

AUG 19 2015

STUDY ABROAD EVALUATION REPORT

Your Name:

Name of Study Abroad Program: ICU Summer Courses in Japanese(SCJ)

Quarter(s) of Participation: Summer A+B 2015

E-mail Address:

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

Some advice for arriving in Japan is to follow signs closely. Many signs in Japan are in both English and Japanese and can help you direct yourself efficiently. Japan Post Bank ATM's as well as 7-11 brand ATM's have good exchange rates and are good for exchanging. When arriving at ICU there are many maps posted around campus to help you find your way.

b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

The orientation for SCJ is fast, fun, and very efficient. They go over how class placement will be decided and how class levels are divided up. Course layouts are also given and a campus tour is also given. ICU has quite a large campus so its important to attend this orientation.

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- classroom structure:

The classroom structure was very effective in helping my learning. Because classes are divided into many levels (C1-C7) the classes are quite small. Everyday we have 3 periods of class for 1 hour and 10 minutes each. The class forms a semi-circle with desks while the sensei lectures in the center. This allows for everyone to be front row and keep everyone involved. For instance many days we would practice spoken role-plays in Japanese and this classroom structure allowed everyone to engaged in the material.

- instruction:

Instruction at ICU can be very hit or miss. Each level of class receives a different amount of sensei's based on amount of students. My class had 12 students and 2 sensei's, allowing for very personalized instruction. Overall the instruction was good; teachers break the course into learning new grammar, new kanji, and new vocabulary. The period that follows each newly introduced chapter material will be verbal practice of the material. I believe this is a good system, but it also can be insanely difficult at times. By only practicing verbally I found it hard to absorb the new material. I am a very visual learner and would have liked some written practice of the new material.

- teacher/student relations:

Teacher student relations were incredibly good in this program. By having more than one Sensei for such a small class, the teachers were really able to connect with each student on an individual level. In addition, once every week you are required to signup for a 15-30 minute 1 on 1 tutorial session with your teacher. In these sessions the teachers catered the workload for each student as seen best fit to aid him or her the most efficiently. My only complaint actually is sometimes I felt these sessions should be a bit longer.

- grading/exams:

My BIGGEST problem with this program was the grading system. The grading system at ICU is incredibly difficult. For one, the final exam is worth 45% of your grade, and the two midterms are in total worth 25% of your grade. This means in total 70% of your grade is based solely on tests. Leaving quizzes, homework, compositions, presentations, and participation comprising only 30% of your grade. This was hard for many of us in the program; even if we did all of the required work we could still fail the course. This coupled with the fact that the grading on tests was incredibly difficult. One misspelled word or one missing particle in an answer sentence would cause you to lose half of a questions points. The combination of such a heavy reliance on test scores and extremely strict test grading made the class much less enjoyable, as well as made the class more difficult than it needed to be. Many other college's who run study abroad programs at ICU give their students a 5-10% grade bump to their final grade because the class is SO difficult.

- administration:

The administration at ICU was spectacular. Every department was highly considerate of student needs and were always available when needed.

- library, computer, and classroom facilities

The facilities at ICU were also a high point of the program. The library is absolutely huge and open very late. There is also a computer lab in the library with more than enough computers available for use.

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

The instruction was overall good, but it really depended on your teacher. Because the classes rely so heavily on student teacher relations, a student can really be setback by having a teacher who is disinterested or doesn't teach effectively. I had one teacher who had a super positive attitude and made the course more engaging, and one teacher who was very intimidating, making the course more difficult.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

I can honestly say that I would not recommend this course to people who are beginning their study of Japanese language. The C1 (entry level) Japanese class covers an insane amount of material compared to the other Japanese language levels. If you are signing up for the C1 course be prepared to spend all of your time studying. The other classes seemed more reasonable.

As far as instructors I would highly recommend Kishi Sensei.

d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

My study abroad coursework related greatly to my UW education. I have specified my major as Asian Studies with a Japan Focus and learning the Japanese language has helped me fulfill my language requirement. Also being in the country I have studied firsthand really gave me the opportunity to cement the knowledge I knew about Japanese culture.

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

The options available to me were on-campus dormitory, homestay, or a local hotel.

b. Which did you choose, and why?

