

K Center for International Programs **Study Abroad Guidebook** **KALAMAZOO** **COLLEGE**



STRASBOURG-1Quarter
Spring



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INTRODUCTION TO STRASBOURG CULTURAL GUIDEBOOK

With your departure for France approaching, many of you have begun to wonder what it's really going to be like spending one quarter in Strasbourg. What will you experience living, studying and traveling to other parts of the country? Is there anything that you are forgetting to do before you leave? Will your French be good enough to allow you to do well in your classes and to meet people outside of class? And just how much should you plan to pack in your suitcases? Hopefully, this guidebook can begin to answer these and other questions.

The information that follows is a collection of advice from former participants, the Center for International Programs and on-site program staff members. All information was accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing. We recognize that there might be some necessary changes in the program made on site. If you have updated information upon your return from Strasbourg, please let us know. When you return, we would greatly appreciate it if you could help us update this guidebook for the next year's participants.

Expect the unexpected. Ultimately, no written materials or suggestions are going to fully prepare you for what lies ahead. The best you can do is to commit yourself to keeping an open mind, remaining flexible, and being patient with yourself as you're adjusting to your new environment.

We would like to thank the former participants from previous years who have shared their experiences and helped with the editing process!

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BEFORE YOU GO... PREPARATION FOR STRASBOURG, FRANCE

France is the largest country in Western Europe, and is about the size of the state of Texas. In general, France enjoys a temperate climate, with fewer extremes than the United States. In the winter, zero-degree temperatures are rare except in the mountains, and temperatures over 90 degrees in the summer are uncommon except in the southern areas. Depending on the year, winter in Strasbourg varies between wet and rainy to cold and snowy, so prepare for either.

Strasbourg is the ninth largest city in France, with a current population of 700,000 people, including its suburbs. Located near the French/German border in the Alsace region of France, the Alsace region lies between the Vosges Mountains and the Black Forest in Germany, bordered to the East by the Rhine River. In the 3rd century, the first grape vines were brought to this area, and ever since, the dry white riesling, sylvaner, gewürtztraminer, pinot blanc, and tokay wines have been Alsace's glory and wealth.

Strasbourg has always been the capital of the province, and is also now the capital of Europe. The city attracts many visitors due to the presence of the European Union Parliament, Council of Europe, and internationally-known Christmas Marchés. The Center of Strasbourg has an extensive past, and is centuries old. It is dominated by its famous gothic cathedral that was built on Roman foundations beginning in 1176 and completed in the 15th century; upon its completion, the Cathedral was the tallest in the world for several centuries. Unlike the rest of France that is predominately Catholic, Strasbourg's population is equally divided between Protestant, Catholic and Jewish people. Strasbourg has some German flair evident architecturally, as it has been occupied by Germany during war times – owing mostly to its close vicinity to the French/German border. The city center is, approximately, a 20-minute walk away from Kehl, Germany. These occupations occurred in 1870 during a two-month siege at the end of World War I and then again from 1940-1944, during World War II. Due to World War II, France is also very connected to cultivating a collective European identity through the European Union. There was dissent regarding Brexit from French leaders that now affect borders, traveling, finances, as well as the pride of a European identity.

With Strasbourg's location and history, many visitors comment that it seems to be the perfect mix of French and German culture in one city. The region is characterized by half-timbered houses, flower boxes, breweries and wide boulevards reflecting Germanic influence while spacious squares, a Gothic cathedral and the ancient vineyards found in the outskirts of the city have a distinctly French flavor. A former participant describes Strasbourg as "the perfect size for living during study abroad: it is compact yet there are things to do all the time. It is great for

students because there are three universities there so the city is literally filled with young people. I also felt very safe, and was able to comfortably walk around by myself at any time of day in any area.” In Strasbourg’s downtown area, it is not uncommon to see the occasional protest. Another former participant describes the protests as useful for understanding current political climate as well as community issues. In fact, the past participant was often able to discuss with protestors about what was taking place and why during the demonstration.

Additionally, there have been recent movements in across France solidarity with the U.S.’s Black Lives Matter movement. In fact, France has their own Black Lives Matter movement that’s credited to Assa Traoré, a Black French woman from Paris. Assa Traoré often mentions that race in France is complex, as many French born people are taught to view all French people as just French. The concept of race is often left out of political discourse, and many French people believe it is up to the local community to address racism specific to their area; however, Traoré is calling for French politics and society to understand that racism is also a systemic problem that must be addressed in policy and public discourse. In addition to Black Lives Matter, France’s government and society is also very focused on creating a sustainable environment and they have many social programs available to citizens and refugees.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

It is necessary to have a passport to travel to France for the short-term program. You should carry a copy of your passport (the first page with your photo and personal information) with you at all times. Only carry your actual passport whenever you leave the city or country. We strongly recommend that you leave a copy of your passport with Madame Tennis, your Resident Director, and at home in the United States and keep an electronic copy in the cloud (email or google drive).

*U.S. citizens are legally allowed to remain in France, without a visa, for a total of 90 days. Please note that visa requirements are subject to change at any time. This study abroad program is less than 90 days in duration, and thus the CIP cannot apply for a visa for you. If you intend to remain in France beyond the study abroad program (longer than 90 days total), you will need to apply for a visa. If you wish to contact the Consulate General of France, they are in Chicago and can be reached at 312.327.5200 or by email at contact@consulfrance-chicago.org (subject: name of dept. you wish to reach). Please understand that if you remain in France longer than 90 days without a visa, you will be in France illegally and risk deportation. The Resident Director and the CIP have no control over French law and are not able to assist you in this matter. Please plan ahead and contact the consulate before you leave.

If your passport is lost or stolen while you are abroad, you will need to reapply at the U.S. Consulate in Strasbourg, located at 15, avenue d'Alsace (telephone: (33) 388353104) or in Paris at the U.S. Embassy, located at 2, avenue Gabriel (telephone: (33) 142 122222).

