Center for International Programs
Study Abroad Guidebook

STRASBOURG 18-19
INTRODUCTION TO THE STRASBOURG CULTURAL GUIDEBOOK

With your departure for France approaching quickly, many of you have begun to wonder what it's going to be like in Strasbourg. What will you experience living and studying in Strasbourg? What will it be like to travel to other parts of Europe? Will the family you'll be living with accept you just as you are now, or will you need to make some adjustments in order to fit into your new household? Is there anything that you are forgetting to do before you leave? Will your French be good enough to allow you to do well in your classes and to meet people outside of class? And just how much should you plan to pack in your suitcases? Hopefully, this guidebook can begin to answer these and other questions.

The information that follows is a collection of advice from former participants. The Center for International Programs staff has added practical information as well. All information was accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing. We recognize that there might be some necessary changes in the program made on site. If you have updated information upon your return from Strasbourg, please let us know. When you return, we would greatly appreciate if you could help us update this guidebook for the next year's participants.

Expect the unexpected. Ultimately, no written materials or suggestions are going to fully prepare you for what lies ahead. The best that you can do is to commit yourself to keeping an open mind, remaining flexible, and being patient with yourself as you're adjusting to your new environment.

We would like to thank the former participants from previous years who have shared their experiences and helped with the editing process!
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BEFORE YOU GO…PREPARATION

STRASBOURG, FRANCE

France is the largest country in Western Europe, and is about the size of the state of Texas. In general, France enjoys a temperate climate, with fewer extremes than the United States. In the winter, zero degree temperatures are rare except in the mountains, and temperatures over 90 degrees in the summer are uncommon except in the southern areas. Depending on the year, winter in Strasbourg varies between wet and rainy to cold and snowy, so prepare for either.

Strasbourg is the ninth largest city in France, with a current population of 700,000 people, including its suburbs. Located near the French/German border in the Alsace region of France, the Alsace region lies between the Vosges Mountains and the Black Forest in Germany, bordered to the East by the Rhine River. In the 3rd century, the first grape vines were brought to this area, and ever since, the dry white riesling, sylvaner, gerwürztraminer, pinot blanc, and tokay wines have been Alsace’s glory and wealth.

Strasbourg has always been the capital of the province, and is also now the capital of Europe. The city attracts many visitors due to the presence of the European Union Parliament, Council of Europe, and internationally-known Christmas Marchés. The Center of Strasbourg has an extensive past, and is centuries old. It is dominated by its famous gothic cathedral that was built on Roman foundations beginning in 1176 and completed in the 15th century; upon its completion, the Cathedral was the tallest in the world for several centuries. Unlike the rest of France that is predominately Catholic, Strasbourg’s population is equally divided between Protestant, Catholic and Jewish people. Strasbourg has some German flair evident architecturally, as it has been occupied by Germany during war times – owing mostly to its close vicinity to the French/German border. The city center is, approximately, a 20 minute walk away from Kehl, Germany. These occupations occurred in 1870 during a two-month siege at the end of World War I and then again from 1940-1944, during World War II.

With Strasbourg’s location and history, many visitors comment that it seems to be the perfect mix of French and German culture in one city. The region is characterized by half-timbered houses, flower boxes, breweries and wide boulevards reflecting Germanic influence while spacious squares, a Gothic cathedral and the ancient vineyards found in the outskirts of the city have a distinctly French flavor. A former participant describes Strasbourg as “the perfect size for living during study abroad: it is compact yet there are things to do all the time. It is great for students because there are three universities there so the city is literally filled with young people. I also felt very safe, and was able to comfortably walk around by myself at any time of day in any area.”
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<td>Last day of program</td>
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PASSPORTS AND VISAS

It is necessary to have a passport for travel to France. You must also have a student visa to enter the country because you will be studying in the French school system (unless you have a passport from a country in the European Union). Provided you submit the necessary materials (including registering with Campus France) by the deadline, the Center for International Programs will assist you with the visa process with the French Consulate. Of course, as the visa regulations are determined by the French Government and by each region, the process that you will need to follow upon arrival in France to remain in legal status could change at any time. Mme. Zehr, your resident director, will be able to assist you in following these regulations.

Due to the increase of visa controls and restrictions, please be aware that various countries may interpret visa documents and regulations in different ways. For example: French authorities may issue you a 6-month student visa, which allows you multiple entries to France for the length of the visa. However, Greece may interpret the French visa as a document authorizing entry to France only and might not recognize free travel in and out of Greece. One such ambiguity in regulations that has come to our attention is regarding the Schengen Countries in Europe. The Schengen Countries are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. Students have at times been required to travel outside of the Schengen Countries and return in order to reset a 3-month time restriction for visiting within this block of countries. This regulation may not necessarily be dictated by the country issuing the original visa, but rather by the country of destination of students traveling in Europe.

Therefore, if you are traveling at the end of your study abroad in Europe, you may want to travel outside of the Schengen countries to get your passport stamped in order to comply with this rule held by some of the European Countries. Additionally, in your travels abroad, ensure that you bring all appropriate documents with you and follow all rules and regulations exactly. Please be aware that you may encounter differing systems and policies depending on the country that you are in. If you come across any difficulties or discrepancies, please bring them to the attention of your Resident Director as well as the CIP in order that we may advise future students in similar situations.
You should carry a copy of your passport (the first page with your photo and personal information, along with the page that has your visa on it) with you at all times. Only carry your actual passport with you when you want to change money and whenever you travel outside of the city. We strongly recommend that you leave a copy of your passport with your host family and at home in the United States. When you arrive you will also receive a cafeteria card, a university student ID and a ‘carte culture’, which should help you to get discounts throughout France.

If you have specific questions regarding student visas, or intend to remain in France beyond the study abroad program, you can reach the Consulate General of France in Chicago at 312.787.7889. If your passport is lost or stolen while you are abroad, you will need to reapply at the US Consulate in Strasbourg, located at 15, avenue d’Alsace (telephone: (33) 388353104) or in Paris at the US Embassy, located at 2, avenue Gabriel (telephone: (33) 142 122222).

**FLIGHT CONNECTIONS**

Please allow yourself plenty of time to check in at the airport. The current increase in security also means longer lines and processing time. Airlines recommend arriving at the airport at least 2 hours early for domestic flights and 3 hours early for international flights. Airlines are also randomly searching checked and carry-on luggage. Keep boarding passes and your identification (passport) easily accessible.

Please take care not to miss connecting flights. It is your responsibility to be in the boarding area at the appropriate time. Should you miss a connection, however, please note that you must be rerouted by an airline representative at the airport. Travel Leaders and/or Kalamazoo College can do nothing to alter your airline tickets at that point. Once you have had your airline tickets altered, you should contact Mme. Zehr (see contact information in the MAIL section) so that she knows of your delay and can give you new arrival instructions. If you are unable to contact Mme. Zehr, contact the CIP or a member of the CIP staff (contact information can be found in the EMERGENCIES section), and we will try to assist you in informing the on-site personnel of your situation.

**MONEY**

The question that most people bound for study abroad ask--"How much money will I need to bring with me?"-- can't be easily answered. You will want to budget some personal spending money for the occasional meal out, night-life, personal travel, etc. People spend money differently, whether in Kalamazoo or in Strasbourg. This first step will be thinking about how much you spend in Kalamazoo on a weekly basis. Then you will want to add additional funds if you plan to travel. Former Strasbourg program participants report having spent widely varying amounts of money during their six-month stay, between $800 and $6000 (the higher amount including a Eurail
pass), with an average around $2400. So, the best piece of advice is to know yourself and your spending habits.

