



EXCHANGE REPORT

Kraków Fall 20015/20016

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Resumé

This is a report on my exchange experiences in Kraków. I study “Bachelor of Architectural Technology and Construction Management” (Byggningskonstruktør) at KEA, and went to Kraków in my 3rd semester. I chose Krakow because I wanted to stay in Europe, and I had been to Gdansk once a few years ago, which made a really good impression on me. I also read other students reports, and it seemed like a good choice. I studied at the architectural faculty at the university Politechnica Krakowska (Cracow University of Technology) in Krakow. My expectations were high when it comes to the social life, but for studying, I didn't have the biggest expectations, besides learning some basic architectural techniques and rules.

Studies

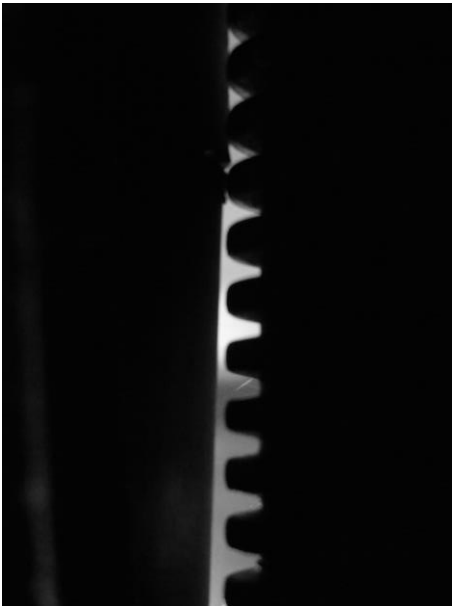
Photography (2 ECTS)

I came with the expectation, that we would learn something about the techniques of photography, but the first thing the teacher said was, that he wouldn't teach techniques, because we could learn everything on the internet – fair enough. We had four subjects through the semester and the goal was, to have four pictures for each subject at the end of the semester. The subjects were:

- Flat abstract composition
- Portrait
- Light and shadow
- Still life

There was an introduction lecture for each of the subjects, with examples and ideas. The course took place once a week, but you only had to go there, if you wanted to show pictures. If you think about taking this course, you should have a good quality camera – I bought one in Krakow.

This course was only for ERASMUS students.



Freehand Drawing – Perspective (2 ECTS)

For this course, I also came with the expectations of learning some technique, but it was the same concept as the photography class, which means, that my first drawings were really bad! However, after some practice and some YouTube tutorials, I managed to draw some nice sketches. The course took place once a week and students had to bring their own materials (paper 50x70 cm and a black fineliner 0,5 mm).

This course was for ERASMUS students and polish students.

CAD I (4 ECTS)

This course was about CAD modeling programs. We worked with following programs:

- AutoCAD
- 3DS-max
- Mudbox
- Sketchup

The course was once a week in the computer-lab of the university. The lab was well equipped with good PC's. The concept of the course was: Monkey see – Monkey do. It means that we saw what the teacher did on the big screen, and we did it on our PC. It wasn't always that exciting, but I learned the basic of the programs, and it's a good start if you want to learn more CAD programs.

The course was only for ERASMUS students.

CAD II (4 ECTS)

This course was about CAD BIM (Building Information Modeling) programs. We worked with following programs:

- Revit
- ArchiCAD

This course was also once a week and I combined it with the CAD I course (so CAD I + CAD II = 3 hours). It was the same concept as CAD I: Monkey see – Monkey do. Unfortunately, we spend more time with Revit than with ArchiCAD. This was not that exciting for me, as I already knew Revit, however I learned some more functions and maintained my skills. I would have preferred spending more time with ArchiCAD, because it is a very interesting program. In both programs, we drew a house, and then we talked about the differences of the programs. The professor was very nice, and he said it would be possible to get more ECTS points, than the amount written on the subject list.

The course was only for ERASMUS students.

