

My experience studying
abroad at ISCOM, Paris.

Where and when did you study abroad?

I studied in autumn 2023 at ISCOM in Paris, from September to December. Paris was my first priority and I only intended to go on exchange if I could be allowed to study in Paris. I was lucky enough to be allowed to do that.

What KEA program did you attend at the time?

I am currently studying Entrepreneurship and Design at KEA in Copenhagen. It is a 2-year course. In my case, an exchange stay is only possible in the third semester, unless you continue your education.

What classes did you take during your semester abroad?

Each course you can choose between is 1-5 ECTS points. You must have at least 30 ECTS points to pass. I chose several courses for a total of 30 points. The reason I chose the courses that I did, was because of the courses names and I thought they sounded interesting.

The courses were reminiscent of what I had already learned from KEA, but I still learned a lot of new things, and things that I would not be able to learn at KEA. I'm gonna note something about the teachers in every course, because I think it's important to understand how the courses were like because teachers are super important for the success of a course. Of course - the teachers may vary, from when other Erasmus students go there.

The courses were:

French Culture -

This course was very nice, we learned a lot about history and important figures of France. I really like history, if you don't, it would maybe not be the best course for you. We had a lot of exhibitions, where we saw museums and that was something I really enjoyed. I think that it is so important to have trips in this course, to see the real life history, in front of your eyes.

French as a foreign language -

In the first class we had, we had a test to see what level of French we are able to speak and write. I was in the beginner class, and that made a lot of sense, since I have never had French before. It was very hard, mostly because French is hard to learn. But we had a lot of online classes, and I don't learn much, being online. The teacher was really nice, and she was really good at learning us the language, even though I thought it was very hard.

Graphic design -

This course was probably my favorite, because of the teacher and how he taught us the basic skills needed to make graphic things. I really liked how structured his classes were, and we knew what we were going to do, through the semester because he has already ministered it on his own website. The assignments were definitely the best, out of all the courses on ISCOM, because he clearly stated what he was looking for, and what he would grade us on. That way, it was easy to navigate the assignments because you had, kind of a to-do list.

Personal branding professional project -

The whole administration didn't really know we had chosen this course until November, so the thing we have to do is make a big assignment talking about personal branding. I wouldn't necessarily recommend this course.