At the time of printing, the exchange rate was 0.81 Euros to the U.S. dollar. You can check the most recent exchange rate prior to departure (many phone apps for this). It’s a good idea to get some Euros here before you go (at least $50 or so), just so you have something in the airport when you arrive in France.

In general, prices in France tend to be more expensive than in Kalamazoo. Strasbourg is a tourist town, so prices might be high compared to other areas in France. Some costs are unavoidable; as is the case on nearly all study abroad programs, you’ll need to buy textbooks or photocopied materials for language classes in France. You may spend upwards of $35 - $50 per class.

In terms of how to bring money, past students recommend using an ATM card. The majority of money machines in France, and Europe as well, accept American ATM cards (particularly those that are "Cirrus Plus"- look at the back of your card). Make sure you, or someone from back home, will be able to monitor your bank account balance and monitor ATM fees and currency conversion charges. It is also a good idea to bring a credit card with you (recognizable brand such as VISA) for emergencies. For both your ATM and credit card, you should call the company and let them know you will be studying overseas so that they do not suspect fraud when they see foreign transactions on your account.

**CLIMATE**

You can expect the weather to be warm in September (but you won’t want to bring more than one or two pairs of shorts). You should also note that the French rarely wear shorts or skirts that fall above the knee. After September, you’ll need to be prepared for cold weather. Expect it to be cold, windy, and wet. Bring an umbrella and/or a raincoat and bring shoes that can get wet. It may snow in December, but you will not experience a typical Michigan winter with lots of snow.
PACKING AND LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS

You will need to check with the airline or your travel form from Travel Leaders (800.633.6401) to determine your luggage restrictions. Airlines will not hesitate to charge for your excess baggage. As these requirements change frequently, please check the airline’s website prior to travel. Even if you’re willing to pay overweight or excess baggage charges at the airport, we strongly encourage you to resist doing this and to pack as little as possible. Additionally, when flying on smaller airlines, such as RyanAir, the luggage restrictions are much lighter (30lbs) so make sure you also bring a light duffel bag you can use on side trips. At the time of this printing, some airlines were imposing additional fees on bringing more than one checked luggage bag, so please contact the airlines in August before you depart.

PACK LIGHTLY!! Few things are as disheartening as dragging around excess baggage or overloaded suitcases while traveling abroad, especially when you could have done without most of it. The best rule of thumb when packing is to pack everything you think you’ll need, take out half, and then half again. Don’t bring it if you can’t carry it!

“Pack half of the things you think you need. You really only need one, maybe two pairs of shoes, and enough clothes for one week (two weeks max) There were several things that I never wore while abroad because they weren’t practical (skinny heels) or they were out of style (bright colors). I would recommend packing things that look nice put together AND that you will feel comfortable wearing on an average day in the US. A classic trench coat or pea coat (men and women) will be the most important part of your wardrobe!” – a former participant

A good packing tip is to carry a change of clothes and essential toiletries in your carry-on bag in case your luggage gets lost. Never pack your passport, money, prescription medications and/or valuables in your checked luggage! Keep those items in a money belt or in your carry-on which you should keep with you at all times.

In general, casual wear in France is dressier than in the US. Be aware that what is perfectly acceptable in a Kalamazoo classroom may earn you a few odd looks in a French classroom. For example, Kalamazoo students wear sweatpants, sweatshirts, and flip-flops to class – something you will never see a French person do. However, you might find Strasbourg to be a little more laid back about fashion, as there are many international students and tourists. Overall, the French tend
to dress in darker tones (i.e. lots of black and other dark colors) than Americans. You may wish to adjust the clothes you pack accordingly.

Bring clothes that you can layer. Energy is expensive in Europe - many French families don't keep the heat turned up very high (and turn it off completely at night), so you'll need to pack clothing suitable for being indoors as well, especially clothes that you can wear in layers (pajamas, sweaters, and pullovers are especially useful). This will also serve you well when traveling, as you can adjust to other climates by adding or removing the appropriate layers. Take clothes that you don't care about wearing out, since frequent washing and extensive traveling will take a toll on your clothes. Clothes that are light in weight and easily foldable are the best.

Jewelry: It is a good idea to leave favorite jewelry items at home. Never pack anything valuable or sentimental. Costume jewelry is more practical than the real stuff, especially if it is lost or stolen.

Electricity: If you plan on bringing any electrical appliances with you, keep in mind that you will need both an adapter and a converter. For small items, such as hair dryers and curling irons, think about buying them in France.

PACKING LIST

- Sweaters (several warm ones)
- Pants – dark/nice jeans, cotton trousers
- Heavy coat, scarf, gloves, winter hat, warm boots
- A nice outfit (separates that will mix and match with your more casual clothes)
- Raincoat (not a must, but a waterproof pull-over is a great idea!)
- Sturdy walking shoes
- T-shirts (good for layering and to reduce the amount of your laundry you do when you travel)
- Warm pajamas and slippers (don't go barefoot in your house!)
- Backpack (if you are planning to buy a backpack for traveling, buy one that has an attachable daypack. Don't buy one that is too wide -- you might need to get through train doors quickly!)
- Fleece or pullover that can act as a jacket
- Bring plenty of underwear and socks, because in some cases, especially when traveling, laundry access may be limited
- Toiletries (enough to get you started)
Adapters (plugs) for European outlets and/or portable chargers for phones

Gift for the host family (see suggestions in "Gifts" section)

Towel & washcloth (if you plan on traveling, as most hostels don’t provide one)

Money belt or neck pouch

Luggage locks to use when traveling around Europe

**Additional items to bring:**

- Extra passport photos (you will receive these from the CIP)
- VISA or MasterCard credit cards and an ATM card
- Contact solutions/glasses (It’s a good idea to bring a copy of your prescription with you in case they are lost or stolen.)
- Prescription medicine (in original containers) and prescriptions
- Flashlight
- Bathing suit
- Pack for your emotional self as well. Bring books, small musical instruments, etc. or whatever can help pull you through difficult times.

**NOTE:** Do not pack your passport, money, prescription medications or valuables in your checked luggage. Keep those items in a money belt or pouch on your person. Keep your carry-on with you at all times.

**Gifts**

It is customary to bring a gift to your host family. Some good ideas include:

- T-shirts, sweatshirts, or other clothing items with Kalamazoo College logos
- Scenic potholders, aprons, placemats, mugs, glasses, or calendars
- Typical food items (i.e. Mrs. Field’s cookies, raspberry preserves etc)
- Baseball caps
- U.S.-style paraphernalia (i.e. things from Disneyworld, Warner Bros., World Cup, NBA, NFL, etc.)

**Billing**
The Center for International Programs does not handle the billing for the program. The Business Office issues the bills and will send your bills for the program cost to your home address just prior to the beginning of each quarter that you are abroad, as when you are on campus. For specific questions regarding your account, please direct these to Patrick Farmer in the Business Office, 269.337.7226 or patrick.farmer@kzoo.edu.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL ISSUES
You need to be up to date with your standard immunizations such as measles and tetanus. Please refer to the Study Abroad Handbook for the information on required and recommended immunizations. If you have any questions contact the Health Center (269.337.7200) or your personal physician. Of course, be sure to make doctor appointments if you are concerned about a particular problem (i.e. make a dentist appointment for that sore tooth, etc.).