Residential Buildings Design I (10 ECTS)

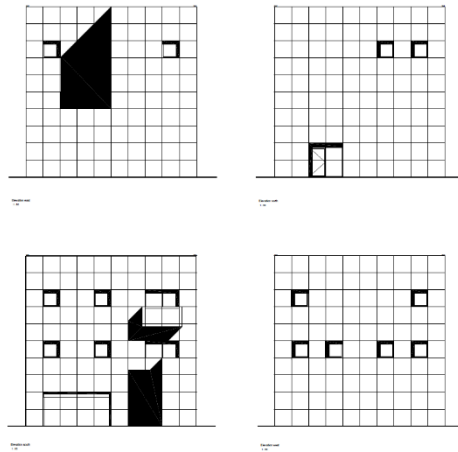
In this course, the subject was to design a single-family house, in a grid of 12x12x12. Every element of the building had to be made in cubes – more or less. At the end of the semester, we had to hand in following:

- Drawings in 70x70 cm (floors, sections, elevations etc.)
- An essay on cubism
- A Project description
- An axonometric drawing
- A hand-made perspective drawing
- A CD with all documents and drawings

I wasn't a big fan of this course. First of all, we were two ERASMUS students and about 60 polish students, which meant, that I didn't feel welcome. Everything in this course was very individual and there wasn't place to study at the university, so I worked at home, which I don't really like. The course was twice a week, but the procedure was only: showing up, being told what to do different, go back home. The teachers were

not really teaching, and the words I heard the most during this course were: “No, this is impossible”. At the end, I was not motivated for going to the course at all.

This course was for ERASMUS students and polish students.



Residential Buildings Design II (8 ECTS)

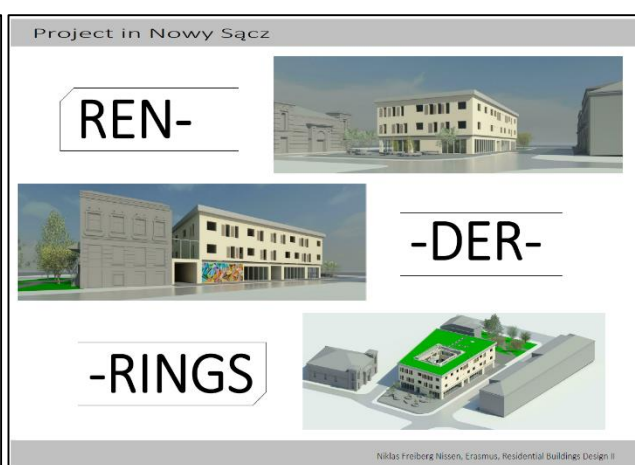
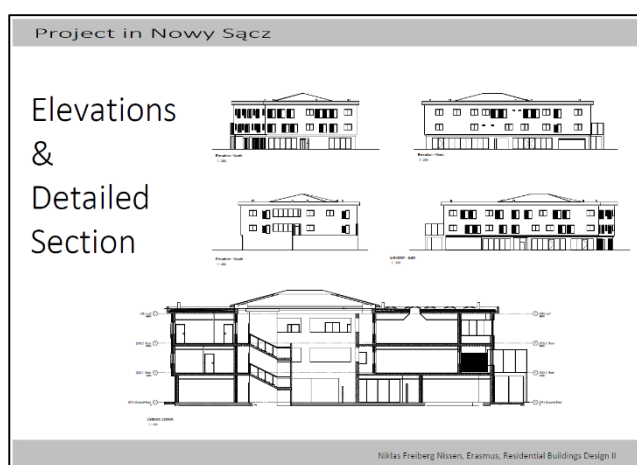
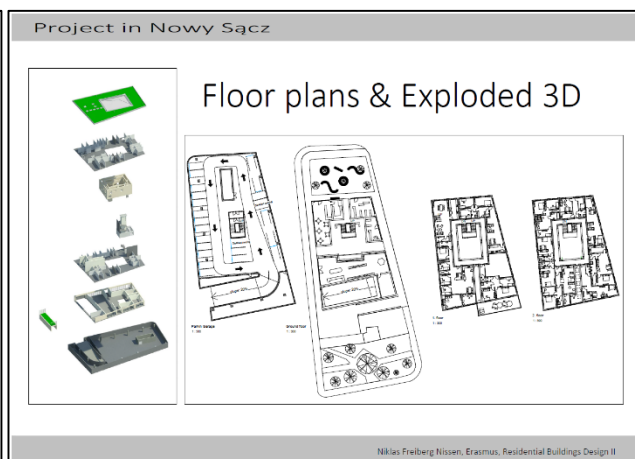
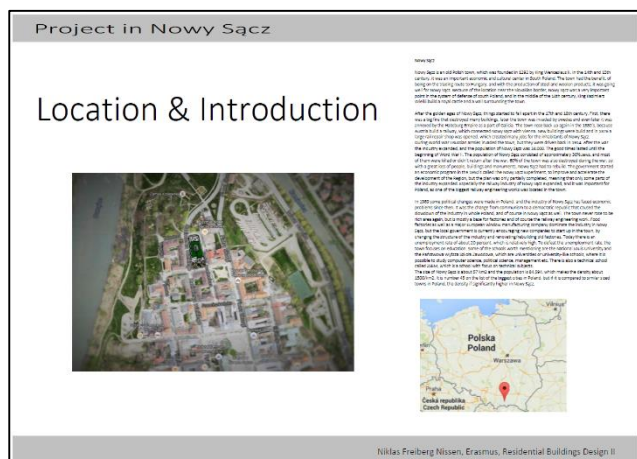
In this course, we had to design a multi-family house in a town called Nowy Sacz. The course started with a field trip to the town where the building site was, so we could see the place. At the end of the semester we had a presentation and had to hand in following:

- Drawings (floors, sections, elevations etc.)
- An essay on other similar projects
- A Project description
- 4 posters in B2 size (50x70 cm)
- A CD with all documents and drawings

The course was made for 5th semester architecture students, so I asked the professor if I could join, because I was only on 3rd semester. He accepted me and set down the expectations a bit. The procedure was kind of the same as Residential Buildings Design I, except the professor was more into the projects, it was possible to talk with him about the project and he gave me many good tips. I feel that I got a lot of good experience from this course, and would recommend it.

Residential Buildings Design II – dr. hab. Mateusz Gyurkovich

This course was for ERASMUS students and polish students.



Social and cultural life

I had a lot of luck meeting some really nice people from different universities. I spend a lot of time with this group, and went on various trips both in Poland and in neighbor countries. The good thing about being on exchange is, that other exchange students also search for new friends, and on this basis it is very easy to find new friends. At the beginning of the semester there were a lot of activities and events hosted by the ESN (Erasmus Student Network). They had activities like bubble football, laser tag, tram-party (highly recommended!), trips etc. This is a good and fun way to get to know people.

Krochow itself is also a good place to start friendships, as almost everybody lives close to each other (except me and my flat mates), there are hundreds of cheap cafés and bars, there are a lot of activities and there's minimum one club open every night.

Here are some nice places to go, good activities and useful sites:

Places to go:

- Alchemia in Kazimierz – one of the oldest bars/cafés, one of my favorites
- Game-Pub in Old Town – In this bar you can drink cheap beers and play board games and console games like Guitar Hero, Fifa, Gran Turismo, Tekken etc. for free.

- Huki Muki in Old Town – This bar has open 24 hours. They have cheap beers and shots (especially on Thursdays), and they make a very good burger for only 8 Złoty (14 DKK).
- Pijalna is a cheap bar where you can eat traditional Polish food. There are several of these bars around Krakow.

Activities:

- Free Walking Tours – this is a foundation, which arranges walking tours through Krakow for “free”. The idea is that you pay whatever you feel like paying. The guides are nice and it’s a great way to explore Krakow. Meeting point is at the Saint Mary Church in the middle of the Old Town.
- Lake – There is a big artificial lake a bit south-west of Krakow, which is really cool. Look at a map of Krakow, and you will easily find it. It’s fast to go there by tram and takes approximately 15-20 min. There is a fence around the lake and it’s not open for the public, but many people go there and there are many holes in the fence to go through. Perfect for a single-day trip.
- Laser-Tag – It’s a lot of fun. I went there with the ESN, but it’s probably possible to go there on your own as well.
- Exit-games – The concept is, that you get locked into a room with 3-4 friends, and you have to solve a variety of puzzles, to find the key to get out. There are more of them in Krakow, so just google it.
- Ausswitch – Ausswitch is about one hour away from Krakow and it is not very expensive, because you only pay for transportation and a guide. Everybody should go there. Period.