Communication and internet law -

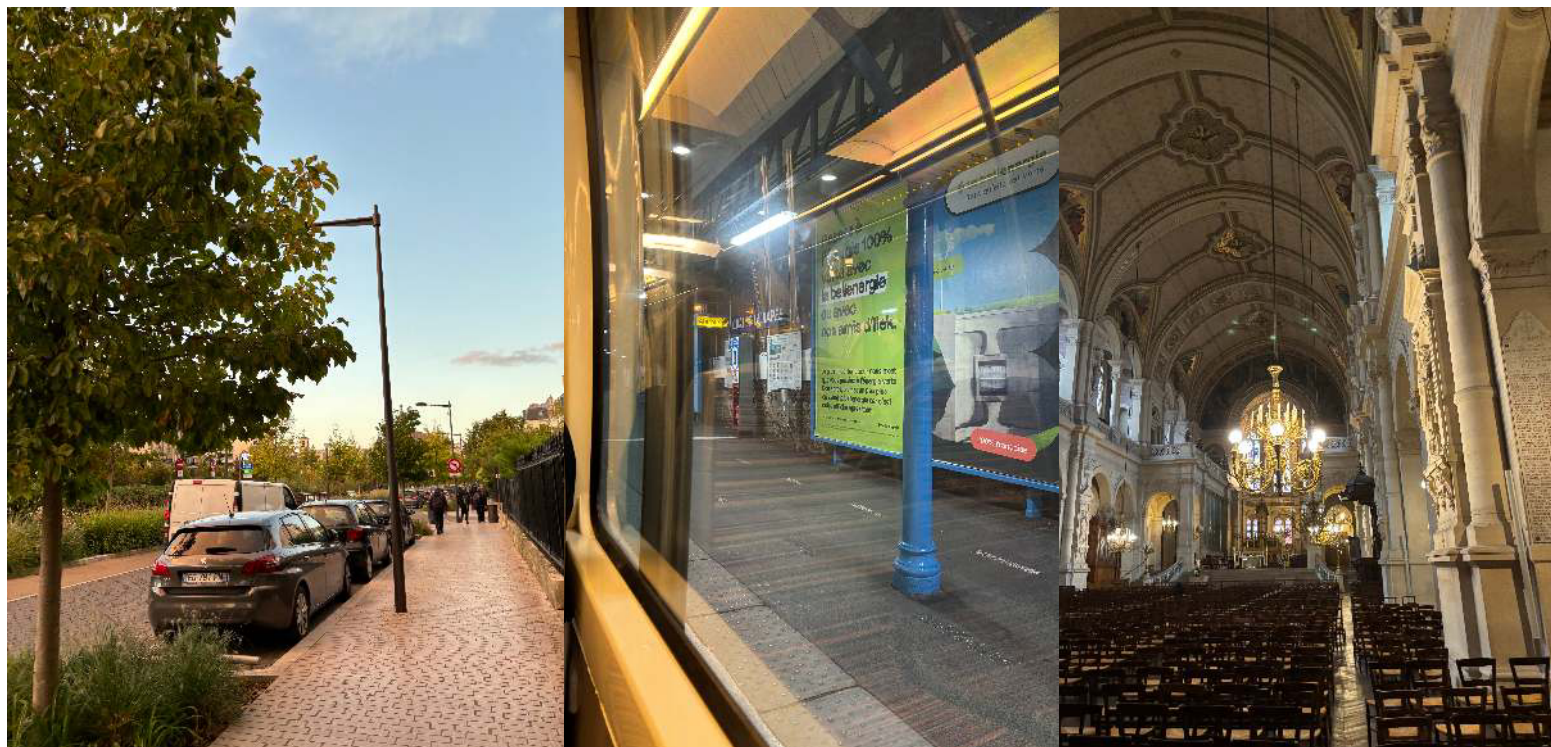
This course was a lot of research. We had to pick a country, where we looked at the laws from that country, it was okay, but not super interesting. The teacher was very sweet, but expected a presentation for every class, even though she didn't ask for it on Teams Assignments. So it was confusing, what she wanted from us.

Writing for the web -

This course was not very theoretical, we had two classes where the teacher talked about theory, but otherwise it was a lot of writing something, and then he would comment on it. The teacher was very sweet, and very good with young people, but I don't know if I learned much from this course.

Communication theory -

I really liked this course, because I find it very useful to know how to communicate. There was good balance of theory and fun. The teacher was really good at being present and communicative, while being nice and strict at the same time. This was one of the best courses in my opinion.



Academic Experience

How helpful was the receiving school in the process of choosing classes and settling you in?

I think the school was generally good at settling us in. Everything was very last minute, and in the beginning you didn't know what classes you had the next day, because they had a lot of trouble with electronics. But the staff is really nice, and I felt that they wanted the best for me. I did go to the administration a lot, because there were a lot of stuff that didn't work or made sense to me, but the administrator helped me, even though she was also sometimes confused by all the new technology.

What classes/study experiences did you find the most rewarding? Why?

I learned a lot in graphic design, and communication theory. The teachers were really great, and they made the subjects come to life.