You will find that what are prescription drugs in the U.S. are often sold over the counter in France. So if you are feeling sick, generally you may explain your ailments to the druggist and she or he will provide you with medication. However, you should know the generic/ scientific names of medicines before you leave. That will be immensely helpful when you’re trying to explain to the pharmacist what you need.

Common medical complaints include sore throats and stomach aches. Bring aspirin or Tylenol, yeast infection creams, Midol, Rolaids, cold medicine, laxatives, Pepto-Bismol, vitamins, and other medications you generally use. Shampoo, soap, (non-applicator) tampons, and sanitary napkins are sold in France for more than their cost in the United States. You may want to bring these items if there is a specific brand that you cannot do without, or budget your money accordingly.

If you are ill, please notify Mme. Zehr and see a doctor. Doctors are generally not expensive, so the cost should not be prohibitive. Mme. Zehr will provide you with the names of doctors in town during your orientation following your arrival. Be aware that you will have to pay for services and then submit them to your insurance company in the United States for reimbursement.

VEGETARIANISM
For those of you who follow a vegetarian diet: be aware that you may find yourself in situations in France meat when it is served to you, however infrequently, you risk offending the people that are with you. One good way to prevent offending someone is to let your host family or resident director know before you are served food or are taken to a restaurant.

Typically, no special accommodations will be made for vegetarians during the various field trips. If you require a vegetarian diet and cannot eat what is available during such excursions, you will be responsible for paying for and providing your own meals at those times.
YOU'VE ARRIVED!

ARRIVAL IN STRASBOURG

When you land in Europe from the US, you’ll be required to pass through passport control. It is possible that your luggage will be searched, as immigration officials will be monitoring you as you exit the customs area. In some international airports, guards with trained drug-detecting dogs will be monitoring luggage collection. Do not be alarmed by this, just remember to keep your luggage with you at all times, and do not agree to carry anything that a stranger might try to give you. Cooperating with all airline and immigration officials is very important and will make your travels more pleasant. If you are asked questions, remain calm and understand that they are there to protect you too!

Once you arrive in Strasbourg, you will be met by the Resident Director, Mme. Bethany Zehr, and your host families. You will go with them directly to your new home after Mme. Zehr welcomes you and gives you instructions for the orientation the following day.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Most of Strasbourg, including the university, is within walking distance. There will be times when a bus or taxi may be necessary, and you can get a bus/tram pass once you're there. Mme. Zehr will assist you in purchasing your first pass, and you will need to renew it monthly. Bus/Tram passes that will give you unlimited rides on a monthly basis cost around $25 per month. You can buy them at the bus office in the center of Strasbourg near the tram stop north of Place Kleber. It is also possible to purchase one-trip bus/tram tickets at each tram station for 1Euro30. The last buses run until about eleven PM and the last trams run until about 1 AM. Make sure you know which ones stop running earlier, though.

If you're out later than midnight, taxis are also a good option. They are expensive, so you won't want to rely on them as your sole method of transportation, but please don't take safety risks by walking a long way home at night alone. This is especially true for students who live outside of the Strasbourg city limits.
Some students in the past have rented or purchased used bicycles to travel around the city. The city is bicycle-friendly with bike paths and numerous fellow-bikers. If you rent a bike, expect a security deposit of approximately 100 Euros. Caution: cyclists and automobile drivers alike drive much more aggressively in France and it is not unusual to witness a bike-car traffic accident– you will want to buy a helmet and ride with caution!

**TRAVEL/VACATIONS**

When you travel in or out of the country, please inform your host family of your plans, indicating where you are going and approximately when you will return. If you are planning on being gone for more than 48 hours, please notify Mme. Zehr. Please also leave addresses where you can be contacted at approximately 48 hour intervals. Be sure to check in at the addresses you’ve given, with the director, or with someone at home during your travels. Should an emergency happen at home or with you, this information will make communication possible.

**TIPS ON INDEPENDENT TRAVEL**

- **Avoid traveling alone.** This will ensure that you don’t have to deal with illness, theft, or emergencies by yourself.

- Definitely take some kind of pouch for documents, money, and tickets. The best rule is never to remove it. Sleep with it and take it in the shower if you have any doubts (especially for those of you planning to stay in International Youth Hostels). Be sure to use luggage locks.

- When traveling, keep documents with you, not in your luggage on a train rack or in a checked bag.

- Make sure you know where you’re going– confidence can deter criminals and you are less likely to get lost.

- Email your itinerary to the Resident Director. Also, make sure that your French family and someone in the U.S. has a copy.

- Contact home and/or your homestay when you get a chance, especially if there is an itinerary change.

- When meeting people in different cities, make sure you set a time and place to meet and a back-up arrangement in case one person doesn’t make it on time, gets lost, etc.

- Talk to experienced personnel concerning where you will enter boarding areas, which plane, train, or bus is yours, etc.

- Be wary of complete strangers who approach you and offer you rides. As is expected here in the U.S., never accept a ride from a stranger when you are alone.
Do not spend the night in train stations, especially if you are traveling alone. Most of them close during the night.

Always carry your passport with you while traveling and a copy of your passport – kept in a different place than your actual passport.

Check to see what kind of discounts you can get with your International Student I.D. card, as there are usually discounts for museums, bus rides, etc.

For US passport holders, consider enrolling in the “Smart Traveler Enrollment Program” or STEP https://step.state.gov/step/

SAFETY

Just as you would expect in a different city here in the U.S., you will find it necessary to become well-acquainted with your new surroundings in Strasbourg in order to feel safe. You will need to find out which areas of town should be avoided, which means of transportation are reliable and safe, and what time of day is safe to be walking around. Use of common sense and caution will serve you and your money well in this regard; women should get used to holding on to their purses tucked close to their bodies while they walk, and men should not carry their wallets in their back pockets. This is more of an issue in crowded places and in larger cities like Paris.

Former participants report that you should be wary of walking late at night, both men and women. You might consider bringing a whistle or some other similar safety device. It's always a good idea to ask your friends to walk with you after dark. When you are walking around the city, and in other areas, be sure to walk assertively and as if you know where you're headed. A strong and confident posture will let people know that you're not a tourist. Please make sure that you have read the “Responding to Physical or Sexual Assault While on Study Abroad” section in your Study Abroad Handbook, to be prepared in case you or a friend are in such a situation. It is always best to be prepared.

If you are drunk or otherwise impaired, you are much more vulnerable to potential safety hazards than when you're sober. Drinking (even 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks) impairs cognitive function and your ability to judge your surroundings. Drinking may also negatively affect your ability to make appropriate, safe decisions in response to these surroundings. As most of you will be able to legally drink alcohol for the first time, we encourage those of you who choose to drink to be
mindful of how drinking habits may impair your safety.

**WATER AND OTHER BEVERAGES**

Tap water in France is generally safe to drink. Many students are able to drink the water from the first day with no ill effects. Occasionally, your system may prove a little less adaptable, in which case you may wish to avoid it for a while.