FLIGHT CONNECTIONS

- Airlines recommend arriving at the airport at least 2 hours early for domestic flights and 3 hours early for international flights
- Keep boarding passes and your identification (passport) easily accessible while traveling
- Please take care not to miss connecting flights. It is your responsibility to be in the boarding area at the appropriate time
 - Should you miss a connection, however, please note that you must be re-routed by an airline representative at the airport. Kalamazoo College's travel agent and/or Kalamazoo College can do nothing to alter your airline tickets at that point
 - Once you have had your airline tickets altered, you should contact Mme. Tennis (see contact information in the MAIL section) so that she knows of your delay and can give you new arrival instructions
 - If you are unable to contact Mme. Tennis, contact the CIP staff (contact information can be found in the EMERGENCIES section), and we will try to assist you

AIRPORT SECURITY

Federally mandated airport security regulations require more time to properly screen travelers and their luggage. When reconfirming a flight, remember to check luggage and carry-on restrictions. For further information on security measures, see the Federal Aviation Administration website at www.faa.gov.

MONEY

The question that most people bound for a stay in France inevitably ask--"How much money will I need to bring?"-- can't be easily answered. You will want to budget some personal spending money for the occasional meal out, night life, personal travel, etc. People spend money differently, whether in Kalamazoo or in Strasbourg. The proof of this is in the fact that former Strasbourg program participants report having spent between \$1000 and \$2000 (not including a Eurail pass), with an average around \$1500. So, the best piece of advice is to know yourself and your spending habits. If you plan to do a lot of traveling, invest some time before leaving to

check out prices on-line, talk to former participants, and plan your budget. At the time of editing, the exchange rate was around .93 euros to the U.S. dollar.

In general, prices in France tend to be more expensive than in Kalamazoo. Strasbourg is a tourist town, so prices might be high compared to other areas in France. Some costs are unavoidable: as is the case on nearly all study abroad programs, you'll need to buy course materials in France. You may spend upwards of \$35 per class.

You'll also need to spend money just like you do in Kalamazoo – for the coffee before class, pizza, etc. You will receive a modest stipend to pay for meals not provided by the program/host family.

You will also spend money when you travel. While hotels vary greatly in price and quality, you can obviously save money by planning day trips to nearby cities when possible, instead of planning to stay two or three nights in those cities. If you eat in restaurants when you travel, plan to spend a lot of money. Even restaurants of average quality can be quite expensive. Past participants report that ordering food *à la carte* from the menu is much more expensive than choosing the *plat du jour* meals. Occasionally you can reduce food expenses while traveling by going to the grocery store for one meal of the day and buying fruit, cheese, bread and other relatively inexpensive foods instead of going to restaurants for every meal. Also, look for hostels or accommodations that provide breakfast in the morning with the price of your stay. The CIP strongly discourages students from “couch surfing” or trying to find accommodation on Craigslist. For obvious reasons, this is dangerous.

The majority of money machines in France, and Europe as well, accept American ATM cards. This is the most popular and convenient way to access money. Discover Credit cards do not (except on rare occasions) work in France or elsewhere in Europe. Visa is the best way to go and Mastercard is a close second; American Express is generally accepted but not always. However, Diners Cards - including Discover cards - are unreliable. If you decide to use this option, make sure you check your balance and inform your bank that you will be traveling outside the US. You should understand the fees associated with international ATM withdrawals. In addition, you will want some cash in case the ATM machines “eat” your card, are not working, or if the card is stolen. There is nothing more frustrating than ending up with no way to access your money while you are far from home.

You will be given a meal stipend on-site for lunches, with a payment schedule that will be determined by Mme. Tennis. Meal stipends are paid only when classes are in session.

Financial Issues

The Center for International Programs does not handle the billing for the program. The Business Office issues the bills and will send your bills for the program cost to your home address just prior to the beginning of each quarter that you are abroad, as when you are on campus. For specific questions regarding your account, please direct these to the Business Office, 269.337.7226 or businessoffice@kzoo.edu



CLIMATE

The average temperatures in April and May range from 15°C to 25°C (59°F - 77°F). Similar to Kalamazoo, it is hard to predict what is going to happen in Strasbourg. Layering t-shirts and sweatshirts (or sweaters, to appear less American) is probably the best idea, with a raincoat or an umbrella, of course!

LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS AND PACKING SUGGESTIONS

You will need to check with the airline's website to determine your luggage restrictions for both checked and carry-on baggage. Do not assume you will be able to check two bags. Even if you're willing to pay overweight or excess baggage charges at the airport, we strongly encourage you to resist doing this and to pack as little as possible. Additionally, when flying smaller and/or cheaper airlines (such as RyanAir) the luggage restrictions is much lighter, so bringing small duffel that would accommodate this would be advantageous.

In general, casual wear in France is dressier than in the U.S. Where Americans wear jeans and t-shirts, French students will wear cotton and polyester pants and skirts, button-down shirts and blouses, and possibly a jacket. Be aware that what is perfectly acceptable in a Kalamazoo classroom may earn you a few odd looks in a French classroom or in the city. However, you might find Strasbourg to be a little more laid back about fashion, as there are many international students and tourists. The surest way to let people know you're an American is to wear tennis shoes or flip-flops and a baseball cap.

Bring clothes that you can layer. Many French buildings don't have the heat turned up very high (and turn it off completely at night), so you'll need to pack clothing suitable for being indoors without heat, especially clothes that you can wear in layers (t-shirts, sweaters, and pullovers are especially useful). This will also serve you well when traveling, as you can adjust to other climates by adding or removing the appropriate layers.

Jewelry: It is a good idea to leave favorite jewelry items at home. Never pack anything valuable or sentimental. Costume jewelry is more practical than the real stuff, especially if it is lost or stolen.

