

# ryanfunk

Budapest, Hungary

**RYAN'S MAJOR:** Political Science

**YEAR/TERM ABROAD:** Spring 2006

**REASON YOU CHOSE THIS PROGRAM:** I chose Budapest for three reasons: I wanted to learn what it is like to live in Europe, study a less-popular language, and gain insight on the transition from Soviet Bloc to an EU member state.

**FAVORITE CLASSES:** *European Integration and Security* (POL 430) and *Political Problems of Transition in Central Europe* (POL 469). In Hungary, professors normally have one or two additional jobs—these guys ran a think tank and worked in the Ministry of Education.



Ryan Funk takes a break to enjoy his apartment's balcony while studying in Budapest, Hungary.

**DESCRIBE THE HOUSING SITUATION:** I lived with two other Americans in a beautiful apartment in an historic district of downtown Pest. Most people lived in this type of arrangement, but a few lived with Hungarian families.

**GREATEST CHALLENGE:** Choosing where to travel each weekend! Vienna is 3 hours away; Prague, 7; Belgrade, 6; Krakow, 10; Transylvania, 4 (all by train).

**WHAT I KNOW NOW:** In most places, the struggles people face are weighty and underexposed. Studying their stories and history while living in the present sheds light on why things are the way they are.

**BEST MEMORY:** The universities in Hungary throw parties from time to time. Halfway through the semester I went to my school late at night and found it transformed into a 2,000-person club with lines outside.

**EXPERIENCES WITH CULTURE SHOCK OR REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK:** Shopkeepers in Hungary do not smile at customers. They are probably just as helpful as in the U.S., but "service with a smile" is not part of their culture. It takes some getting used to.

"I never imagined that I'd be taking *a weekend trip to Transylvania!*"

**ADVICE TO FUTURE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS:** Elizabeth Simon, the Resident Director, does an amazing job of getting students involved in activities around Budapest. Teach English to NATO officers. Work for an English-language newspaper. Intern with the Ministry of Education. Don't miss out!