

jylkuczynski

Freiburg, Germany

JYL'S MAJOR(S): Germanic Studies, Religious Studies and LAMP

YEAR/TERM ABROAD: academic year 2002-2003

REASON YOU CHOSE THIS PROGRAM: I wanted to study in Germany for as long as possible, and Freiburg looked like a fairy tale university city. It is a good-sized university and has a good reputation.

FAVORITE CLASSES: History of the GDR; Religion, Krieg and Frieden

DESCRIBE THE HOUSING SITUATION: I lived in a student apartment with four German flatmates. It was the best opportunity to learn German, and they were very hospitable. I don't think I would've learned near as much German had I not had a situation like that.

BEST MEMORY: Skiing in the Black Forest and having conversations with my flatmates on a regular basis over coffee and tea.

BIGGEST SURPRISE: The emphasis that Europeans put on learning a foreign language and their vast knowledge of the world around them. They don't just study history from their own country.

EXPERIENCES WITH CULTURE SHOCK OR REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK: I had a difficult time with the lack of convenience and technology. For example, they don't take credit cards everywhere. The facilities aren't like IU - smaller libraries, no gym. With reverse culture shock, it was seeing very few international news articles in the paper and not seeing more walkers and bikers. I think we're lazy - we think it's a big deal to walk 10 minutes across campus.

COMPLETE THIS SENTENCE: IF I COULD DO IT OVER, I WOULD ... have done volunteering or had another German conversation partner. I am pleased with what I did overall, but I would've taken the little things that affected me negatively and taken them with a grain of salt.

WHAT YOU KNOW NOW THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE GOING ABROAD: It reinforced my idea that spending time with people is more important than achievements, grades, money - people matter the most.



In the Innenstadt (center of Freiburg) with the Schwabentor in the background, Jyl Kuczynski (right) and Jen Miller, a friend on the Madrid 02-03 program, stand next to the Bächle during Miller's visit. Kuczynski said that before she left, she wished that she would have known more about the historic structure of Germany, as well as the U.S.

“When you go abroad, you're so caught up with what you're doing, you forget about things back home. *I thought I would miss out on campus stuff, but I was overwhelmed with things to do there.*”

ADVICE TO FUTURE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS: Don't fall in the Bächle - unless you want to. Legend has it you'll marry a Freiburger.