ELECTRONICS

Most laptops, iPhones, tablets, Kindles, etc. have a built-in converter and you only need to purchase an adapter to be able to plug-in the device. PLEASE CHECK YOUR ELECTRONICS TO MAKE SURE THIS IS THE CASE. Don't make assumptions! For small items, such as hair dryers and flat irons, either think about buying one in France or consider buying a travel version (that allows you to adjust the current).

PACK LIGHT!

Recommended Packing List

- ☐ Clothing: pieces that mix and match;
- ☐ Moderately warm coat
- ☐ A nice outfit (separates that will mix and match with your more casual clothes)
- ☐ Raincoat (not a must, but a waterproof pull-over is a great idea! It will rain a lot in the spring)
- ☐ Towels for living in a dorm (you can purchase these when you arrive in Strasbourg)
- ☐ Folding umbrella
- ☐ T-shirts (good for layering and to reduce the amount of laundry you do when you travel)
- ☐ Warm pajamas and slippers
- ☐ Backpack
- ☐ One or two pairs of shorts – note you will be noticed as French students rarely wear shorts;
- ☐ Underwear and socks

- ☐ Toiletries (enough to get you started)
- ☐ Gifts for friends that you make (see suggestions in "Gifts" section)
- ☐ Plastic baggies (large Ziploc bags are great for holding wet towels and dirty laundry)
- ☐ Money belt or neck pouch
- ☐ Luggage locks (good for securing backpack zippers while traveling)
- ☐ Toilet paper (you need to supply your own in the dorm)

Additional items to bring:

- ☐ Extra passport photos
- ☐ VISA or MasterCard credit cards or an ATM card (American Express is not commonly accepted in Europe)
- ☐ Contact solutions/glasses (It's a good idea to bring a copy of your prescription with you in case they are lost or stolen.)
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ Prescriptions (in original containers)
- ☐ Flashlight

NOTE: Do not pack your passport, money, or valuables in your checked luggage. Keep those items in a money belt or pouch on your person. Keep your carry-on with you at all times.

GIFTS

It is a good idea to have small tokens to give to new friends and/or your host family. Some good ideas include:

- ☐ Maple syrup or candies
- ☐ Baseball caps

HOUSING BACK AT K

You will need to submit a housing contract and proxy form to housing@kzoo.edu prior to your departure. The designated proxy will choose a space on your behalf during the Fall Housing Selection Process. This process occurs during late Spring Quarter.

If you are interested in a living-learning house when you return, you must coordinate with the group you are hoping to live with so they may account for you during the LLHU Selection Process. This process occurs in Spring Quarter prior to the general Fall housing process. Should the proposal not be accepted and you are not offered the opportunity to live in a living-learning house, you will need to make alternate arrangements.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL ISSUES

You need to be up to date with your standard immunizations such as measles and tetanus. Please refer to <https://cip.kzoo.edu/study-abroad/healthsafety/> for the information on required and recommended immunizations. If you have any questions contact the Health Center (269.337.7200) or your personal physician. Of course, be sure to make doctor appointments if you are concerned about a particular problem (i.e. make a dentist appointment for that sore tooth, etc.).

French Healthcare System

The French healthcare system is very different than the U.S.'s healthcare system. The French system operates under a national healthcare model that provides coverage to all legal residents, and their healthcare insurers all reimburse at the same nationally set rate coverage. It is a good idea to understand how your own insurance coverage works abroad and how to submit for reimbursement if you do see a doctor while in France; however, the costs are extremely lower than in the U.S.

You will find that what are prescription drugs in the U.S. are often sold over the counter in France. So, if you are feeling sick, generally you may explain your ailments to the druggist and she or he will provide you with medication. However, you should know the generic/ scientific names of medicines before you leave. That will be immensely helpful when you're trying to explain to the pharmacist what you need.

Common medical complaints include sore throats and stomach aches. Bring aspirin or Tylenol, yeast infection creams, Midol, Roloids, cold medicine, laxatives, Pepto-Bismol, vitamins, and other medications you generally use. Shampoo, soap, (non-applicator) tampons, and sanitary napkins are sold in France for more than their cost in the United States. You may want to bring these items if there is a specific brand that you cannot do without, or budget your money accordingly.

If you are ill, please notify Mme. Tennis and see a doctor. Doctors are generally not expensive, so the cost should not be prohibitive. Mme. Tennis will provide you with the names of doctors in town during your orientation following your arrival. Be aware that you will have to pay for

services and then submit them to your insurance company in the United States for reimbursement.



YOU'VE ARRIVED!

ARRIVAL IN STRASBOURG

When you land in Europe from the U.S., you'll be required to pass through passport control. Be prepared to present your passport and the boarding card for your flight to Strasbourg. The airline should automatically transfer your luggage from your international flight to the airplane transporting you to Strasbourg. Pay close attention to the instructions that are given to you on the airplane as you arrive in Europe.

In the past students have flown through to Frankfurt and taken the Lufthansa bus to Strasbourg. Mme. Tennis will meet you at the appropriate stop in Strasbourg and escort you to your accommodations.



It is possible that your luggage will be searched, as immigration officials will monitor you as you exit the customs area. In some international airports, guards with trained drug-detecting dogs and guns will be monitoring luggage collection. Do not be alarmed by this; just remember to keep your luggage with you at all times, and do not agree to carry anything that a stranger might try to give you. Cooperating with all airline and immigration officials is very important

and will make your travels more pleasant – if you are asked questions, remain calm and understand that they are there to protect you too!

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Most of Strasbourg, including the university, is within walking distance. There will be times when a bus or taxi may be necessary, and you can get a bus pass once you're there (ask Mme. Tennis about how to get one). Bus passes will give you unlimited rides on a monthly basis cost around \$25 per month. You can buy them at the bus office in the center of Strasbourg or at the station. You should be able to buy bus tickets at a local tabac (newspaper, stamp, and tobacco store). The last buses run until about midnight. Make sure you know which ones stop running earlier, though.