**MAIL**

You can expect letters to and from the States to take about two weeks to arrive. Packages can take longer. If you must get a message across speedily, you can use an express service (DHL - 800 225-5345 or FedEx - 800 463-3339) or email. Your mailing address during your stay in Strasbourg is:

Your Name  
s/c de Mme. Bethany Zehr  
33, rue de Zurich  
67000 Strasbourg  
France  
Mme Zehr’s telephone: 011 33 3 8837 31 81

(Please remember that France is 6 hours ahead of Michigan and that France does not take part in daylight savings time, so it is sometimes 7 hours ahead.

**EMERGENCIES**

► In case of an emergency, you should first contact Mme. Zehr at 011 33 3 8837 31 81. She will notify the appropriate people on site. We’ve also provided some basic emergency numbers here below. Although emergencies rarely happen that would require you to use these numbers, they can and do happen, and you’ll feel better if you are prepared. Double check this information with your families when you arrive.

- Police  
  17
- Fire  
  18
- Ambulance  
  15

In case of an emergency that requires you to get in touch with us in the Center for International Programs, call one of the following numbers:

**Center for International Programs**  
(voice) 269.337.7133  
(Email) cip@kzoo.edu

**Margaret Wiedenhoeft, Executive Director**  
(cell) 269.267.5800  
(Email) mwieden@kzoo.edu
THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

RESIDENT DIRECTOR
Mme. Bethany Zehr is the Resident Director of the Kalamazoo program in Strasbourg. She will act as your academic adviser and home stay coordinator. Mme. Raffner will advise and grade your Integrative Cultural Research Projects. Madame Zehr also works with another study abroad program sponsored by Lewis and Clark College. You will have your orientation and some excursions with the students from Lewis and Clark. The participants from Lewis and Clark are primarily French majors and thus have a higher level of French. There will also be a student assistant that is available for questions and will accompany the group on excursions.

Resident Directors work part-time for Kalamazoo College and are responsible for on-site welcome, orientation, and other activities in the beginning of the program to help students settle into their new environment. Throughout the program Resident Directors are resources for students when they have concerns about housing, academic questions, or medical issues. In the event of an emergency, you should contact Mme. Zehr, who will contact Kalamazoo if it is necessary.

THE STAGE
The Strasbourg program begins with a one-week intensive course in French. The stage will serve as your on-site orientation and will include intensive language practice and culture-specific information. Expect to be in class for approximately six hours per day. At the end of the stage you will take another test to place you in the appropriate level for the semester that will determine your other course selections. Please note that the higher you place, the more options you will have. American students from other study abroad programs also participate in the stage.

UNIVERSITY SETTING
Founded in 1566, the University of Strasbourg system is one of the largest Universities in France. The 43,000 students keep the clubs, squares and coffee shops in the university area busy.

Following the orientation period, you will enroll in special courses at the IIEF for international students. You will take a French language class (10 to 12 hours/wk) for which you will be placed according to your language level. Available language courses start at A1 and go through D4, which is the highest level. Students may also audit other courses at the IIEF or at the university depending upon availability and language level.

CLASSES AND CREDITS
You will receive one unit in the French language for your Stage. In addition, you will typically be required to take courses during the semester in the following areas: two units in French language, one course on the European Union (SOC SCI), one unit for an ICRP and one additional social
science or political science course depending upon your language placement. Students with very high levels of French as evaluated by the IIEF and Mme. Zehr will complete their sixth unit at the Université de Strasbourg. Course registration occurs much later in the school year, just prior to the final exams; Mme. Zehr will help you register for your exams. Grades from all study abroad courses will appear on the Kalamazoo transcript but are not included in the Kalamazoo College grade point average. The transcript will list the title of the course, the appropriate discipline, and a translation of the local grade into the Kalamazoo “A, B, C” grading system. Students must earn the equivalent of a “C” in the local grading system to receive credit for course work completed abroad. Attendance in all classes is mandatory. Failure to attend class will result in the lowering of grades and possibly withdrawal from the study abroad program.

**INTEGRATIVE CULTURAL RESEARCH PROJECT**

For your integrative cultural research project you will choose some aspect of French culture that you wish to research in a more direct, experiential manner. Conducting such a project offers you a way to get to know the host culture using a variety of methods and in a more intimate fashion. How productive and fruitful your experience is will depend on how much time and thought you put into the planning and how much you choose to commit yourself.

**Six distinctive features characterize the ICRP projects**, regardless of where they are completed, and should guide you in the selection and implementation of your particular project—

1. **Emphasis on “hands on” human interaction**—your project should allow you to interact with local people outside of the usual academic environment in a systematic, integrated way.

2. **Choice of the Project Topic, Type, and Scope**—the project should reflect your own goals, interests, and skills. Although you will need to consult with the local project coordinator who will ultimately approve your topic, you may exercise wide latitude in selecting the sort of project you wish to pursue in the host city; however, the project should give you an opportunity to apply what you are experiencing to your academic experience and to interact with a diverse group of people within the local culture.
   
   a. Service and volunteer projects
   
   b. Cultural externships or internships—participation in some facet of the local culture
   
   c. Life histories

3. **Choice of Methodology**—in consultation with the project coordinator, you’ll have wide latitude with respect to the information-gathering method(s) you choose to employ in your project.
4. **Systematic Research** (cf: Describe, Interpret, Evaluate, Validate, Act)
   a. Consistent journaling
   b. Painstaking interpretation

5. **Cultural Insight** (cf: DIEVA)
   a. Insight into the particular cultural activity or aspect you’ve selected
   b. Insight into the larger culture and/or social structure of the host country

6. **Advising and Mentoring**—from a local project coordinator and also a site supervisor
   a. Selection of topics and methods
   b. Introductions and first contacts
   c. Review of journal notes
   d. Interpretation

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR ICRPS**

- What is the main activity of the placement? What was produced?
- What are the goals and mission of the organization?
- Where does this particular organization stand in relation to similar ones in the city? In the region? In the state? In the country?
- Whom does this organization serve?
- How do people view this organization and its mission?
- What problems and tasks are to be accomplished?
- How was this done?
- How successful is the organization?
- What are the basic skills and knowledge needed to work for this organization?
- What would be a typical day or week in the organization?
- What were your responsibilities?
- What contribution did you make to help the organization achieve its goals?
The project can consist of a collection of life histories, a study of some facet of the local culture, a service project, or some other form. Start thinking early in the fall about what aspect of the culture you would like to study. In discussing your plans with Mme. Raffner you will receive more specific instruction. You will need to determine the focus of your project during orientation and have a site selected by October. Each study abroad site has unique conditions, practices particular to the community and specific limitations. Some of the common limitations of this program are that students cannot work in medical setting, and prisons or houses for battered and abused women do not usually accept our students. The ICRP must be conducted in Strasbourg, and you will be required to keep extensive notes of the time you spend conducting your project. In the past, students have selected service-learning projects, such as volunteering to work with children with learning disabilities and with women’s organizations.

