language, but still does things a bit differently from us. It took me a little while, but before long, I learned how to carry myself

like a Brit (even though I never adopted a British accent). I discovered that to say you wanted “cider” meant that

you would receive a sort of alcoholic fermented apple drink, not Ziegler's apple cider; that to properly greet a British person you say “you alright?” instead of “how are you?”; and that to get a hair straightener, one would walk to Boots—which is a drug store, not a place to get shoes. Above all, I learned to relish the fleeting moments and opportunities that life offers us. It is surprising how very quickly three months pass! I will miss that instead of “thank you,” the English respond with a “cheers” when you hold the door for them or pass them, the sign-in sheet during class, as well as the primly decorated houses with their small, fuel-efficient cars parked out front, and even to an extent the teachers—who have greatly facilitated my ability to write an analytical paper by demanding nothing short of writing that could be published.

Studying abroad broadens your understanding of the world that surrounds you. Friendships made while abroad last forever and they are the most precious things to pack for the journey back home because you never know when your life will intersect with theirs again. For example, in London I met up with my friends

Vivian and Miriam, whom I had not seen since I left Germany six years ago! Therefore, my advice to go abroad is threefold: travel light, laugh more than you study, and never say goodbye; instead, say “Auf wiedersehen” or—till I see you again—because this world works in strange and mysterious ways and chances are you will be back.



Why

Are You Here?

continued

J. PRESTON HILDEBRAND

and how the US interacts with them all is just interesting to me.

- The region has managed to avoid (significant) armed conflict in the post-Cold War era that other regions haven't been so lucky to avoid.
- The East Asian region claims vital importance in US security and economic interests. The United States keeps more than 80 percent of its 100,000 overseas troops deployed in the Asia-Pacific region, concentrated mostly in Japan and South Korea. Accordingly, the world's heaviest concentration of military and economic capabilities is in the NEA subregion (which is ultimately what I am interested in dealing with in the future).
- The world's three largest nuclear weapons states (the United States, Russia and China), one semi-nuclear state (North Korea), three "threshold" nuclear weapons states (Japan, South Korea and Taiwan), the world's three largest economies (the US, China and Japan), and Asia's three largest economies (Japan, China, and South Korea) exist in this small region.
- It's Asia's turn to lead the world. I am of the personal conviction that the US has been irresponsible with the place we've been given in the world and we need a balancing act. China is becoming this act. It is not a country to be feared or fought, but also not one to sit on the sidelines and watch. It will be a "tough companion." That is, a country we shake hands and eat dinner with, but also keep the holster close and the safety off. Through the intense rivalry that is developing, and will continue to develop, both countries will become more powerful and better places to live as they try to surpass each other.
- The US is lagging behind in several important ways. Our energy grid and transit system are horrendous and our lack of initiative on climate change and energy issues is appalling. China, for what some deem their many faults, is pushing ahead on these fronts. The Chinese have a terrific network to deploy power and move their massive population. They had to develop these because of the way their country has grown so quickly these years. Sure, you can poke holes here and there in Chinese domestic policy, but you can do the same for the US domestic policy.
- Despite a degree of impressive, somewhat unexpected progress in development, East Asia faces several sets of interrelated challenges and obstacles. These take many forms. Political, economic and

security are my forte, but cultural, judicial and social are also intrinsically important.

- There is a high degree of variance among the region's governments: Ranging from democracies, to states where a monarch remains a political force, to outright authoritarian states—which is unlike Europe. Freedom House's latest (2001–2002) annual survey and ranking gives us a feel of an even distribution of sixteen East Asian countries on a "freedom rating": six as "free" (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines and Mongolia); seven as "not free" (China, North Korea, Brunei, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam); and three as "partly free" (Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore).
- The security situation in East Asia is more complex and volatile than in any other region of the world. Pressured by globalization and regionalization, East Asia developed unique regional security characteristics: high military capability, proximity of the four major powers in the arena and the absence of a multilateral security regime. Negotiating strategies in the region are highly dependent on who is involved in the negotiations because of the latter characterization.
- The fun for me is this: Will countries be able to overlook ideological differences in order to coordinate regional policy? Will more developed and less developed countries find consensus on regional economic cooperation? Can security cooperation occur between regimes? What does the US do about all this?
- Finally, Asia is different. Just that. It's not bad, or good, worse or better... just different. If you ever take an anthropology class you understand that all cultures are inherently equal. I have met many people from Asia: Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Indians, Malays, Taiwanese, Nepalese, Sri Lankan, Russians, Australians, New Zealanders, Filipino and many others who have traveled extensively and/or lived here for many years. I have learned so much from all of my encounters with these people—both chance encounters and those that were planned. If you believe that countries are made up of individuals, then Asia is a great place to live.

I can only hope that my work in the future, the life that I have to give, can better the world I live in, the world they live in, and the future I wish to see one day.

The Japanese pop culture is **hilarious** from the Western perspective, but also **informative** as it takes everything to extreme, which can force us to question our own **sanity**. Why do they do it this way? Well, how do you think they view us?