If you're out later than midnight, taxis are also a good option. They are expensive, so you won't want to rely on them as your sole method of transportation, but please don't take safety risks by walking a long way home at night alone.

Bus and Tram

- Popularly used by people who live in Strasbourg and they are accessible
- They can get crowded, so if you need to get to class or ICRP during the morning make sure you account for extra travel time
- Passes that will give you unlimited rides on a monthly basis cost around \$25 per month.
- Purchase at the bus office in the center of Strasbourg near the tram stop north of Place Kleber
- It is also possible to purchase one-trip bus/tram tickets at each tram station when needed
- The last buses run until about eleven PM and the last trams run until about 1 AM

Taxi

- Expensive, so you won't want to rely on them as your sole method of transportation,
- A safer option for when out late and for students who live outside of the Strasbourg city limits

Bicycle

- The city is very bicycle-friendly
- You can rent or buy a bicycle once you're there
 - There might be a security deposit when renting (~100 euros)
- Please ride with a helmet and use caution as there are many bike-car traffic accidents in Strasbourg!

MAIL

You can expect letters sent to the States from France to take a week to arrive, and letters sent from the states to France to take two weeks to get to you. Packages can take longer.

Your mailing address/phone number during your stay in Strasbourg is:

Your Name

s/c de Mme. Molly Tennis

6, rue Mozart

67000 Strasbourg France (Telephone: + 33 6 89 55 81 56)

Please remember that France is 6 hours ahead of Michigan. You may choose to use the address and telephone number of your dorm instead, which you'll know after your arrival.

TRAVEL/VACATIONS

When you travel in or out of the country, you must inform your host family or Mme. Tennis of your plans, indicating where you are going and approximately when you will return. If you are planning on being gone for more than 48 hours, please notify Mme. Tennis and leave her a copy of your itinerary. Should an emergency happen at home or with you, this information will make communication possible.

Tips on Independent Travel

- Avoid traveling alone. This will ensure that you don't have to deal with illness, theft, or emergencies by yourself – and it's more fun in pairs or groups!
- Definitely take some kind of pouch for documents, money, and tickets. The best rule is never to remove it. Sleep with it and take it in the shower if you have any doubts (especially for those of you planning to stay in International Youth Hostels or taking overnight trains).
- Be sure to use luggage locks.
- When traveling, keep documents with you, not in your luggage on a train rack or in a checked bag.
- Make sure you know where you're going and try to arrive in a new destination during daylight and with reasonable instructions on how to find your hostel/hotel.
- Plan an itinerary and email a copy to the Resident Director.

- If you feel uneasy, remove yourself from the situation, it is best to err on the side of caution than worry about offending someone.
- Contact home when you get a chance, especially if there is an itinerary change.
- Be sure to track local news and follow news outlets on Twitter so you may receive alerts.
- Talk to experienced personnel concerning where you will enter boarding areas, which plane, train, or bus is yours, etc.
- Be wary of complete strangers who approach you and offer you rides. As is expected here in the U.S., never accept a ride from a stranger.
- Students are strongly discouraged from finding accommodation via Craigslist or a “share” site. This is as dangerous as hitchhiking.
- Always carry your passport with you while traveling.

Other Travel Suggestions (from former participants)

- The train line in France is called SNCF (like Amtrak here). If you plan on traveling by train more than 5 times, check out the 12-25 card which will save you anywhere from 20%-50% on all of your train rides. You will pay of the price of the card by the money you save in 2 trips to Paris.
- Flights in Europe can be much cheaper than flight prices we are used to in the U.S. Check out Ryan Air and Easy Jet (they have websites) for great deals.

SAFETY

Just as you would expect in a different city here in the U.S., you will find it necessary to become well acquainted with your new surroundings in Strasbourg in order to feel safe. You will need to find out which areas of town should be avoided, which means of transportation are reliable and safe, and what time of day is safe to be walking around. Use of normal common sense and caution will serve you and your money well in this regard: women should get used to holding on to their purses while they walk, and men should not carry their wallets in their back pockets.



Former participants report that you should be wary of walking late at night, for both men and women. You might consider bringing a whistle or some other similar safety device. It's always a good idea to ask your friends to walk with you. When you are walking around the city, and in other areas, be sure to walk assertively and as if you know where you're headed. A strong and confident posture will let people know that you're not a tourist. The best advice is to simply use your common sense and be aware. Please make sure that you have read the "Responding to Physical or Sexual Assault While on Study Abroad" section in the [Study Abroad Health and Safety Webpage](#) to be prepared in case you or a friend are in such a situation. It is always best to be prepared.

If you are drunk or otherwise impaired, you are much more vulnerable to potential safety hazards than when you're sober. Drinking (even 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks) impairs cognitive function and your ability to judge your surroundings. Drinking may also negatively affect your ability to make appropriate, safe decisions in response to these surroundings. As most of you will be able to legally drink alcohol for the first time, we encourage those of you who choose to drink to be mindful of how drinking habits may impair your safety. Please be safe, travel in groups, and make responsible decisions if you decide to drink.

Water and Other Beverages

Tap water in France is generally safe to drink. Many students are able to drink the water from the first day with no ill effects. Occasionally, your system may prove to be a little less adaptable, in which case you may wish to avoid it for a while.

EMERGENCIES

In case of an emergency, you should first contact Mme. Tennis. She will notify the appropriate people on site. We've also provided some basic emergency numbers here below. Although emergencies rarely happen that would require you to use these numbers, they can and do occur, and you'll feel better if you are prepared. Double-check this information with Mme. Tennis when you arrive.