The following pages provide a sampling of recent Strasbourg ICRPs, including the locations and activities that students performed and discussed in their final papers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>ICRP Title</th>
<th>Abstract/Synopsis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La foret m’a dit</td>
<td>“Flower Shop in Strasbourg”</td>
<td>My project involved working with a local florist, Natalie, in her shop 'La foret m’a dit.' In general I helped her set up in the afternoons, greeted guests and helped prepare several arrangements. Through my tasks, I was able to observe interactions between she and the costumers, as well as note the behaviors of French people while shopping. After each day spent at the shop, I took detailed notes of what I did, costumers that came in and conversations between Natalie and I.</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Strasbourg</td>
<td>The Alsacien Bread Culture</td>
<td>I worked in a small neighborhood bakery for my project. I looked at the local Alsacien bread culture. The name of the bakery was La Banette Aristan Boulangerie by Philippe Caye. I observed the everyday people of Strasbourg that came in and out of the bakery every day buying different types of bread. I noticed the different types of break they bought because not all the breads were the typical light and fluffy breaks of France but there were also darker, denser breads from German influence with whole grains, walnuts, and raisins. The goal of my project was to see how the people of France, but particularly the people of Alsace, preserve their culture through their bread.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmer’s Market, Place de Zurich</td>
<td>&quot;Grassroots Commerce in France: A ‘Market’ Study&quot;</td>
<td>My ICRP consisted of working with a local organic farmer at a Strasbourg market near the old city. In the process of working with M. Picot, I hoped to apply the experience I gained at the market to investigate aspects of French society such as commerce, political activism, uninformed consumerism and social interactions. In particular, I concentrated on gathering information about French attitudes towards commerce and capitalism through the lens of this local institution. I used a combination of careful observation of and engaged dialogue with customers and vendors at the market to achieve these conclusions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elle Tricote – Rue fu Coq.</td>
<td>&quot;A Comparison of Fiber Art Communities in France and the United States&quot;</td>
<td>Creating my project involved being part of a local knit shop in Strasbourg and getting familiar with the day-to-day activities there. During my internship I worked closely with the shop’s owner, Daniele Dietrich, and her assistant, Cathy Abrial. My goal for this project was to compare my past experiences in working at craft stores in the United States and examine the influence that knitting has on French communities. This was attained while I learned the ropes around the shop (stocking shelves and learning to run the yarn rolling machine, as well as how to properly greet and help costumers who came in) and participated in weekly classes at the shop with members of the community. I was able to observe how knitting is done in France, both in large groups, as a class, and as individuals working on personal projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Strasbourg / Synagogue de la Paix</td>
<td>&quot;The Jewish Community of Strasbourg: History, Tradition and Modernity&quot;</td>
<td>My ICRP project involved observing and participating in Strasbourg’s Jewish community through my involvement in both the Association des Étudiants Juifs en Strasbourg (AEJS,) and Reguesh. The AEJS is an organization for Jewish students run jointly through the University of Strasbourg and the Synagogue de la Paix, while Reguesh is another organization geared specifically towards Jewish women and is not associated with the University. My research methods included attending a variety of student events including parties and dinners, attending formal synagogue services, and well as museum research in both English and French to support the research-based aspects of my project. The goal for my project was to learn about the Jewish community in Strasbourg, and how the history of the community has helped shape its unique identity and traditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eckert Boulangerie</td>
<td>&quot;Regional Specialties in France&quot;</td>
<td>My project was based on my experience with French cuisine while living here in France and working part-time at a Boulangerie. I was interested in the diverse yet complimentary nature of the different specialties in various regions. There is an over-arching theme of butter and crème and such yet some regions add more spice than other and it all seems to flow together extremely well. I also incorporated my knowledge and the things I had experienced into my paper to add to its dimension. Not only did I experience first hand the Boulangerie life and its important social role but also my Host mother happened to be an amazing cook and helped me to experience traditional Alsatian and Norman dishes..</td>
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**LIVING IN STRASBOURG**
THE HOMESTAY EXPERIENCE

Please familiarize yourself with the "Housing Policies" and "Housing Definitions and Regulations" as stated in the Study Abroad Handbook.

Typically, all Kalamazoo College students live in private households in Strasbourg. For most of you, these living arrangements will be very different from what you've experienced in living with your family in the U.S., or in living in dorms or apartments here in Kalamazoo. As is the case with all private households that receive Kalamazoo students anywhere in the world, the College compensates the heads of households fairly for their willingness to take international students into their homes.

We are counting on you to give us honest, accurate, and complete information on your housing form so that the Resident Director can try to place you in an appropriate household. Mme. Zehr will make every effort to place you in the sort of household you'd prefer, but you need to keep in mind the fact that she may not be able to match you with exactly the situation you're seeking. In this regard, as in many others where life in Strasbourg is concerned, you'll need to be prepared to be flexible and to make some adjustments to a different way of living.

Show your pictures of home and ask to see theirs. Talk about your country, and ask questions about France. Different kinds of magazines from the U.S. can also be conversation starters. You will probably find that the French are proud of their country and willing to give you a lot of historical information. Other good topics of conversation include politics and cuisine as long as you are sensitive to their opinions. Avoid talking negatively about any aspect of French life.

If you are having problems with your host family, please discuss the situation with Mme. Zehr. She will assist you in solving the miscommunication problems or speak with the host family if necessary. Please remember that you may not change your housing situation without the direct approval of Mme. Zehr and the Center for International Programs.

HOMES IN FRANCE

Most of you will be living in apartments in large buildings, as very few people live in individual houses. Most French people keep the heat quite low by American standards, so you should be sure to bring warm clothes for sleeping (see the suggested packing list). In some cases, the water will be hot only at certain times of the day, and the head of household may object to your taking long showers since energy costs in France are very high. The heads of households are responsible for feeding you breakfast and dinner, and you should be sure to be home on time for those meals. If you need to miss a meal, inform the head of household that you'll be absent. You'll then be responsible for paying for the meal(s) you eat out of the house.
MEALS
You will eat the midday meal, or déjeuner, outside of the home. One returning student suggests that you look for places where you can buy the menu du jour, which will include a full-course meal for one price. It will cost you about $7. The best deal is to buy a sandwich made with the delicious French baguette in a boulangerie ($2.50) or to go to a university café, such as “Le Minotaure” or “Gallia”.

The French take special pride in their cooking. The fastest way to win over your host-mother is to praise her cooking! The important thing to remember is to be clear about your food dislikes from the beginning. There is no sense in pretending you love the fish soup, because in an effort to be courteous, you may from then on be served a lot of it! So be honest, but not brutal. Also, be honest about the amount of food you want to eat – because you are expected to eat everything that is on your plate, make sure you are not served too much!

Always leave your hands above the table when eating; not to do so is considered rude. Rest your wrists on the table -- no elbows! Do not touch your food; use the bread (which is served at every meal) as a pusher.

You may be offered wine at every meal, but don't feel like you have to drink it on every occasion. You won't offend anyone by just asking for water.

As you undoubtedly know, France is famous for its pastries and desserts, wine, café au lait. . . to name a few. You might especially enjoy this part of your experience. Quiche is very common. You may also be exposed to escargot (snails) and boudin (blood sausage).

Petit déjeuner: the breakfast meal will normally consist of coffee, tea, or chocolat; bread with confiture (don't ask for "préservatifs" which means "condoms") and perhaps yogurt, fruit or cereal.

Déjeuner: lunch is the biggest meal of the day. You can eat lunch at the cafeteria at the university. You can also have lunch in pastry shops, which generally serve hot dishes.

Diner: the size and time of the dinner meal will depend on your family. You can expect to eat anywhere from 6 to 10 p.m.