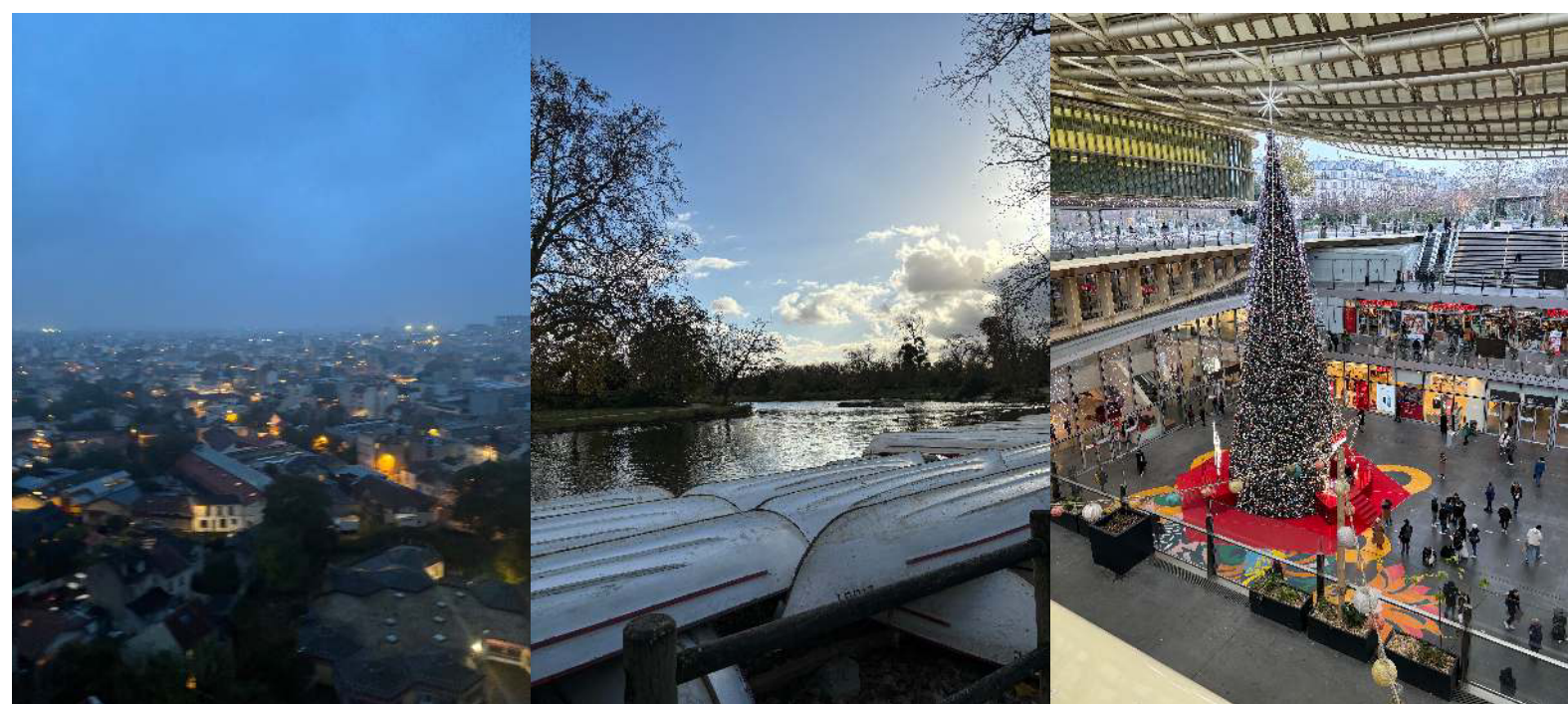
What classes/study experiences did you find least relevant or least valuable to you? Why?

The Communication Project Management course, was not interesting to me. I don't feel like I have learned anything from this course. It's a lot like other classes at KEA. The course was very unstructured and the teacher was really sweet and

tried her best, but I personally find it hard to understand and learn from someone that does not have a clear defined English pronunciation, and when the material we're being taught is not interesting, it makes it harder.

What classes would you advice other KEA students going to the receiving school to choose or not to choose?

I would not recommend picking the Business Case Digital and Business Case Creation. They didn't learn me much, and the Digital Case were completely in French, so the only thing I could do was to do graphic design (they are going to change the course to full English next year, I think). French is also a course I only took because it had so many ECTS points so I kind of had to. But I don't think I am going to use French later in my life, so it was a bit unnecessary for me to take that course.



Practical Experience

How was the application process?

It was smooth, it was a bit of stress sometimes because I had a lot of questions, and I sometimes didn't know what the steps required, but my coordinator helped me a lot.

