



POLITECHNIKA KRAKOWSKA

Eramus Report

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Introduction

I chose to study abroad at the Cracow University of Technology in my 5th semester. Why Cracow? Well, I'm part-Polish and grew up speaking Polish. I wanted to experience living in my grandparents' home country and improve my Polish. I chose to go in my 5th semester because I didn't feel motivated to learn about renovation, and I had heard from upper-level students at KEA that 5th is the best semester to go abroad. My expectations for my exchange were to integrate with Polish culture and language, have easy classes that were more design-oriented, and spend every weekend partying.

University Experience

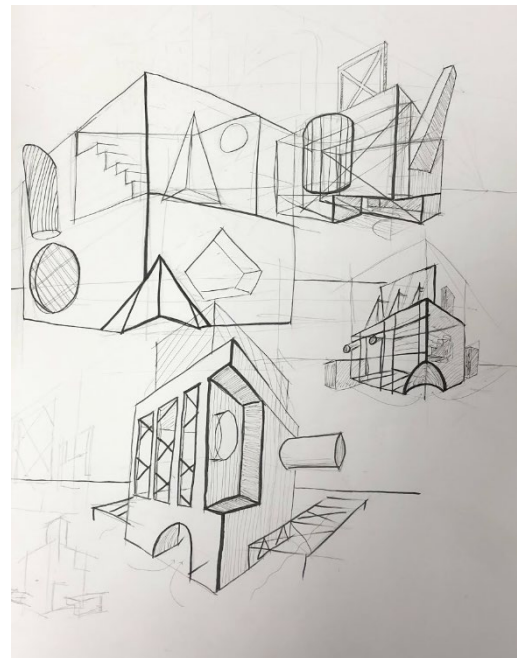
Here is a quick summary of the classes I took and the amount of ECTS. At the time of writing this, I am still waiting for my final marks for the semester

Class	Credits
Drawing I	2
CAD I	5
CAD II	5
Building Construction	
Systems	9
Building Surveying	9

Classes

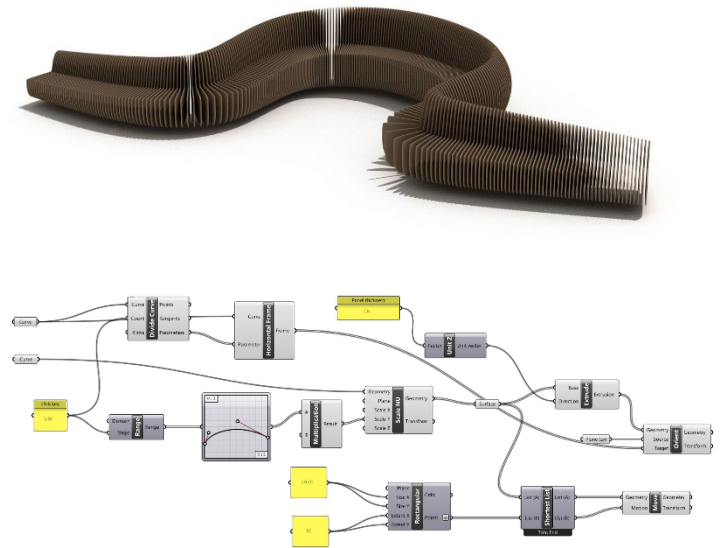
Drawing I

This class is an Introduction to Perspective Drawing with a Pen. I needed to buy high-quality paper and ink pens for this class. We met once a week in the Drawing Room, a small auditorium with stools. In this class, I was hoping to learn how to draw better in perspective; however, this class mainly consisted of Polish students with excellent drawing skills. Around four professors would walk around the auditorium and provide feedback on your drawings. We usually made a drawing per class around a specific topic, which was almost always an architectural sketch inspired by a famous architect or building. There was no homework, and you will pass as long as you attended class and turned in drawings.



