

## University of Stockholm

Wintersemester 2018/2019 – Studiengang an der FU: MA Medien und Politische Kommunikation

### Vorbereitung

As Stockholm University provided a very interesting curriculum in its master program in Global Media Studies, which discussed issues I had previously not encountered in my home university, I was very intrigued to spend the autumn semester of 2018/19 there. I was also intrigued by the opportunity to study in English and, therefore, extend my language skills. Shortly after learning that I had been accepted, I was given all information needed in order to plan my travels, select compatible courses, and chose the accommodation abroad. As I had no prior experience in the Swedish language, I also registered for a Swedish language class for international students at Stockholm University.

### Unterkunft und Finanzierung

The accommodation I was ascribed to was mediated by Stockholm University. In Stockholm, all student housing is owned by a privately owned company, which collaborates closely with the city's academic institutions guaranteeing every international exchange student a room. According to personal preference, you can choose to apply for either a single-room apartment with a shared kitchen on the corridor, or a shared-room apartment in which the kitchen is integrated. I chose the latter and felt very comfortable with my choice, as the room's state was clean and all appliances and furniture were modern.

### Studium an der Gasthochschule

Before classes started, all media department exchange students met up for breakfast at the department building to discuss all organizational information with the Erasmus coordinator. There, I was able to confirm course choices, handle administrative tasks, and get to know all other international students from this semester. Few days later, the first courses started. In general, I discovered Stockholm University to be a very welcoming and helpful institution for international students, as not only language classes were provided, but also several welcoming events were held, in which all international students were given the opportunity to get to know the university as well as all of its clubs and unions before the semester started. The university, furthermore, provided students with various free-of-charge activities to get to know the city of Stockholm. Those activities were helpful opportunities to meet people from all over the world and create a network of acquaintances. The biggest difference to my studies at Freie Universität was the curriculum organization. Instead of having two or three courses that last the whole semester and have an exam at the end, the semester at Stockholm University was divided up into two parts with each two parallel courses and examination throughout their duration. In other words, throughout the autumn semester, I had four media studies courses in total, two in the first half

of the semester and two in the second, and I was writing papers for those courses while they were ongoing. Those papers critically examined the course literature we discussed in class and often dealt with a case analysis of some sort, in which we had to apply the theory we encountered to a real-life media example. The course literature we read was extensive and thematically multifaceted, which allowed us to examine theoretical approaches from various perspectives. We were also provided with the opportunity to visit many interesting guest lectures on media-related issues that took place at the department and featured international media scholars from different institutions. Another organizational difference to university in Berlin was the scheduling of the courses, which was not as consistent as I was used to back home. Instead, the amount of sessions as well as their duration could vary weekly. For example, in some weeks the same course would be scheduled in three sessions à two hours and in the next week it would be scheduled in one session à three hours. Even though this organization was new to me, it did not pose great troubles with the scheduling of my other courses, as the department management achieved to schedule everything neatly with no overlapping sessions.

The course organization allowed for the possibility of encountering many diverse strands of media studies as well as to get to know different lecturers and their respective teaching methods in a short period of time. I can definitely say that I encountered many interesting and inspiring aspects of media studies I had not come across in my studies in Germany. Another important and very enriching experience I made was the improvement of my English language skills that I was able to achieve due to the detailed feedback I got from the professors who revised my papers. I was pleasantly surprised by the helpful remarks I got concerning academic rhetoric and argumentation. Not only did the professors at the department help with my English skills, but also the university in general posed very helpful assistance, as it offered free language classes for academic writing in English.

### **Alltag und Freizeitgestaltung**

Stockholm is a charming and modern city in the South-West of Sweden, which is made up of 14 islands and is located next to the Baltic Sea. The city's architecture is very beautiful, especially the old town, called Gamla Stan, has many well-preserved buildings from the Middle Ages that you can look at while walking through the old town's narrow streets. Culturally, Stockholm has a lot to offer. Aside from its museums, which can often be visited for free, there are many concerts with international musicians in different venues. Going to the movies is also a good option for foreign students, as all international films are screened in their original language with Swedish subtitles. Aside from the enriching experience, I made academically, I can also say that I made very inspiring experiences personally, as I made great friendships and widened my personal network. As we Erasmus students were placed in the newly formed master's class of 2018/19, we were able to come into an environment that everybody was new to and friendships had not yet been formed. The master class in Global Media Studies was quite small and everybody got along well. As a group, we would often hang out together after class and drink

coffee, or go out for dinner at night. Once a month, the department organized a “pub”, which was a get together for all students at the department building to get in touch, play games, and have some snacks. The friendships I made were with Swedish course-mates as well as international ones, as the master’s program of Global Media Studies - as it was held in English – mainly attracted many international students.

At the end of my stay, we made a trip to the North of Sweden with some friends from university to a region called Lappland. Together, we spent five days in the cold North and had a wonderful and very interesting vacation. We saw the famous ICE Hotel, went into the area of the Arctic Circle, drove snowmobiles and rode in a dog sled. My favorite part of the trip was the time we visited some Sami reindeer herders; the Sami are the indigenous people of northern Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Russia, and are the only people allowed to breed reindeer.

### **Fazit**

My studies abroad at Stockholm University with the Erasmus+ Mobility Programme were a unique and personally, as well as academically, very enriching experience. This experience helped me to widen my academic horizon by introducing me to a new university environment and to extend my personal network by meeting many other international students from all over the world. With the organizational help from my sending institution, the Freie Universität Berlin, as well as the tremendous help I experienced from Stockholm University, I was able to get most out of my stay in Stockholm. Overall, I would say that I had a wonderful experience traveling one semester abroad to study at Stockholm University. The academic environment was very interesting and inspiring for my future studies back home. I enjoyed the cultural opportunities the city posed as well as its architectural beauty and location next to the ocean. In addition, I made some great new friends from all over the world, whom I will visit in the near future. I would definitely recommend any other student to spend their studies abroad in Stockholm at Stockholm University!