Police	17
Fire	18
Ambulance	15

In case of an emergency that requires you to get in touch with us in the Center for International Programs, call one of the following numbers:

Center for International Programs

Voice: 269.337.7133

E-mail: cip@kzoo.edu

Abosedo Odukoya, Strasbourg Program Coordinator

Mobile: (269) 257-3197

E-mail: abosedo.odukoya@kzoo.edu

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**RESIDENT DIRECTOR**

Mme. Molly Tennis is the Resident Director of the Kalamazoo program in Strasbourg. She will act as your academic advisor, coordinate housing options, and oversee all other aspects of the program. She can be approached about any issue related to your stay in Strasbourg. When you arrive in Strasbourg, Mme. Tennis will be the first person that you meet and she will facilitate your orientation and be your contact throughout the program.

UNIVERSITY SETTING

Founded in 1566, the Université de Strasbourg keeps the clubs, squares and coffee shops busy. You will enroll in special courses at the IIEF and at the ITI-RI for international students located on the Université de Strasbourg campus.

CLASSES AND CREDITS

You are eligible to receive 3 K units for the spring short-term programs in Strasbourg: one unit in intensive French language, one in French Civilization and Culture, and one in European Political Institutions. In order to be counted as one K unit of credit, a course must have 40-45 total contact hours for a unit of credit. All courses except the European Institutions course (which will be taught in English) are taught in French. Grades from all study abroad courses will appear on the Kalamazoo transcript but are not included in the Kalamazoo grade point average. The transcript will list the title of the course, the appropriate discipline, and a translation of the local grade into the Kalamazoo "A, B, C" grading system. Students must earn the equivalent of a "C" in the local grading system to receive credit for course work completed abroad. Attendance at all classes is mandatory. Failure to attend class will result in the lowering of grades and possibly withdrawal from the study abroad program.

Grades must be appealed in writing within five weeks of their submission by the Center for International Programs to the Registrar's office. When the grades are finished, the Registrar will post them by the Registrar's Office and at the mail hut. It is your responsibility to obtain a copy of your grade report from the Registrar's Office, regardless of whether or not you are on campus.

Please see the program description or a staff member for a detailed explanation of the academic program and requirements.

Students must check in with the appropriate academic department before departure if they want the credit to count toward their major, minor, and/or concentration.

LIVING IN STRASBOURG



Housing will be determined and communicated during winter quarter.

Telephone Use

Most students report bringing their phone that works in Kalamazoo and purchasing an international phone plan OR buying a local SIM card upon arrival in Strasbourg. Wi-fi is available at the University and in your dorm. It will be enough to communicate and use What's app but may not allow you to

watch all your movies (make sure you understand how you will be charged for data if you get an international plan).

Skype/What'sApp/Facetime/Duo, etc. is the least expensive way of keeping in touch with family around the world. However, it is dependent on wi-fi. Not all homes will have wi-fi in each room of the home, so if this is an issue please let Mme. Tennis know and a solution can be found.

ADAPTING TO FRENCH CULTURE

Besides the challenge of adjusting to a new culture (which will be discussed further below), students will be faced with the task of adapting to a new country. Adapting will require you to make changes to your lifestyle—changes which may cause you to feel more limited in your freedom and choices than you would at home. Be prepared.

Doing Without

In addition to adjusting to the conditions mentioned above, there are things you will have to give up to live in Strasbourg—and this may be hard at first. Eventually, though, you may realize that you don't necessarily “need” what you thought you did. Not everyone misses the same

things and different people react differently to the sacrifices they must make. For some people, not having their own car may prove frustrating since possibilities for travel will be limited. For others it might be the unavailability of certain foods, or not being able to maintain a vegetarian diet. For some people it's hard to find clothes or shoes that fit or suit their taste.

You will also have to adapt to a new city and a new community. This means using a map to learn where things are and making use of public transportation. In a new community where you don't know anyone, your usual support systems will not be available. It's important to consider beforehand how you will cope in such circumstances. Your routine will be different. You may find structure where you don't want it and none where you do. This is a normal part of cross-cultural learning and adaptation.

France: The Second Culture

In addition to adapting to France as a country, you will be learning to adjust to a second culture. Learning to live in a new culture requires a great deal more than a list of do's and don'ts, or a brief description of the cultural traits of a society. For one thing, any culture is much too complex to narrow down to a definitive description. Descriptions can cover general characteristics, but they will not explain each specific encounter. Secondly, and more importantly, adaptation has as much to do with understanding oneself and one's own culture as it does with understanding a different culture.

As individuals, we are cultural beings with ways of behaving and perceiving what we do not always identify as springing from our culture. It is when we attempt to understand, or become a part of, another culture that we come to see that many of our values, beliefs and behaviors stem from our own cultural background. Interaction in a new cultural environment can cause conflict both within oneself and between oneself and the new culture. Some of this conflict is inevitable. However, by understanding yourself as a product of your own culture and of your own personal background, you will have a much easier time observing your interactions and learning to adapt to a new set of behavioral ground rules.

The task of culture learning requires a high tolerance for ambiguity and a patient willingness to work through culture shock in a constructive manner. Students must be willing to learn from situations where they may have mis-communicated or failed at communication. They will be expected to examine how their own cultural expectations may have interfered with interpretation, to use their observation skills to pick up on other clues as to what may be happening, and to reserve judgment while remaining tolerant of ambiguity until they reach understanding.

Exposure to a second culture not only affords students an understanding of the new culture derived from first-hand experience, it also gives them an awareness of their own culture that they have never had before. Without familiar surroundings and friends, students are led to examine not only their culture, but themselves as well. One student participating in an intensive study abroad program wrote, *"I'm learning to enjoy being with myself, independent and alone from lifelong cultural props. It's great!"*



Such awareness of one's own culture and self ultimately allows students to live more responsibly as members of the global community.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR A POSITIVE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

While common sense will get you through a lot of potentially awkward situations in an unfamiliar culture, you should be aware of a few cultural differences that exist between France and the U.S. You should bear in mind that France tends to be more formal socially compared to American standards; but if you're willing to adapt to your new culture by observing some of the French norms, you'll run into fewer problems at home, in the classroom, and elsewhere. Keep in mind these tips:

- Speak French in public as much as possible.
- Avoid wearing a hat in homes, churches or in class.
- Don't wear shorts or halter tops into cathedrals or churches -- you won't be allowed to enter.
- Don't take off your shoes in public.
- Be sure to cover your mouth in public when you yawn!
- Don't put your feet on furniture, whether in a home or in class.
- When going out in public with large groups of US Americans, be especially aware of your actions and behavior. US Americans have the reputation of being loud and obnoxious.
- When in bars, do as the French do: enjoy the company of the people you're with rather than absorbing yourself in the act of drinking as an end in itself.