Trips:

- Zakopane – We went to Zakopane, which is in southern Poland, twice. There are busses leaving from Krakow every 20 minutes, and the ticket is only 15 Złoty (25 DKK). We went hiking in the mountains, but in the winter, it is also possible to ski there.
- Warszawa – The capital of Poland is a nice place to go for a weekend trip. If you get your train tickets early, you can be lucky to get cheap ones.
- Prague – If you haven’t been there you should go. If you have been there, you know you should go. It’s a few hours in bus/train, but you can find cheap accommodation and it’s a cool place to spend a weekend or more.
- Budapest – Same as Prague. A very nice place to go for a weekend. We only paid 13 EUR to go there by night bus (high standard bus with lots of legroom and displays for movies, games and music in the seats). If you go there with a group it shouldn’t be a problem to find cheap accommodation.

Usefull sites:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/567927946679437/?fref=ts>

<https://www.facebook.com/esnpk/?fref=ts>

<http://freewalkingtour.com/krakow/>

<http://krakow.jakdojade.pl/> (public transport)

<http://aqicn.org/map/world/> (air pollution index)

Practical information

Getting there

Krakow has a small airport with departures and arrivals from many different places. I bought my plane ticket about one month before I left for about 450 DKK (including 2 bags and hand luggage) one-way. After I left, the tickets got very expensive though, so remember to keep an eye on the prices. I went home to my parents twice during my stay, where I flew to Hamburg. These tickets were much cheaper – about 270 DKK two-ways.

From the airport, you can go to the city by bus (208 and 292), for 4 Złoty (8 DKK). You can also go by train, but I don't know how much it is. The busses are leaving every 20 min., but check <http://krakow.jakdojade.pl/> first. DO NOT take an airport taxi – they are very expensive (about 3-4- times the price of a regular taxi).

Public Transport

In Krakow the public transport consists of trams and busses. A normal ticket is 3,80 Złoty (5 DKK), but I bought a semester ticket on my student card. You will have to buy the student card for 17 Złoty (28 DKK) from the university, and after you receive it, you can go to a public transport office, and get a semester ticket on the card. The semester ticket is about 270 Złoty (450 DKK) and for me it was very useful. The public transport generally works great, but when you are in a hurry, it's delayed.

Living

I found an apartment on a German website before I went to Krakow (I speak German), but unfortunately it was located about 5-6 km from the city center. It doesn't seem like a lot, but everybody else I got to know lived in walking distance from the city center. In our flat we paid 239 EUR (1800 DKK) per month, and had extra expenses for about 180 Złoty (300 DKK) per month. For people going to Krakow, I would recommend, to go to a hostel in the beginning, and start the search of a place to live from there.

Groceries and other prices

Bread	3,50 PLN	6 DKK
Eggs	5 PLN	8,50 DKK
Sweets	5 PLN	8,50 DKK
Pasta	4 PLN	6,75 DKK
Meat	5-20 PLN	8,50-33 DKK
Beer (supermarket)	1,70 PLN	2,80 DKK
Cigarettes	14 PLN	23,50 DKK
Beer (bar)	4-10 PLN	6,75-17 DKK
Drinks (bar)	8-20 PLN	13,5-33 DKK
Food (restaurant)	12-20 PLN	20-33 DKK
Kebab	8 PLN	13,5 DKK
Print (A4)	0,10 Złoty	0,17 DKK

The prices are the cheapest prices, so of course you can go to places that are more expensive. I always multiplied the Złoty-price with two, and it was still cheap, it was really cheap. The accept credit card most

places in Krakow, and because I paid 30 DKK for every time I withdrew money, I used my card a lot in the supermarkets and bars.

Conclusion

I would do it again! I did not really like the study methods at the university, and sometimes I would be very frustrated. However, everything else was so nice, that I ended up being very happy about my choice. I would change a few things if I could:

- Not get a place to live before going
- Go there early, to travel around Poland, and get to know the city
- Do more sports

One thing you should also be aware of is the high amount of air pollution. Krakow is one of the most polluted cities in Europe and living there is not healthy. Exercising outside is a very bad idea and it is said, that living in Krakow is like smoking 2500 cigarettes per year. You can follow the air pollution index on this website: <http://aqicn.org/map/world/>

Don't hesitate to contact me 😊

Pictures



Picture 1 – Zakopane



Picture 2- Budapest



Picture 3 – Prague



Picture 4 Warszawa



Picture 5 - Bungee jumping in Krakow



Picture 6 – Halloween party in Krakow



Picture 7 – Halloween party in Prague