Semester down under

JAMIE FREES

HOW MANY PEOPLE can say they went scuba diving in the Great Barrier Reef, volunteered at an Aboriginal art community, ran on the beaches of Tasmania, and rode a horse through the hills of New Zealand? These are just some of the amazing experiences I will remember from my semester in Australia. When faced with the decision of where I wanted to spend six months of my life, it was hard to choose. I have always had a love for traveling and would have gone everywhere if I had the time. It came down to me wanting to go to an English-speaking country, so I finally narrowed it to Australia and Scotland. Being an anthropology major I decided that I would take the opportunity to go to Australia to study the Aboriginal Australians' culture. Sure enough, that is exactly what I did.

Washington College offers two schools in Aussie—Bond on the Gold Coast near the beaches and Monash in Melbourne. I chose Monash, not knowing at the time that it is actually one of the top 100 schools in the world. The course work was very demanding and I never borrowed so many books from the library before in my life. After a semester of writing nine essays and a few presentations I could not be more happy with the education I received there. I was able to take classes on the belief systems of the indigenous Australians as well as the political issues that have occurred, and two archaeology classes. One was about Indigenous Australia, while the other class on the Roman Mediterranean, was taught by a professor from Italy. When I found

“On weekends we did a lot of travelling to places like Sydney and over spring break we went to the Great Barrier Reef.”

myself stressed out about the work, everyone told me to relax because down the road it would be the memories I made for myself rather than the grades I got that I would remember most. In the end I succeeded at getting good grades on top of the amazing memories, which just adds that much more to my experience there, since I did go there to learn after all.

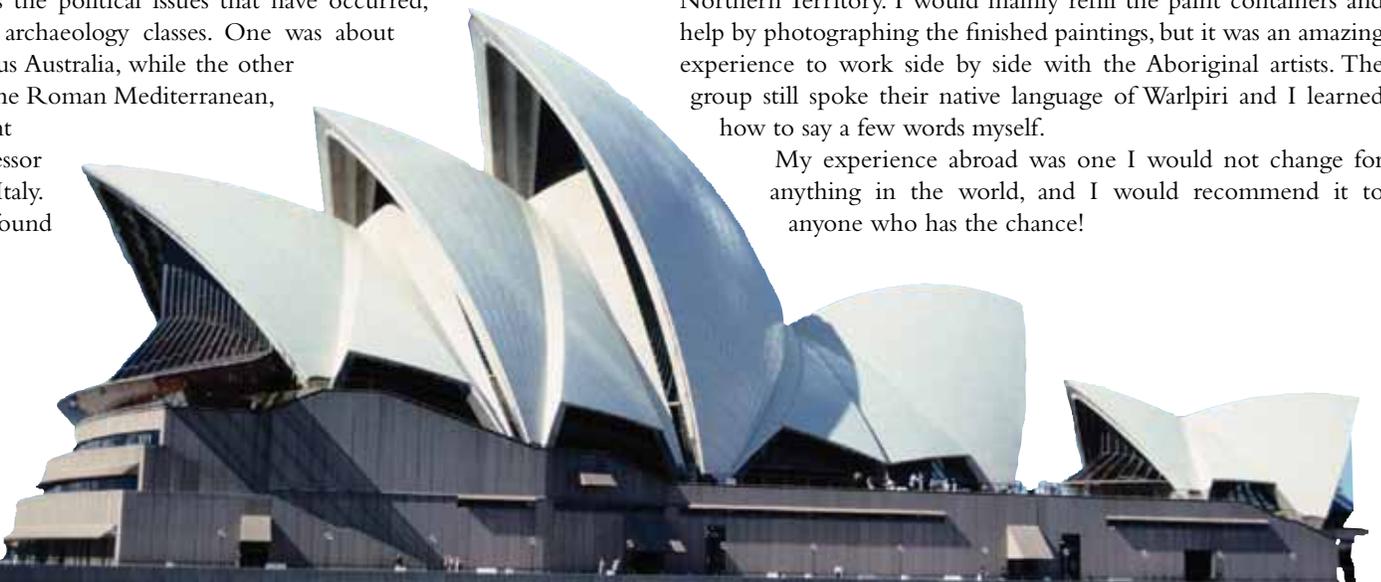
I became close with fellow Washington College student Caroline Stanley '12, as well as a number of other international students, the majority being from England. On weekends we did a lot of traveling to places like Sydney and, over spring break, we went to the Great Barrier Reef. I had been there when I was 13 with my family, but we only snorkelled, so this time I needed to make it more exciting. I decided to do the introductory scuba dive. I didn't like all the breathing exercises and almost got too nervous to do it but Caroline

assured me I wanted to. It was such an awesome experience!

Although scuba diving was fun, the most memorable experience is the one I made for myself after exams ended. I had about two and a half weeks to spend exploring before my dad and older brother came to travel with me so I chose to

volunteer at an Aboriginal art community. I spent a week and a half living at Warlukulangu Aboriginal art center in Yuendumu, Northern Territory. I would mainly refill the paint containers and help by photographing the finished paintings, but it was an amazing experience to work side by side with the Aboriginal artists. The group still spoke their native language of Warlpiri and I learned how to say a few words myself.