- Avoid smiling at people on the street: it may be interpreted as a "come-on" rather than as a sign of general friendliness.
- Don't be offended if a French person doesn't smile at you. Relatively few cultures in the world smile as much as US Americans do.
- If you go outside wearing very short shorts, you may well attract some unwanted attention. However, Bermuda-length shorts are certainly acceptable in the spring and summer. One returning student cautions that French women never wear shorts – save for during sporting activities.
- Pay close attention to non-verbal behavior; communication isn't always direct and verbally expressed.

In greetings, men shake hands with other men. Women greet each other and men with a series of kisses on the sides of the cheeks. How many kisses (usually two to four) will depend on what part of France the people are from. Don't feel like you should necessarily know in advance how many times to kiss someone. Often, the French play it by ear as well. If you do not feel like kissing, no one will be offended if you don't.
- Don't chew gum in public.
- There is no guarantee that if you fail to observe some or all of these norms, you'll be openly criticized for it. However, many French people will regard a failure to acknowledge these sorts of norms as proof that you aren't particularly well mannered. The French culture is one that places great value on exhibiting proper degrees of respect and self-control in socializing; therefore, they won't be as inclined to want to meet you or spend time with you if you seem unwilling or unable to observe what they regard to be normal standards of conduct.
- If you are unsure of something, ASK, ASK, and ASK again! Mme. Tennis is an excellent resource. No one is going to expect you to catch on to everything at once, so anything you don't understand, ask people to repeat and clarify.

Cultural Adjustment

Over the period of your stay in France, you will probably learn the most from daily living in a different culture. For in the day-to-day experiences— the morning walk to the university, a trip to the market— lie the real challenges, frustrations, and joys of living in a new cultural environment. It is an immensely rich and rewarding experience, one that you can anticipate with pleasure.

However, everyone has bad days once in a while, some people more than others. It is normal to feel like you just want to go home -- everyone has felt that way at some point in his or her travels. Students who have been abroad in the past offer the following advice:

- First of all, be prepared to have unhappy days and know that they will pass.
- Remember that the French have bad days, too. If someone that you encounter is having a bad day, don't take it personally and automatically think they're unhappy with you.
- Keep yourself open to making friends with different kinds of people, including the people in the K group.
- Know how you handle stress at home, and try some of the same activities in France that help here in the States.
- Talk to others in your group, perhaps with someone who's having a good day but who can relate to your feelings.
- Try doing something that will involve you in the present; simply doing something can work wonders.
- For example, if you have nothing to do one Saturday and are feeling homesick or miserable, give yourself a task that will help you to get to know the local culture better -- like going to a local church, searching for a specific item in the market, or going to a café in a different part of town. Immerse yourself and keep busy.
- Sometimes, though, you might find that you need to be away from people and/or the local culture for a while, so you might choose to hole up with a book, listen to music, write letters, or write in your journal.
- Be patient with yourself. There will be times when you feel you are the only one who is miserable and having a bad day -- you're not!
- Lastly, just tell yourself that you can do it. You can survive in a different culture.
- You'll learn that everyone has his or her own way of coping in a different culture. What might help some people some of the time won't help everyone all of the time. But this



learning process, getting to really know yourself in a way you haven't before, is part of the adventure.

- For more detailed information about crossing cultures, check out:
<https://reason.kzoo.edu/cip/culture/>

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH FRANCE AND U.S. BEFORE YOU GO

Getting to Know France: Talk to Your Fellow Students!

One of the best ways to start preparing for your experience is to do some background research on France. Familiarize yourself with the current political situation and educational systems, historical background, current events, customs, and cultural norms. Former participants and the current French students on campus will be your best sources of information. They know what it's like to be in your shoes as you try to imagine what the next three months will hold.

Know What is Going On in the U.S.

Some people have had the embarrassing experience of learning that people abroad seem to know more about U.S. history and politics than they themselves do. You can expect to be asked for your opinion about current events and U.S. politics -- you can also expect to hear the opinions of others, and not all of them will be complimentary of the U.S. Should such a situation arise, the best advice is to remain respectful, even when disagreeing, and to resist the temptation to criticize France, as you are a guest. Start keeping abreast of current events and continue to do so while you're in France.



Speaking French

Probably all of you are feeling French-language anxiety -- relax! It will be okay if you arrive in Strasbourg and don't understand a word that people say to you. Everyone who has been abroad where another language is spoken has lived through that experience. There are, however, some great opportunities to practice your French here before you go. Some ideas for practicing French include: renting French movies, listening to French music, and

practicing the language with the French-speaking students on campus. We also recommend that you use language-learning apps like DuoLingo, or Mango, available through the Kalamazoo College Library website. However, if you don't end up doing as much as you would have liked,

don't panic. Regardless of how comfortable you feel about your French, the thing everyone has to get through is the fear of making mistakes. Remember, especially at first, that the goal is to get your point across. Proficiency will come with time and practice.

GENDER RELATIONS IN FRANCE

While in recent years French women have gained an ever more active voice, traditional male machismo is still alive and well (the Spanish concept and word applies in France). At home there are still clearly defined spheres of men's work and women's work. Most married French women still take their primary pride from a well-kept home and family, leaving career concerns in second place, although many may also work outside the home.