I chose to stay in the on-campus dormitory because it was the closest to the classroom and I could avoid an expensive commute. Also the dorm was provided with helpers (similar to RA's), that were bilingual in Japanese and English. Having these helpers was incredibly helpful in the program.

c. What would you recommend?

I would highly recommend staying in the dormitory.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

The campus was absolutely stunning! While most universities in Japan have very compact but tall campuses due to Japan's size constraint, ICU has a beautiful open campus that is filled with nature at every turn. It was truly one of the most beautiful places I have ever had the pleasure of staying at. The people in the community around the campus are friendly, but are also cautious of foreigners. Mitaka is sort of a small-town rural/suburban area that doesn't have the business of the more central cities in Tokyo prefecture.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

There is a nurse available on campus every day who was extremely friendly and eager to suit your needs. My only word of warning is to watch out for Japanese bee's! Because the campus is outdoors and right next to a forest there are a lot of insects and wildlife there. Japanese hornet's are the largest Bee in Japan and they have a very painful and occasionally lethal sting. Be weary of them!

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?
(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

The downside about this program is that the class is so intensive that you don't really get a long of time to indulge yourself in Japanese culture. Signing up for the culture events provided by the program is the best way to integrate into Japanese culture. The events they choose are often very traditional Japanese activities that help you to understand the culture. Because ICU is used to having foreign students many of the students there are very open and friendly to foreigners. They are easy to get along with!

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.
(e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

In general, Japanese people are very reserved and modest people. Due to this almost everyone you meet is very friendly and willing to talk and help you out. Younger people seem to be very open and friendly to foreigners and tend to really enjoy their company. Senior-aged Japanese citizens can sometimes have a very stand-off attitude towards you if you're foreign. Not that I blame them, looking at the events that occurred in WWII. In other words there is a generational gap. Overall everyone will be nice to you if you are being respectful, whether they like you or not.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

Japan Post Bank ATM's as well as 7-11 brand ATMS accept all kinds of international cards and offer the best exchange rates on currency. Just use GPS or Google maps to locate them, as they are everywhere.

b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

Japan can be a very expensive place to live. Produce is ridiculously expensive compared to the American standard rates. The dorm cost is high but definitely worth it. Other than the dorm cost I would say you need at LEAST a solid 400-500 dollars to live comfortably.

c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

If your planning on visiting other cities in the Tokyo area, you are going to want to use the local train(monorail lines). While each trip is only 3-4 dollars it really does add up quickly over time.

d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program, were there any problems? If so, how did you address them?

No problems.

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

Please comment on the effectiveness of the UW Study Abroad Office's services. What service could be improved?

I had very little help preparing for this program. I called the study abroad office over and over again and even visited numerous times to be turned away with no help. I basically did all my requirements to the best of my ability and knowledge and hoped that everything would work out okay. I think the counselors and workers in the Study Abroad Office work well...there are just not enough of them to keep up with the amount of students needing help. The University of Washington should really consider staffing more for the UW Study Abroad Office.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

For many schools this class is a pass/fail credit. This allows students to not stress so incredibly much about the incredibly strict and difficult grading system and heavy course-load. Many other schools count them as graded credits but provide a grade bump to the final grade because the class is so difficult. The UW counts this course as 12 graded credits, but does not provide any kind of grade bump as other Universities do. If you are very concerned with your GPA this may not be the best course for you. I only recommend this to people very interested in Japanese and who are ready to work a lot and sleep little.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

My personal expectations were that being completely immersed in a new culture would be a very big perspective changer, and would help me to better understand society from a holistic perspective. This program definitely met my expectations. Seeing a culture that runs and operates completely differently from my own helped me to get a more cultured outlook on life and myself in general.

From an Academic standpoint I knew this course would be very challenging. I feel I had a realistic outlook on how difficult it would be. In reality however it surpassed even my expectations. I studied for at least 7 hours everyday and barely managed to maybe hold on to a B(3.0) grade in the course. You really have to give it your all.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM/EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT

Your Name:

Name of Study Abroad/Exchange Program: ICU Intensive Summer Course

Quarter(s) of Participation: Summer

E-mail Address:

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AUG 29 2014

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

I recommend when you first arrive to go to a hotel near the campus a day before hand. Also it is very important that you reserve a hotel room ahead of time to save money. The hotel I stayed at was nice but expensive.

b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

My program exchange did have a short orientation. It helped me adapt by supplying information about the exchange program and information about getting around Japan.