What did KEA help you with?

KEA held a meeting, which was very helpful and my coordinator helped me with most things. The help I got was satisfactory and I don't have any complaints in that manner.

What help did you receive from your school abroad?

I don't think I received help in the application process, of what I remember. They filled out the information needed, and I didn't have any correspondence with the host school before going to the school.

Did you have any practical difficulties settling down at your destination?

No, every question I had regarding living in Paris, I asked Freja (my friend and roommate). She made it really easy for me to come to a new country, and the fact that France is a part of EU is very nice, there is a lot of things that is easier like healthcare, mobile subscription etc.

How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

I received mails from ISCOM with help regarding public transportation etc. But I just asked people I know in Paris, otherwise I would ask the other Erasmus students or the other students at ISCOM. They have experience with living in Paris, so it made most sense to me.

Where did you live?

Through the whole semester I lived in Montreuil, at the end of the metro line 9. It is where my friend Freja lives. I wanted to visit Paris and I really like the atmosphere of the city, but I wouldn't have gone on a semester abroad if I couldn't live with someone that I know. So I was very lucky to know someone, and I could move in with her.

Was it difficult to find accommodation?

Not in my case, but I think it is for other people.

Was it expensive?

I think it is an expensive city. Compared to Copenhagen, that is also very expensive, the rent is higher in Paris. Grocery are basically the same as in Denmark, but going out to buy beer or coffee are a bit cheaper than Denmark.

What kind of expenses did you have in general?

My general expenses were rent, groceries, buying clothes or gifts for other people, public transportation (which was very expensive, when you come from Copenhagen where everyone is biking everywhere) and museums. I had a few people come to visit me, I also spend quite a lot of money, because in the moments they were visiting me, we went out to eat and drink at different places.

Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?

I think I spent a little more than what my budget 'allowed' me to. But it was inevitable for me, because when people came to visit me, we were all 'tourists'. When I'm on vacation I spend a lot of money.

What kind of income did you have during your exchange?

I had my SU, and my Erasmus grant. I went home to Denmark for a week, during a school vacation and worked for two days, so I had a bit more money. But in general you can't have a lavish lifestyle when you're on exchange, at least I couldn't.

Did you apply for any grants and did you receive any?

I didn't, because I knew I had SU and the Erasmus grant, and I knew I could get by with the money from the SU and the grant.



Cultural/Personal Experience

What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

Of course the language. Going to a school with a lot of French people that don't want to speak English, has been difficult. I think most people know how to, but don't feel secure with the English language, so they stick to French. I completely understand why they feel insecure or don't wish to communicate in an other language than their mother tongue, but I was a bit difficult. It would have been nice to have class with more Erasmus students, because in class it can be a bit lonely, if you don't know any French.

The metro is super crowded, almost constantly, I had to get used to that. You have to stand in the metro most times.

How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

I don't think they could prepare me or help me with these issues, it's a cultural difference you have to get used to, and that's the beauty of going on exchange. But of course the school could put more Erasmus students together in one class, but I will still say I found some really nice French people in my class that was ready to speak English with me, so it's not every French person, that is reluctant to speak to you!

What was the best cultural/personal experience during your studies abroad?

Going out with friends or people visiting me. Spending time with people and learn new things from new people. They have made my stay in Paris an amazing one. Going to see architecture and museums has been great. I have also learned a lot about myself, my reaction pattern and being exposed to many new things have made me in someway stronger. I think it is a big personal experience - experiencing yourself in a new light.

What advice would you give other KEA students going to study abroad at the receiving school?

I would say that you have to be ready to have very long days sometimes. I've had classes until 8.00 PM. The communication between the administration and students has often been confusing. The teachers are really sweet, and everyone wants to see you succeed and they try their best to make your semester abroad the best it can be. The school is a bit more strict than my school in Copenhagen,

about attendance and assignments, but that is in some regard also a good thing.



THANK YOU to ISCOM and KEA, for giving me the opportunity to go on exchange in another country.

- Rasmus Christiansen