Dating patterns also differ. To go out as a couple is a much more serious step in a relationship than it is here in the U.S. One French exchange student remarked that American dating appears much more casual and that, contrastingly, in France, if you are "going out" with someone it is assumed that your relationship will be exclusive. She also adds that French couples are much more affectionate in public, and that it is culturally perfectly acceptable behavior to do so. If you get involved in a relationship, it's a very good idea to talk to a French friend and to ask what kinds of norms and behavior you should follow. It can be very confusing, especially with the language barrier.

Women should expect a certain amount of overt attention, and should not be surprised if they receive unwanted stares or comments in the street. As this attention is almost always non-threatening, you might want to do what the French women do: ignore it and walk away.

Sexual Health

Issues of sexuality can be complex in your own cultural environment, and much more so in one with which you are less familiar. While living in a culture that is not your own, it is more challenging to evaluate situations and to assess risks for emotional distress, disease, and assault as a result of intentional or non-intentional sexual contact. Sexually transmitted diseases are prevalent everywhere in the world, and the HIV virus can lead to death. We strongly recommend that students educate themselves on safe sex practices, pack condoms from the U.S. when they are traveling abroad, and be cautious about their sexual activity while abroad. For further information regarding HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, please consult with Kalamazoo College's Health Center or your physician.

Learning about French culture with regard to acceptable and safe sexual behavior, is one of your responsibilities as you prepare for and experience study abroad. It is also very important that

participants understand the local norms and cultural patterns of relationships between genders. What are the local dating patterns? Is it the custom for females to have male friends (or vice versa) or is that considered unusual? If you accept a drink or some other “gift”, are you tacitly consenting to sexual activity? If you invite a member of the opposite gender into your living space, is it culturally and/or legally acceptable for him/her to expect intimate contact? Is the legal definition of “consent” different from the definition in the U.S.? -- Most of the time, it is different.

At a minimum, you must be aware that some behaviors that may be culturally and legally acceptable, and seemingly safe, at home may not be in France – and vice versa. Certain behaviors will also communicate different messages in France than they do in the U.S. Mme. Tennis and other program staff members will give you guidelines to the local cultural norms for relationships between genders and laws regarding this issue.

LGBTQIA+

France legalized gay marriage in 2013. Discrimination in employment, housing and the provision of goods and services has been banned country-wide since 1985. Transgender individuals have the right to change their gender assigned at birth. LGBTQIA+ students are encouraged to research and seek out local LGBTQIA+ groups in Strasbourg. This can be a great way to make new friends and learn about issues important to the local LGBTQIA+ community. The LGBTQIA+ community is active in France, but catholic tradition and history also have an impact on acceptance.

Black Lives Matter

Racism can be complex in your own cultural environment, and much more so in one with which you are less familiar. While living in a culture that is not your own, it can be extremely nerve-wracking to confront and face; however, there are many U.S. Black Americans who have spent time in France and posted blogs about their experiences. Perhaps reading these as well as reaching out to previous Black program alum can provide context, solidarity, and comfort. Mme. Tennis is very aware of U.S. and French culture, and telling her any reservations you have at the beginning of the program would be helpful. We strongly recommend that each student educates themselves to the social and political climate of their host country, and we also encourage K students to check-in with each other about safety of Black peers.

YOUR RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

YOUR RETURN FLIGHT

You need to check your itinerary before you leave the U.S. and make sure you have the correct return dates. If you are interested in changing your return flight or have any questions about your ticket, please call your airline or travel agent before you go. Check to find out the amount of the charge to change the ticket.

If you are interested in requesting a special meal (i.e., kosher, vegetarian/vegan, low fat, etc.), call the airline directly approximately one week before your departure to make arrangements.

PREPARE FOR YOUR RETURN

As the end of your program approaches, you will likely experience a wide range of emotions and reactions. Just as you needed to prepare for your stay in Strasbourg before leaving the United States, you will also need to take care of many important details as your program comes to an end. As you are preparing to leave, please remember the following:

1. Make sure you are not bringing back items that will not be able to pass these items through U.S. customs.
2. Don't forget to set aside some U.S. cash for the trip home.
3. Remember: when completing custom forms, a trip to the country does not constitute time spent on a farm. Answering otherwise on the customs form when re-entering the U.S. will make for a long chat with immigration officials concerned about parasites, mad-cow disease and such!

Also, the Center for International Programs' Peer Advisers – seniors who have returned from studying abroad that organize campus events and help advise students on their study abroad experience – put together a list of recommended things to do several weeks BEFORE you leave for the US, and before you do any post-program travel. These are great things to do to prepare yourself for the end of the program and for the reverse culture shock you may experience when you return to the United States. The Peer Advisers, who have experienced the reintegration process, wish that they, themselves, had done the following:

- Take photos of your campus, living space, neighborhood, and surrounding areas so you can remember them and share them with your family and friends back home.

- Definitely set time aside for thorough 'last' goodbyes with friends and host families.
- Enjoy some of your favorite foods that you may not be able to get in the United States.
- Re-visit a place you went to when you first arrived and reflect on how that place feels differently now.

Start thinking of ways to be upfront with your family and friends back home about how you are feeling – write emails or make phone calls to share what you will miss from study abroad and ask them to be patient with you when you have ups and downs as you reintegrate.

READJUSTMENT

Going home is usually a very exciting prospect. Most students look forward to seeing family and friends they have missed, eating food you haven't had for so long, and enjoying activities that may not have been possible during study abroad.

Remember that returning home is also a transition very similar to your arrival in France. Just like your arrival, you can expect to feel frustration, anxiety and confusion at home, on your campus and with your friends. Craig Storti puts it this way in *The Art of Crossing Cultures*:

"The problem is this word home. It suggests a place and a life all set up and waiting for us; all we have to do is "move-in." But home isn't a place we merely inhabit; it's a lifestyle we construct (wherever we go), a pattern of routines, habits and behaviors associated with certain people, places and objects-all confined to a limited area or neighborhood. We can certainly construct a home back in our own culture-just as we did abroad-but there won't be one waiting for us when we arrive... In other words, no one goes home; rather we return to our native country and in due course we create a home.