If you are planning on following a vegetarian diet, put that on every form in which you are asked your eating preferences. Also, be very specific about what you will and will not eat. It is essential for student welfare that no family discover this after the student’s arrival. Any extra expenses incurred because of special dietary needs, including additional food for those who are "big eaters," must be borne by the student.
TELEPHONE USE
Kalamazoo College students in the past have decided to purchase cell phones while abroad and find this to be a better way to make domestic and international calls as well as receive calls at any time. Speaking with past participants about this is a good idea, to learn about the plans available and what was most economical. In fact, some returnees may have cell phones to sell to you that they cannot use in the U.S.

Skype is the least expensive way of keeping in touch with family around the world. However, it is dependent on a computer with an internet connection. While it is likely that the family will have internet, it may not be as fast or the wireless access you have become accustomed to at “K”.

LAUNDRY
Your family will inform you when you arrive how laundry will be arranged in the house. You may or may not be able to do it yourself. Again, if you don't know what to do, don't hesitate to ask.

LEAVING YOUR HOMESTAY AND DESIGNATED VACATION PERIODS
As a matter of policy, you'll be able to stay in your home only when classes are in session. When the academic program ends, you must vacate the household the morning of the second day after the end of classes.

ADAPTING TO FRENCH CULTURE
HELPFUL HINTS FOR A POSITIVE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE
While common sense will get you through a lot of potentially awkward situations in an unfamiliar culture, you should be aware of a few cultural differences that exist between France and the U.S. You should bear in mind that France tends to be more formal, socially, compared to American standards; but if you're willing to adapt to your new culture by observing some of the French norms, you'll run into fewer problems at home, in the classroom, and elsewhere:

- Speak French at all times in your home.
Before inviting people over to your home, ask the head of household if it's all right to invite a guest.

If you do have guests, introduce your family to your friend and give them an opportunity to talk to one another.

If you want to take a guest into your bedroom, ask your family’s permission first--especially if the guest is a member of the opposite sex.

Respect people's privacy at home: the French often regard certain areas of the house, especially the master bedroom, and in general all bedrooms, as off-limits to visitors. Do not take your guests into the kitchen unless asked to do so. Do not help yourself to food in the fridge.

Make sure you know the rules for using the shower and water in your home. For example, don't just assume that it is OK to wash out some socks in the sink.

Avoid wearing a hat in the house or in class.

Don't wear shorts or halter tops into cathedrals or churches -- you won't be allowed to enter.

Don't take off your shoes in public; wait and observe what your family does before walking barefoot in the home.

Make sure you understand the rules of the toilet and bathroom in your home. Former participants specifically mentioned this as being an area of confusion. Ask upon your arrival which bathroom you're expected to use and how much time you should take in the shower, etc.

Be sure to cover your mouth in public when you yawn!

Don't put your feet on furniture, whether at home or in class.

When going out in public with large groups of Americans, be especially aware of your actions and behavior. Americans have the reputation of being loud and obnoxious. This is mostly because Europeans speak quieter and more intimately than Americans.
When in bars, do as the French do: enjoy the company of the people you’re with rather than absorbing yourself in the act of drinking as an end in itself.

Avoid smiling at or making direct eye contact with people on the street: it may be interpreted as a "come-on" rather than as a sign of general friendliness.

Don’t be offended if a French person doesn’t smile at you. Relatively few cultures in the world smile as much as Americans do.

If you go outside wearing very short shorts, you may well attract some unwanted attention. However, bermuda-length shorts are certainly acceptable in the spring and summer.

Pay close attention to non-verbal behavior in and out of your home; communication isn’t always direct and verbally expressed.

In greetings, men shake hands with other men. Women greet each other and men with a series of kisses on the sides of the cheeks. How many kisses (usually two to four) will depend on what part of France the people are from. Don’t feel like you should necessarily know in advance how many times to kiss someone. Often, the French play it by ear as well. If you do not feel like kissing, no one will be offended if you don’t.

There is, of course, no guarantee that if you fail to observe some or all of these norms, you’ll be openly criticized for it. However, many French people will regard a failure to acknowledge these sorts of norms as proof that you aren’t particularly well-mannered. As their culture is one which places great value on exhibiting proper degrees of respect and self-control in socializing, they won’t be as inclined to want to meet you or spend time with you if you seem unwilling or unable to observe what they regard to be normal standards of conduct.

If you are unsure of something in your homestay, ASK, ASK, and ASK again! No one is going to expect you to catch on to everything at once, so anything you don’t understand, ask people to repeat and clarify.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Over the period of your stay in France, you will probably learn the most from daily living in a different culture. For in the day-to-day experiences -- the morning walk to the university, a trip to the market, a meal with your family -- lie the real challenges, frustrations, and joys of living in a new cultural environment. It is an immensely rich and rewarding experience and one that you can anticipate with pleasure.
However, everyone has bad days once in a while, some people more than others. It is normal to feel like you just want to go home -- everyone has felt that way at some point in his or her travels. Students who have been abroad in the past offer the following advice:

- First of all, be prepared to have unhappy days and know that they will pass.
- Remember that the French have bad days, too. If someone in your host family is having a bad day, don't take it personally and automatically think they're unhappy with you.
- Keep yourself open to making friends with different kinds of people, including the people in the K group.
- Know how you handle stress at home, and try some of the same activities in France that help here in the States.
- Talk to others in your group, perhaps with someone who's having a good day but who can relate to your feelings.
- Try doing something that will involve you in the present; simply doing something can work wonders. For example, if you have nothing to do one Saturday and are feeling homesick or miserable, give yourself a task that will help you to get to know the local culture better -- like going to a local church, searching for a specific item in the market, going to a café in a different part of town, or simply asking your host mother if you can help her. Immerse yourself and keep busy.
- Sometimes, though, you might find that you need to be away from people and/or the local culture for a while, so you might choose to hole up with a book, listen to music, write letters, or write in your journal.
- Be patient with yourself. There will be times when you feel you are the only one who is miserable and having a bad day -- you're not!
- Lastly, just tell yourself that you can do it. You can survive in a different culture.

You'll learn that everyone has his or her own way of coping in a different culture and that what might help some people some of the time, won't help everyone all of the time. But this learning process, coming to really know yourself in a way you haven't before, is part of the adventure. For more, detailed information about crossing cultures, refer to information on the CIP website.

DOING WITHOUT

In addition to adjusting to the conditions mentioned above, there are things you will have to give up to live in France—and this may be hard at first. Eventually, though, you may realize that you don't necessarily “need” what you thought you did. Not everyone misses the same things and
different people react differently to the sacrifices they must make. For some people, not having their own car may prove frustrating since possibilities for travel will be limited. For others it might be the unavailability of certain foods, or not being able to maintain a vegetarian diet. For some people it’s hard to find clothes or shoes that fit or suit their taste.

You will also have to adapt to a new city and a new community. This means using a map to learn where things are and making use of public transportation. In a new community where you don’t know anyone, your usual support systems will not be available. It’s important to consider beforehand how you will cope in such circumstances. Your routine will be different. You may find structure where you don’t want it and none where you do. This is a normal part of cross-cultural learning and adaptation.

