

I chose to study in Denmark because I had taken two years of instruction in the Danish language, as well as a class in Scandinavian literature. I felt that spending a semester there would help me to improve my Danish language skills, as well as to allow me to study Danish literature with other Danes. I chose to study at the University of Copenhagen because it was the institution that best fit with my academic interests – literature and philosophy.

My arrival was a bit hard, mostly due to not having a mentor or anyone to help me get from the airport to the international office and finally to my place of residence. I would very much recommend trying to make contact with someone in Denmark before arrival, to ensure a seamless and less stressful experience. My institution did have an orientation, and I also attended a pre-semester language course, both of which were helpful in informing me about the school and my department in particular. I also had an exam orientation, which was very helpful considering the rather complicated exam structure in Denmark.

I very much enjoyed the actual classes that I took. I was in a masters-level English class on Paul Auster and a class on Kierkegaard. Both of these classes met once a week for two hours, and relied mostly on outside reading, with the class time mostly composed of lecture and discussion. The instructors were both very well learned, and I felt extremely confident in their abilities in teaching the subject matter. I do feel as though I would have benefited from more in-class time, as it was easy to becoming out of touch with the material when it was only being addressed once a week. However, I do feel as though I took away a lot from my studies, and received 12's on both exams. The teachers were always happy and willing to meet with us and discuss the matters.

The pre-semester Danish language course was also very helpful. I was placed in the most advanced class, which was very challenging for me. I expressed my concerns about the difficulty to my teacher, and she insured me that I was capable of overcoming the gap between my abilities and those of the others in the class (who I felt were at a much higher

level of proficiency). Ultimately, I felt proud of my accomplishments in that class, and felt that it was very helpful in my overall confidence in speaking Danish.

I do feel, however, that the administration level of the institution was rather difficult to deal with. Whether it was in signing up for classes, navigating the website, or adding money to an account to print, it seemed that there was really no central system which was intuitive or helpful. It is perhaps that they are implementing a brand new system (website, exam submission, e-mail), but I do think that it often caused me a significant amount of stress. The library and computer facilities suffered from the same problems—it was very difficult to sign up for an account to access the computers and to find where I could go to print or copy paperwork. For example, the account for computer access in the library requires a CPR number to register online, which then requires purchase of a card to print, which itself cannot be accessed until it has been activated at the front desk. Unfortunately, the account for library computer access is completely different from the account than the one needed to access computers in the departmental computer lab. The whole process is confusing, and had I not spoken Danish, I do not know how I would have navigated many of the Danish-only websites required to figure it out. This is another case where a good mentoring system would be really helpful.

Despite these problems, I would certainly still recommend the University of Copenhagen, and particularly the culture course on Kierkegaard. It was a very accessible way to approach the subject, and the teacher was available for those students who were already well-learned in philosophy to speak with about more complicated issues.

Overall, it related very closely to my UW coursework. I am an English and Philosophy major, and so I was able to study a particular author in a style I am most interested in (post-modernism) as well as to enrich my understanding of continental philosophy, where I had mostly been educated in the analytic tradition.

I was housed in Keops Kollegium. The arrangements were fine, and they were comparable to having a studio apartment in Seattle (comparable in price as well). I am glad that I was able to set this up through the school, and preferred it to finding private accommodations. I would recommend this option to other students, as it provided both privacy and a way to interact socially with others through events held by the other residents.

I was at the Amager campus (KUA), and I thought it was a rather nice place to be. It is currently being remodeled, and I had once class in the new building, and one in the old. I enjoyed going here, especially considering that it was so close to the city center, such that I would often walk with friends over Langebro and into the heart of the city before or after class.

I did not participate in any clubs, really, though there were always Fredags bars that I could attend. I met some others who skateboarded (I do too), though I did not have a skateboard so I could not participate in that activity with them. I don't think I came into any particularly awkward social situations, and I felt that most of the cultural exchanges that I had (as an American, for example, discussing politics) were fruitful and enjoyable.

The financial assistance that Scan|Design provided was crucial to the possibility of me participating in this exchange. Without it, I would have never been able to do this, and I am deeply grateful for this opportunity. I accessed most of my money by having it in my US bank and using ATMs to withdraw money from my account. The charges were minimal (approximately \$5.00 per transaction). However, in the last week, my debit card became damaged, and I was only able to access cash through currency exchange venues. I would certainly suggest that others have a back-up plan should anything like this happen to them. I would also recommend that they have approximately \$400 dollars per month for food, transportation, and other daily expenses. I would not be able to assess rent, because I paid it all at the very beginning (as required by the housing department). I would say that Scan|Design covered about half of my expenses, while the other half was covered by

financial aid. This did cause a difficulty, because the financial aid and the majority of the Scan|Design money did not disperse until sometime in October—nearly two months after my arrival. However, I was very fortunate to be able to borrow some money from my parents, though my money was very tight for that period of time.

I felt that the Scan|Design activities were very enjoyable and really helped me to meet and interact with others. I enjoyed the opportunity to experience things that I might not have otherwise participated in, and I think that Marianne was very good at encouraging us to join her expeditions. Similarly, the UW IPE was very helpful in preparing me for the exchange and setting everything up with the University of Copenhagen (especially in light of certain problems with clerical errors). I did not have much experience with the University of Copenhagen's international office, but it was one place which I did feel that I could go if I did not know who else to contact.

I feel that this experience is best suited for those who have an active interest in Danish language and/or culture. Though it is important for others who do not know much about Scandinavian culture to learn about it through direct experience, I do also feel that many exchange students I spoke to had no particular reason to be in Denmark rather than any other European country—in fact, many seemed to use their place in Denmark as a mere hub for traveling through the rest of Europe, and I did at times feel that such students were missing the point. I think that it was most enjoyable for me to hear the language on a daily basis, to go into grocery stores and see the food that I had been pretend-ordering for two years in Danish class, and to visit the castles, palaces, and statues that I had seen so many pictures of. As a result of this, I feel compelled to continue strengthening my bond with my heritage in whatever ways I can. I think that the students who would most benefit from visiting Denmark and from receiving Scan|Design funding would be those who have already invested themselves studying Scandinavian culture, because I feel that the experience that Denmark has to offer is

perhaps the richest for these kinds of students

Overall, I loved my time in Denmark. I think that my expectations were largely met and exceeded by the actual experience, and that if I had the chance, I would go back in a heartbeat. The Scan|Design fellowship made this possible, and it is very likely that I would never have had a chance to go, for academic reasons or even for personal travel, had they not provided me with funding and support. The greatest challenge for me was separation from my family and friends, and I was often at odds with wanting to appreciate the country as much as I possibly could while simultaneously being so homesick and lonely. I think that it was all worth it, for I now have such a strong bond to Denmark through the memories, friendships, and interest in Danish literature and culture that I cultivated while there.