At the foundation of this transition is the task of determining what to do with the changes that have occurred while you were away and the changes that have taken place within you as a result of your time in France. Life for your family, friends and teachers probably will not be the same as when you departed, but you were not there to gradually adjust to those changes with them. And they have not been able to get used to the things that are different about you.

Hardly anyone avoids the discomfort of this period of growth, but the good news is you will eventually find a way to include your new ideas, skills, and outlook in your life back in the U.S. Here are a few questions to consider before your return. Your answers may help you recognize the changes that have occurred during your sojourn.

- ☐ What have I learned about France's culture that I did not know previously? In what ways has this changed my view of France?

- ☐ By being abroad and able to compare my culture with a different culture, what have I learned about the history, values and traditions that make up my home culture?
- ☐ While I was away, what significant events have occurred in my country, in my family, in my hometown, among my friends and on campus?
- ☐ How have my personal values changed because of my study abroad experience?
- ☐ In what ways have my stereotypes or biases changed?
- ☐ What new skills have I developed (e.g. adaptation skills, second language proficiency, sensitivity, etc.), and how might I maintain them?
- ☐ How can I express these changes to my friends, family and teachers?
- ☐ What might I do to continue to deepen my understanding of France?

All of the members of the Center for International Programs staff have also experienced this challenge, and we encourage you to feel free to talk with us or someone in the Counseling Center if you are having problems adjusting, or if you just need to talk. The first week back on campus, we invite you to attend a “Reintegration” celebration, where faculty, staff, administrators and international students gather to welcome you back. In addition, we provide many opportunities for students to continue their study abroad experience through activities and functions on our campus. We welcome your participation.

As when you were abroad, be patient with yourself! Continuing to write in your journal about your feelings and experiences will help you to weather this difficult time.

ADVICE FROM PAST-PARTICIPANTS

Recommended Things to Do

“Meet as many people as possible and immerse yourself into the culture and your surroundings. Meet people outside of school - go to bars, restaurants, events that may be happening.”

“Just introduce yourself and make a joke about your poor accent – once you get past that first hurdle people are much more willing to chat!”

“Take some extracurricular classes or activities where you can meet more French people. I took a dance class and that gave me a perfect opportunity to meet French students which is really hard in the International school.”

Living in Strasbourg: Culture and City Life

"Guys - bring nice clothes! You really stand out as an American if you dress like you do here. Guys there usually wear (as normal attire) what would be considered 'club' attire here (Express men, banana republic etc.). Get some dark, nice, tighter jeans, some leather clubbing shoes (!) and some button-down shirts. There are a lot of clubs/bars that have stringent dress codes; if you don't meet them, you won't be let in."



"Bring lots of layers that look nice; cardigans, blazers, nice jeans, scarves, etc. You don't need to bring a lot because you'll be able to do laundry. And bring a good pair of nice black shoes, or nice looking tennis shoes (like dark pumas), that you can wear every day."

"France has the most vacation time within the year than any other country in the world."

"Stores close early – like 6pm – and they close for lunch"

"Use utensils to eat. It sounds silly, but French people eat fries with forks! They are also stingy on the ketchup"

"Really make sure to get a feel for the city; explore it because that's how you'll enjoy it the most. There is so much to find and discover, and so many nice people to meet."

"Cover your mouth when you yawn!!"

"French culture is still struggling against the patriarchal structure, as is the United States, but there were times I felt it stronger there."

"The city has everything you want if you look for it, in entertainment, shopping, history, and politics. The parks are beautiful and I literally took day-long walks when I had free time. I'll probably move there for a year or two after graduation. It's that good."

"It's such a comfortable city – it's the perfect size because everything is in walking distance and there is the tram too. I felt safe walking around at any time of the day/night"

Travel Advice

"The train system is very good throughout Europe, but isn't as cheap as I'd originally thought. Rail passes and inclusive resort vacations will end up saving a lot of money, even though they seem like one big price. I ended up wasting a lot of money because I didn't think connections and locations through well enough."

"Take advantage of either Ryan Air (a cheap flight service) or the train system. It is so easy and convenient! Travel as much as possible and when you stay in hostels, stay in community rooms so you can meet other people too!"

"Try to travel in France a lot. The south is beautiful and the west coast has a great culture. You can get good deals with SNCF and now the TGV is going more places than ever. Other parts of France are surprisingly different than Strasbourg, so it's good to see another town or two."

Courses

"The homework was more like the work I had in high school with completing exercises in a notebook, but the actual classes were more like the FREN201 course I had at K with regards to class discussions. It was challenging but manageable."

Food

"Try many varieties of wines and cheese - "Because Strasbourg is in the wine and cheese region of France, they are both super good and super cheap."

"If you go to Strasbourg, you HAVE to try tarte flambée. It is the traditional food of the Alsace region."

"I miss cheap baguettes and tarte flambée the most (regional favorites). Beer, wines, espresso, cheese, chocolate, and bread are STAPLES there."

General Advice for Study Abroad

"Arrive with an open mind and push yourself beyond the boundaries we all put up for ourselves. Many character-building experiences are complete with language barriers and culture shocks but make sure to participate and to not become solely an observer."

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<http://ilga.org/> - International LGBTQ Association website. Includes interactive country by country climate information.

<https://www.outrightinternational.org/> - The Outright Action International is an association of individuals and organizations dedicated to building a free and peaceful world, respect for individual rights and liberties, and an open and competitive economic system based on voluntary exchange and free trade. They currently have members and representatives in over 100 countries.

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree/index.jspa> - Includes both general travel information and a special discussion section (Thorn Tree Forum) for LGBTQ travelers.

BONNE CHANCE!!!!

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