**FRANCE: THE SECOND CULTURE**

In addition to adapting to France as a country, you will be learning to adjust to a second culture. Learning to live in a new culture requires a great deal more than a list of do’s and don’ts, or a brief description of the cultural traits of a society. For one thing, any culture is much too complex to narrow down to a definitive description. Descriptions can describe general characteristics, but they will not explain each specific encounter. Secondly, and more importantly, adaptation has as much to do with understanding oneself and one’s own culture as it does with understanding a different culture.

As individuals, we are cultural beings with ways of behaving and perceiving which we do not always identify as springing from our culture. It is when we attempt to understand, or become a part of, another culture that we come to see that many of our values, beliefs and behaviors stem from our own cultural background. Interaction in a new cultural environment can cause conflict both within oneself and between oneself and the new culture. Some of this conflict is inevitable. However, by understanding yourself as a product of your own culture and of your own personal background, you will have a much easier time observing your interactions and learning to adapt to a new set of behavioral ground rules.

The task of culture learning requires a high tolerance for ambiguity and a patient willingness to work through culture shock in a constructive manner. Students must be willing to learn from situations where they may have miscommunicated or failed at communication. They will be expected to examine how their own cultural expectations may have interfered with interpretation, to use their observation skills to pick up on other clues as to what may be happening, and to reserve judgment while remaining tolerant of ambiguity until they reach understanding.

Learning a second culture not only affords students an understanding of the new culture derived from first-hand experience, it, at the same, time gives them an awareness of their own culture than they never have had before. With familiar surroundings and friends taken away, students are led
to examine not only their culture, but themselves as well. One student participating in an intensive study abroad program wrote, “I’m learning to enjoy being with myself, independent and alone from lifelong cultural props. It’s great!”

Such awareness of one’s own culture and self ultimately allows students to live more responsibly as members of the global community.

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH FRANCE AND U.S. BEFORE YOU GO

GETTING TO KNOW FRANCE: TALK TO YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS!

One of the best ways to start preparing for your experience is to do some background reading and research on France. Familiarize yourself with the current political situation and educational systems, historical background, current events, customs, and cultural norms. Review the topics on the “preparing for cross-cultural encounters” page on the CIP website. Speak to a faculty or staff member who has had experience in France or arrange to talk with one of the students who has been there in the past. International students are also an excellent source of information. You’ll have had the opportunity to do this during your pre-departure orientation, but quite often individual conversations are more helpful. Former participants and the current French students on K’s campus will be your best sources of information. They know what it’s like to be in your shoes as you try to imagine what in the world the next six months will hold.

KNOW WHAT’S GOING ON IN THE U.S.

Some people have had the embarrassing experience of learning that people abroad seem to know more about U.S. history and politics than they themselves do. You can expect to be asked your opinion about current events and U.S. politics – you can also expect to hear the opinions of others, and not all of them will be complimentary of the U.S. Should such a situation arise, the best advice is to remain respectful, even when disagreeing, and to resist the temptation to criticize France, as you are a guest. Start keeping abreast of current events and continue to do so while you’re in France.

Remember that disagreement is the heat of conversation in France- if everyone had the same opinion, there would be no reason to discuss anything. Don’t take disagreement or criticism personally – it’s just meant to prolong the discussion. On the same token, don’t feel you have to be an expert on everything about the U.S. -- you don't have to assume the role of the "defender" of U.S. culture. If there are things you don't know or don't feel like explaining, just say so.

SPEAKING FRENCH
Probably all of you are feeling French-language anxiety -- relax! It will be okay if you arrive in Strasbourg and don't understand a word your host family says to you. Everyone who has been abroad where another language is spoken has lived through that experience. There are, however, some great opportunities to practice your French here before you go. Some ideas for practicing French include: renting French movies, listening to French music, and practicing the language with the French-speaking students on campus.

However, if you don't end up doing as much as you would have liked, don't panic. Regardless of how comfortable you feel about your French, the thing everyone has to get through is the fear of making mistakes. Remember, especially at first, that the goal is to get your point across. Proficiency will come with time and practice.

GENDER RELATIONS IN FRANCE

While in recent years French women have gained an ever more active voice, traditional male machismo is still alive and well (the concept and word applies in France). At home there are still clearly defined spheres of men’s work and women’s work. Most married French women still take their primary pride in a well-kept home and family, leaving career concerns second-place, although many may work outside the home. Your host father probably won't participate in the cooking and running of the household.

Dating patterns also differ. To go out as a couple is a much more serious step in a relationship than it is here in the U.S. One French exchange student notes that dating in France is more exclusive than in the U.S.--if you are "going out" with someone on a regular basis you should not be seeing anyone else. She adds that couples are often more affectionate in France in public, and this is not in any way considered rude. If you get involved in a relationship, it's a very good idea to talk to a French friend and to ask what kinds of norms and behavior you should follow. It can be very confusing, especially with the language barrier.

Women should expect a certain amount of overt attention, and should not be surprised if they receive unwanted stares or comments in the street. As this attention is almost always non-threatening, you might want to do what the French women do, which is to ignore it and walk away.

You should know that in France, accepting to go for a drink or dinner with a man is a tacit sign of consent for a woman – while you can always change your mind, don’t be surprised if the man expects you to agree to go home with him. Also, be especially conscious of your behavior in clubs – the French do not dance the same way as Americans do and see the physical contact of Americans as vulgar or even obscene. Observe the behavior of others before going on to the dance floor, especially if you don’t want to attract unwanted attention.
SEXUAL HEALTH

Issues of sexuality can be complex in your own cultural environment, and much more so in one with which you are less familiar. While living in a culture that is not your own, it is more challenging to evaluate situations and to assess risks for emotional distress, disease, and assault as a result of intentional or non-intentional sexual contact. Sexually transmitted diseases are prevalent everywhere in the world, and the HIV virus can lead to death. We strongly recommend that students educate themselves on safe sex practices, pack condoms from the U.S. when they are traveling abroad, and be cautious about their sexual activity while abroad. For further information regarding HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, please consult with Kalamazoo College’s Health Center or your physician.

Learning about French culture with regard to acceptable and safe sexual behavior, is one of your responsibilities as you prepare for and experience study abroad. It is also very important that participants understand the local norms and cultural patterns of relationships between genders. What are the local dating patterns? Is it the custom for females to have male friends (or vice versa) or is that considered unusual? If you accept a drink or some other “gift”, are you tacitly consenting to sexual activity? If you invite a member of the opposite gender into your living space, is it culturally and/or legally acceptable for him/her to expect intimate contact? Is the legal definition of “consent” different from the definition in the U.S.? -- Most of the time, it is different.

At a minimum, you must be aware that some behaviors that may be culturally and legally acceptable, and seemingly safe, at home may not be in France – and vice versa. Certain behaviors will also communicate different messages in France than they do in the U.S. Mme. Zehr and other program staff members will give you guidelines to the local cultural norms for relationships between genders and laws regarding this issue.

YOUR RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

YOUR RETURN FLIGHT TO THE U.S.

If you are interested in changing your return flight or have any questions about your ticket, please call Travel Leaders (800.633.6401) before you go. Check to find out the amount of the charge to change the ticket.

If you're interested in requesting a special meal (i.e., kosher, vegetarian/vegan, low-fat, etc.), you may do this on-line using your ticket confirmation number.