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- classroom structure The number of students per class was very reasonable. About 12 students per class but some classes had up to 20 due to placement test results. About the same as UW
- instruction The instruction was excellent and provided excellent practice for foreign exchange students. I believe it was better than UW
- teacher/student relations The teachers were extremely friendly and understanding. Also, there were office hours and once a week meetings so you could ask questions if needed. It was a step up from UW.
- grading/exams The grading and exams criteria was harder than UW's but reasonable.
- administration The administration provides help if necessary but is not as good as UW's.
- library, computer, and classroom facilities The facilities were excellent and computers are available at the library. However, the library is not open on weekends so it is highly recommended you bring a laptop if you are staying in the dorms so you can connect to the internet. UW's facilities are much better than UW's except for maybe the dorms which were well maintained and excellent.

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

The quality and content of instruction was excellent. Every day was filled with excellent information and greatly helped my Japanese education. The use of powerpoint and explanations were very helpful for learning the language.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

I really recommend this course to any student who wants to learn Japanese. I also believe Matsumoto Sensei is an excellent teacher.

d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

The study abroad coursework helped me become more fluent in the Japanese language to help me achieve my goal of receiving a degree in Japanese Linguistics.

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

We could choose to live in an on-campus dorm, off-campus dorm, homestay, or find our own apartment.

b. Which did you choose, and why?

I chose to live in the on-campus dormitory because it was close to the classes making it very convenient. It was also a bit cheaper.

c. What would you recommend?

I recommend the on campus dormitory.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

The campus is very beautiful and quiet. The surrounding community is also quiet and clean. It has a small town feel to it.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

I believe that the area is very safe and Japan is a wonderful country to visit. However, it is a good idea to never travel alone because it is easy to get lost. Before going it would be a good idea to learn how to ask for directions or carry a map.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?

(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

I went out with friends and tried to use Japanese as much as possible. I also walked around with Japanese friends who knew the area.

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.
(e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

I noticed that Japanese speakers speak very fast and it can be hard to understand them. I just asked them to please say again.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

I did not do it while I was over there, but I highly recommend Citibank. I used a debit card at the on campus post office.

b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

The rent you must pay before you arrive. It was about \$800. Commuting to and from campus can be expensive so if you commute you will need about \$50 a month. If you like to travel during the weekends it will be \$100. There cafeteria is very reasonable and costs about \$4-5 a meal. With \$200 you could probably eat out and enjoy the cafeteria each month. If you want to go the cheap route, then \$100 could get you enough groceries to live off of for one month.

c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

Renting a cell phone there is extremely expensive so if you want to buy one it costs a bit of money. Also it costs \$5 for a SUICA or PASSMO card which I highly recommend you buy.

d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any problems? If so, how did you address them?

I used my own savings.

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?

Their services were effective.

b. If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

This program is best suited for students who are majoring or minoring in the Japanese language.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

They were very realistic. This program exceeded my expectations.

AUG 29 2014

International Programs and Exchanges • 459 Schmitz Hall • Box 355815 • Seattle, WA 98195
Tel: (206) 221.4404 <http://studyabroad.washington.edu/> Email: ipe@uw.edu

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM/EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT

Your Name:

Name of Study Abroad/Exchange Program: International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan

Quarter(s) of Participation: Summer 2014

E-mail Address:

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

It is important to contact the study abroad institute before your arrival to find out how to get to the place you will be staying at.

b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

They talked about insurance and the course.

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| - classroom structure | Fine |
| - instruction | Helpful |
| - teacher/student relations | Nice |
| - grading/exams | Okay |
| - administration | Nice |
| - library, computer, and classroom facilities | Fine |

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

Teachers were very helpful. I had more chances to speak Japanese in class compare to the Japanese classes at UW, and the class was tougher. We had quizzes everyday and had a lot of Japanese speaking interviews and oral exams.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

I recommend the ICU program.

d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

I could either receive Japanese language credits or foreign study credits.