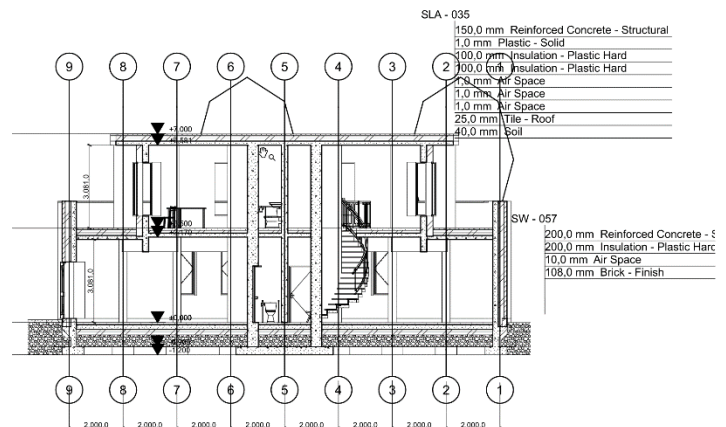
CAD I

In this course, we started by learning Rhino and Grasshopper. We met in a computer lab and followed the professor along as we went through different introductory Rhino functions and some parametric scripting in grasshopper. You didn't have to buy a Rhino license if you didn't want to, but then you would have to spend some extra time in the computer lab after class. The professor, Szymon Filipowski, was super knowledgeable in his subject, but his English was not the best. I nonetheless would recommend this class for KEA students as parametric design is an important skill to learn. Near the end of the semester, we had a final project, and I made a bench through a grasshopper script.



CAD II

This class taught us ArchiCAD and Revit, but mainly focused on ArchiCAD. It was an introductory software course where we started from the very basics and followed along as the professor showed us the different functionalities of ArchiCAD. The professor was Rafał Zieliński. He knew his subject well and spoke excellent English. We turned in an ArchiCAD project that we made on our own at the end of the semester. I was able to get credit for the Revit part as I learned Revit at KEA.



Building Construction Systems

This is the class that was most similar to the curriculum at KEA. I picked a house designed by Polish architects and developed it with my buildup and details. The professor, Robert Marcinkowski, was very condescending and stubborn. Almost no one went to class. Whenever I went, I was the only one there. He was not specific about how much work I would need for 9 ECTS and told me I would repeatedly fail the class throughout the semester. He was, however, particular about how you should be drawn certain things and what line weights to use. You should be fine if you follow the examples from Polish students' drawings. He told me my project was really good and gave me an A. So if this is the professor, only take this class if you love making technical drawings.

Practical Experience

I took a flight from Copenhagen to Krakow for 816 dkk, including two checked luggage bags. I was able to organize a flat before I landed; however, I think this was a mistake. The price of Airbnb prices aren't so high, so it is definitely worth inspecting any potential flat in person. I found a basement studio flat an eight min. from school on Szlak for 3,400 dkk a month. I was later told by my Polish friends that I was overpaying. If I were to do it again, I probably would opt for a cheaper flat may be further away from the city.



For food, I definitely treated myself to takeout more than in Copenhagen because it was cheaper. There is Uber, Wolt, and Pyszne.pl (just eats) and they often run promotions that can give you some sweet discounts. Grocery store wise you will see that there is many convenience stores like Zabka and Carrefour Express. These stores have limited options and are usually more expensive. I did most of my shopping at the Carrefour in Galleria Krakowska and Biedronka. When it comes to the costs about food, drinks, and activities, I am so sorry, but I do not have any helpful advice for you. I am very good at spending money, but not so good at keeping track of what I spent it on.

Conclusion

Professionally, my expectations were not met. I found the university to be a little too old-fashioned and the requirements a little too open to interpretation. I had some great professors, but I also had a very poor one. But at the end of the day, I learned some things I would not have known at KEA that could benefit my future work and studies.

Culturally, I had a blast. I am part Polish, and although I grew up speaking Polish, I only spoke in my mom and grandparents' dialect and vocabulary. I learned a lot of new slang and overall improved my speaking skills. I got to experience the home country of my ancestor for the good and bad.