My experience abroad was one I would not change for anything in the world, and I would recommend it to anyone who has the chance!



Snapshots of London

ANTOINE AND STEPHAN JORDAN



Stephan and Antoine Jordan along with First Lady Elisabeth Reiss in London



Stephan and Jordan joining in the London fanfare



WC students studying at the Hansard Scholars Program and Royal Holloway/University of London gather in London to enjoy a meal out with WC First Lady and former London resident, Elisabeth Reiss. Left to right, standing: Zachary Morgan, Antoine Jordan, Devon Miller. Seated: Stephan Jordan, Elisabeth Reiss, Sally Snover, Stephen Cameron

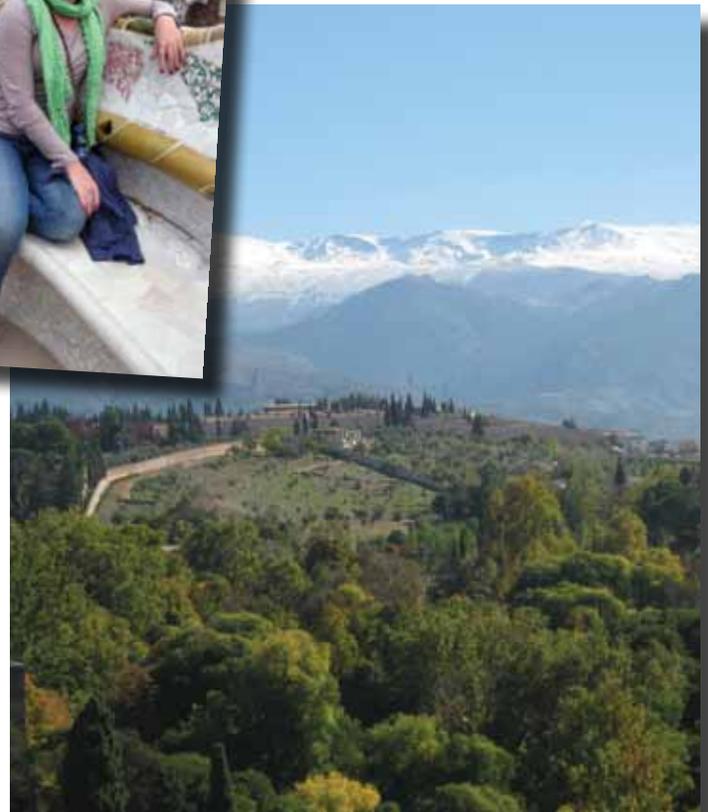
Spain-blogging

M O R G A N P H I L L I P S

DECEMBER 15, 2010

Ten Things I Will Miss Most About Spain

10. Clean laundry magically appearing on a silver platter in my room, seemingly free of charge and literally the day after I wore it;
9. Being able to talk in English about anything I want and no one besides the person I'm saying it to being able to understand;
8. Actually having nothing to do but take a nap between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.;
7. Walking everywhere;
6. Meeting people from all over the world with the most interesting life stories;
5. How easy and cost-efficient it is to travel all around Europe;
4. Going for a run with the Sierra Nevada mountains as a backdrop;
3. Thunderstorms in December;
2. Bueno Bars;
1. And the amazing friends I have made who have become by family away from the states.



for years to come, these four months will stand out as a defining moment not only in my education but also my growing-up process. I am seeing this as an end to a semester, but the beginning of many more adventures to come. Thank you to all who were a part of making it happen! (Especially the bank of Phillips that has now over-compensated for the stupidity of the bank-that-will-not-be-named).

Also I wrote an article for the Washington College sports newsletter that basically sums up my semester and how it affected my life as a student athlete. If anyone is interested in reading it, you can find it here: <http://washingtoncollegesports.com/sports/wswim/2010-11/releases/20101214a99gow>

Hasta luego España!

DECEMBER 16, 2010

Last Day in Spain

And so it ends. This is my LAST day in Spain and it is so hard to believe! It's weird, but leaving Spain now feels very similar to how leaving the United States did in August. It is so surreal how fast the time went by and now I'm a little bit in denial that I will be back in the homeland in less than 24 hours. I couldn't be more excited to see my family and friends but at the same time it is going to be another big change adjusting to life in the States after I have experienced so many things this semester. Not to mention everything that has changed at school since I left it! I am at the point where I am definitely ready to go home and get back to "normal" life, I just have a different definition of that now. And as ready as I am, there will always be a huge part of me that wishes I could just be in two places at once!

Overall, I just feel incredibly lucky to have been given the opportunity to come over here and live and learn for so long, with so many great things at my disposal. I think when I look back at this

GO AWAY

Students who study abroad satisfy their appetite for learning while enjoying some of the world's great cuisines.

To make your reservations at one of thirty-five study abroad sites sponsored by Washington College, visit the Office of International Programs, or e-mail Kelly Keer at kkeer2@washcoll.edu or phone 410.778.7762.



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Four Corners

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