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

Dorm, Homestay, Sharing house, and apartment

b. Which did you choose, and why?

Homestay, I wanted to speak more Japanese with a host family

c. What would you recommend?

Homestay, There are more chances to speak the language and learn culture.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

The school was located in a countryside area, and there were three stations close by. Students had to take a bus from the stations.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

None

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community? (e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

I spent most of the time with friends that I met at school traveling. There are a lot of good sightseeing places in Japan.

- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

Japanese are very quiet in subway and bus. So it is considered to be rude to speak loud when you are on public transportations.

7. FINANCIAL:

- a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

It is good to have a VISA or MASTER card

- b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

\$1000

- c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

Money for hospital

- d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any problems? If so, how did you address them?

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

- a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?

Everything was fine

- b. If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

Students who want to learn Japanese in short time or have interest in Japanese culture

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

Academically and personally, it was a great experience.

SEP 02 2014

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM/EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT

Your Name:

Name of Study Abroad/Exchange Program: ICU Summer Courses in Japan

Quarter(s) of Participation: Summer 2014

E-mail Address:

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

During this program, I believe living in the dorms is your best bet for a few reasons: commuting is extremely expensive, so living on campus is very convenient; after class you know where to find your classmates and can ask for help (also there are Japanese helpers who act like RAs that are there to help you); homestay families are pretty strict about

b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- classroom structure
- instruction
- teacher/student relations
- grading/exams
- administration
- library, computer, and classroom facilities

Classroom structure is that of quiz sections at UW. The classes are small (around 12 people usually) and there are three 1-hour classes each day. Teachers really make an effort to learn your name within the first day, and are really easy to talk to. Grading is pretty strict, so if you are taking this course for a grade you might have to study a few hours every day. Facilities and administration are fairly standard.

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

Instruction was great; the teachers really make sure that every student is keeping up with the pace of the course, since you move quite fast (a chapter every 3 days or so). There is mandatory "tutorial" session every week, which is pretty much 15 minutes of office hours.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

You are placed in a course after taking a placement test on the first day, so you can't choose courses or instructors. Also most of the instructors are different every year.

d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

I'm a biochemistry major, so this study abroad coursework did not relate to my UW education.

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

Dorm, homestay, and off-campus apartments.

b. Which did you choose, and why?

Dorms, for the convenience of living on campus.

c. What would you recommend?

Dorms is probably your best bet for a few reasons: commuting is very expensive in Tokyo, so paying for transportation to and from school can add up quickly; living on campus is extremely convenient; homestay can be limiting since some households require you to return for dinner, and they also might plan trips to go on with you, which is awesome, but that means you have less time to explore Japan with friends; the majority of students live in the dorm, so when I did the program, dorm people quickly formed cliques which unintentionally excluded non-dorm students.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

Campus is beautiful and leafy compared to the rest of Tokyo. The surrounding community is quiet and safe, and there is a nice park and river next to campus.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

I'm allergic to a lot of insects in Asia, so when I got bit I had to go to a dermatologist and get medication to reduce swelling and cure infection and such.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community? (e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

If you live in the dorm, there are "helpers" that are essentially RAs who will schedule events at the beginning of the course to help you get acclimated. There is also a culture program, which hosts events such as Kabuki theater, Ghibli museum tour, flower arranging, and sandal making.

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

The only major cultural difference that I was surprised about was that Japanese people don't eat while walking around in public.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

Many people used ATMs to withdraw from money with their debit cards, but I used traveler's checks. I think that traveler's checks worked best since there is a post office on campus where you can exchange your checks, and the exchange rate is actually higher if you use checks.

b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

\$1,000.

c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

Extremely high transportation costs.

d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any problems? If so, how did you address them?

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?

The IP&E services were fine.

b. If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

Students who aren't afraid of venturing out into the city just to explore. It's really easy to just get comfortable in the dorm and stay there, so you kind of have to force yourself to go outside and explore.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

This program fit my expectations. Academically the classes weren't absurdly difficult but also not a cake walk. In the afternoon after class, it is definitely possible to go out and explore Tokyo. Also on the weekends there are plenty of surrounding cities such as Yokohama and Kamakura that are close enough for day trips. Overall a really fun and enjoyable experience.

AUG 19 2015

STUDY ABROAD EVALUATION REPORT

Your Name:

Name of Study Abroad Program: ICU Summer Courses in Japanese(SCJ)

Quarter(s) of Participation: Summer A+B 2015

E-mail Address:

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

Some advice for arriving in Japan is to follow signs closely. Many signs in Japan are in both English and Japanese and can help you direct yourself efficiently. Japan Post Bank ATM's as well as 7-11 brand ATM's have good exchange rates and are good for exchanging. When arriving at ICU there are many maps posted around campus to help you find your way.

b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

The orientation for SCJ is fast, fun, and very efficient. They go over how class placement will be decided and how class levels are divided up. Course layouts are also given and a campus tour is also given. ICU has quite a large campus so its important to attend this orientation.

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- classroom structure:

The classroom structure was very effective in helping my learning. Because classes are divided into many levels (C1-C7) the classes are quite small. Everyday we have 3 periods of class for 1 hour and 10 minutes each. The class forms a semi-circle with desks while the sensei lectures in the center. This allows for everyone to be front row and keep everyone involved. For instance many days we would practice spoken role-plays in Japanese and this classroom structure allowed everyone to engaged in the material.

- instruction:

Instruction at ICU can be very hit or miss. Each level of class receives a different amount of sensei's based on amount of students. My class had 12 students and 2 sensei's, allowing for very personalized instruction. Overall the instruction was good; teachers break the course into learning new grammar, new kanji, and new vocabulary. The period that follows each newly introduced chapter material will be verbal practice of the material. I believe this is a good system, but it also can be insanely difficult at times. By only practicing verbally I found it hard to absorb the new material. I am a very visual learner and would have liked some written practice of the new material.

- teacher/student relations:

Teacher student relations were incredibly good in this program. By having more than one Sensei for such a small class, the teachers were really able to connect with each student on an individual level. In addition, once every week you are required to signup for a 15-30 minute 1 on 1 tutorial session with your teacher. In these sessions the teachers catered the workload for each student as seen best fit to aid him or her the most efficiently. My only complaint actually is sometimes I felt these sessions should be a bit longer.

- grading/exams:

My BIGGEST problem with this program was the grading system. The grading system at ICU is incredibly difficult. For one, the final exam is worth 45% of your grade, and the two midterms are in total worth 25% of your grade. This means in total 70% of your grade is based solely on tests. Leaving quizzes, homework, compositions, presentations, and participation comprising only 30% of your grade. This was hard for many of us in the program; even if we did all of the required work we could still fail the course. This coupled with the fact that the grading on tests was incredibly difficult. One misspelled word or one missing particle in an answer sentence would cause you to lose half of a questions points. The combination of such a heavy reliance on test scores and extremely strict test grading made the class much less enjoyable, as well as made the class more difficult than it needed to be. Many other college's who run study abroad programs at ICU give their students a 5-10% grade bump to their final grade because the class is SO difficult.

- administration:

The administration at ICU was spectacular. Every department was highly considerate of student needs and were always available when needed.

- library, computer, and classroom facilities

The facilities at ICU were also a high point of the program. The library is absolutely huge and open very late. There is also a computer lab in the library with more than enough computers available for use.

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

The instruction was overall good, but it really depended on your teacher. Because the classes rely so heavily on student teacher relations, a student can really be setback by having a teacher who is disinterested or doesn't teach effectively. I had one teacher who had a super positive attitude and made the course more engaging, and one teacher who was very intimidating, making the course more difficult.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

I can honestly say that I would not recommend this course to people who are beginning their study of Japanese language. The C1 (entry level) Japanese class covers an insane amount of material compared to the other Japanese language levels. If you are signing up for the C1 course be prepared to spend all of your time studying. The other classes seemed more reasonable.

As far as instructors I would highly recommend Kishi Sensei.

d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

My study abroad coursework related greatly to my UW education. I have specified my major as Asian Studies with a Japan Focus and learning the Japanese language has helped me fulfill my language requirement. Also being in the country I have studied firsthand really gave me the opportunity to cement the knowledge I knew about Japanese culture.

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

The options available to me were on-campus dormitory, homestay, or a local hotel.

b. Which did you choose, and why?

I chose to stay in the on-campus dormitory because it was the closest to the classroom and I could avoid an expensive commute. Also the dorm was provided with helpers (similar to RA's), that were bilingual in Japanese and English. Having these helpers was incredibly helpful in the program.

c. What would you recommend?

I would highly recommend staying in the dormitory.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

The campus was absolutely stunning! While most universities in Japan have very compact but tall campuses due to Japan's size constraint, ICU has a beautiful open campus that is filled with nature at every turn. It was truly one of the most beautiful places I have ever had the pleasure of staying at. The people in the community around the campus are friendly, but are also cautious of foreigners. Mitaka is sort of a small-town rural/suburban area that doesn't have the business of the more central cities in Tokyo prefecture.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

There is a nurse available on campus every day who was extremely friendly and eager to suit your needs. My only word of warning is to watch out for Japanese bee's! Because the campus is outdoors and right next to a forest there are a lot of insects and wildlife there. Japanese hornet's are the largest Bee in Japan and they have a very painful and occasionally lethal sting. Be weary of them!

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?
(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

The downside about this program is that the class is so intensive that you don't really get a long of time to indulge yourself in Japanese culture. Signing up for the culture events provided by the program is the best way to integrate into Japanese culture. The events they choose are often very traditional Japanese activities that help you to understand the culture. Because ICU is used to having foreign students many of the students there are very open and friendly to foreigners. They are easy to get along with!

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.
(e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

In general, Japanese people are very reserved and modest people. Due to this almost everyone you meet is very friendly and willing to talk and help you out. Younger people seem to be very open and friendly to foreigners and tend to really enjoy their company. Senior-aged Japanese citizens can sometimes have a very stand-off attitude towards you if you're foreign. Not that I blame them, looking at the events that occurred in WWII. In other words there is a generational gap. Overall everyone will be nice to you if you are being respectful, whether they like you or not.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

Japan Post Bank ATM's as well as 7-11 brand ATMS accept all kinds of international cards and offer the best exchange rates on currency. Just use GPS or Google maps to locate them, as they are everywhere.

b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

Japan can be a very expensive place to live. Produce is ridiculously expensive compared to the American standard rates. The dorm cost is high but definitely worth it. Other than the dorm cost I would say you need at LEAST a solid 400-500 dollars to live comfortably.

c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

If your planning on visiting other cities in the Tokyo area, you are going to want to use the local train(monorail lines). While each trip is only 3-4 dollars it really does add up quickly over time.

d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program, were there any problems? If so, how did you address them?

No problems.

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

Please comment on the effectiveness of the UW Study Abroad Office's services. What service could be improved?

I had very little help preparing for this program. I called the study abroad office over and over again and even visited numerous times to be turned away with no help. I basically did all my requirements to the best of my ability and knowledge and hoped that everything would work out okay. I think the counselors and workers in the Study Abroad Office work well...there are just not enough of them to keep up with the amount of students needing help. The University of Washington should really consider staffing more for the UW Study Abroad Office.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

For many schools this class is a pass/fail credit. This allows students to not stress so incredibly much about the incredibly strict and difficult grading system and heavy course-load. Many other schools count them as graded credits but provide a grade bump to the final grade because the class is so difficult. The UW counts this course as 12 graded credits, but does not provide any kind of grade bump as other Universities do. If you are very concerned with your GPA this may not be the best course for you. I only recommend this to people very interested in Japanese and who are ready to work a lot and sleep little.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

My personal expectations were that being completely immersed in a new culture would be a very big perspective changer, and would help me to better understand society from a holistic perspective. This program definitely met my expectations. Seeing a culture that runs and operates completely differently from my own helped me to get a more cultured outlook on life and myself in general.

From an Academic standpoint I knew this course would be very challenging. I feel I had a realistic outlook on how difficult it would be. In reality however it surpassed even my expectations. I studied for at least 7 hours everyday and barely managed to maybe hold on to a B(3.0) grade in the course. You really have to give it your all.