PREPARE FOR YOUR RETURN

As the end of your program approaches, you will likely experience a wide range of emotions and reactions. Just as you needed to prepare for your stay in Strasbourg before leaving the United
States, you will also need to take care of many important details as your program comes to an end. As you are preparing to leave, please remember the following:

1. Don’t forget to set aside some U.S. cash for the trip home.

2. Remember: when completing custom forms, a trip to the country with your host family does not constitute time spent on a farm. Answering otherwise on the customs form when re-entering the U.S. will make for a long chat with immigration officials concerned about parasites and such!

3. Remember to write your host family a thank-you letter when you get back to the States.

Also, the Center for International Programs’ Peer Advisers – seniors who have returned from studying abroad that organize campus events and help advise students on their study abroad experience – put together a list of recommended things to do several weeks BEFORE you leave for the US, and before you do any post-program travel. These are great things to do to prepare yourself for the end of the program and for the reverse culture shock you may experience when you return to the United States. The Peer Advisers, who have experienced the reintegration process, wish that they, themselves, had done the following:

- Take photos of your campus, living space, neighborhood, and surrounding areas so you can remember them and share them with your family and friends back home.

- Definitely set time aside for thorough ‘last’ goodbyes with friends and host families.

- Enjoy some of your favorite foods that you may not be able to get in the United States.

- Re-visit a place you went to when you first arrived and reflect on how that place feels differently now.

- Start thinking of ways to be upfront with your family and friends back home about how you are feeling – write emails or make phone calls to share what you will miss from study abroad and ask them to be patient with you when you have ups and downs as you reintegrate.

**RETURNING HOME**

Going home is usually a very exciting prospect. Most students look forward to seeing family and friends they have missed, eating food they haven’t had for so long and enjoying activities that may not have been possible during study abroad.

Remember that returning home is also a transition very similar to your arrival in France. Just like your arrival, you can expect to feel frustration, anxiety and confusion at home, on your campus and with your friends. Craig Storti puts it this way in The Art of Crossing Cultures:
“The problem is this word home. It suggests a place and a life all set up and waiting for us; all we have to do is “move-in.” But home isn’t a place we merely inhabit; it’s a lifestyle we construct (wherever we go), a pattern of routines, habits and behaviors associated with certain people, places and objects—all confined to a limited area or neighborhood. We can certainly construct a home back in our own culture—just as we did abroad—but there won’t be one waiting for us when we arrive... In other words, no one goes home; rather we return to our native country and in due course we create a home.”

At the foundation of this transition is the task of determining what to do with the changes that have occurred while you were away and the changes that have taken place within you as a result of your time in France. Life for your family, friends and teachers probably will not be the same as when you departed, but you were not there to gradually adjust to those changes with them. And they have not been able to get used to the things that are different about you.

Hardly anyone avoids the discomfort of this period of growth, but the good news is you will eventually find a way to include your new ideas, skills and outlook in your life back in the U.S. Here are a few questions to consider before your return. Your answers may help you recognize the changes that have occurred during your sojourn.

- What have I learned about France’s culture that I did not know previously? In what ways has this changed my view of France?
- By being abroad and able to compare my culture with a different culture, what have I learned about the history, values and traditions that make up my home culture?
- While I was away, what significant events have occurred in my country, my family, in my hometown, among my friends and on campus?
- How have my personal values changed because of my study abroad experience?
- In what ways have my stereotypes or biases changed?
- What new skills have I developed (e.g. adaptation skills, second language proficiency, sensitivity, etc) and how might I maintain them?
- How can I express these changes to my friends, family and teachers?
- What might I do to continue to deepen my understanding of France?

ADVICE FROM PAST-PARTICIPANTS

RECOMMENDED THINGS TO DO

“Make sure to check out what concerts, choirs, operas, soccer games and ballets are playing in town so you do not miss out. With a discount using your student 'Carte Culture' (culture card) you can get into any museum for free and get fantastic unbeatable discounts; I went to this incredible modern ballet performance at the Opera house, which normally costs 40 euro, for only 5 euro!”
“There was great music to see at the venue La Laiterie, definitely something to check out when you are there.”

“Take some extracurricular classes or activities where you can meet more French people. I took a dance class and that gave me a perfect opportunity to meet French students which is really hard in the International school.”

**LIVING IN STRASBOURG: CULTURE AND CITY LIFE**

“Guys - bring nice clothes! You really stand out as an American if you dress like you do here. Guys there usually wear (as normal attire) what would be considered ‘club’ attire here. Get some dark, nice, tighter jeans, some leather clubbing shoes (!) and some button down shirts. There are a lot of clubs/bars that have stringent dress codes; if you don’t meet them, you won’t be let in.”

“Bring lots of layers that look nice; cardigans, blazers, nice jeans, scarves, etc. You don’t need to bring a lot because you’ll be able to do laundry. And bring a good pair of nice black shoes, or nice looking tennis shoes (like dark pumas), that you can wear every day.”

“France has the most vacation time within the year than any other country in the world.”

“Stores close early – like 6pm – and they close for lunch”

“Use utensils to eat. It sounds silly, but French people eat fries with forks! They are also stingy on the Ketchup”

“Really make sure to get a feel for the city; explore it because that’s how you’ll enjoy it the most. There is so much to find and discover, and so many nice people to meet.” Corey Smith K’09

“Cover your mouth when you yawn!!”

“Spend time with your host family; they are willing to help you with almost anything, from language to directions. It’s the best way to begin integrating into the culture, and dinner time conversation will improve you language skills a lot.”

“The city has everything you want if you look for it, in entertainment, shopping, history, and politics. The parks are beautiful and I literally took day-long walks when I had free time. I’ll probably move there for a year or two after graduation. It’s that good.”

“It’s such a comfortable city – it’s the perfect size because everything is in walking distance and there is the tram too. I felt safe walking around at any time of the day/night” Laura Marshall K’10

**Language:**
“Preservatif in French means condom. If you want to talk about preservatives say ‘agent de conservation’ or ‘confiture’.”

“If you want to say ‘so’ as in ‘that was so cool!,’ do not use the word ‘assez.’ It’s an insult! Use ‘très’ or say ‘super cool’ in a thick French accent ‘soup-air kuul’.”

RECOMMENDED PLACES TO VISIT

- Flam’s (restaurant) – try the Tarte Flambee!
- Rock City Bar
- Net Sur Coeur (internet cafe)
- Salon de Thé (next to Net Sur Coeur)
- Brant Café – free internet, they’re used to international students, and they have great cappuccinos
- Trois Brasseurs has good happy hour deals involving Tarte Flambee - try their homemade Ambre!
- The Roman Baths in Strasbourg
- Petite France
- The SIUAPS at the University (the equivalent of PE at Kalamazoo, the hiking club in particular)
- Sandwich Village
- Seven (doesn’t charge cover) has a DJ and a large dance floor
- Le Mirrior - buy one get one free drinks all night and a more lenient dress code
- L’Orangerie (a beautiful park- great for Saturday picnics with friends!) is maybe a 15 minute walk north of the University
- Mosquito - the ‘crowded international bar’
- Visit the European Parliament and Council of Europe – they are internationally known places!

TRAVEL ADVICE

“The train system is very good throughout Europe, but isn’t as cheap as I’d originally thought. Rail passes and inclusive resort vacations will end up saving a lot of money, even though they seem like one big price. I ended up wasting a lot of money because I didn’t think connections and locations
“Strasbourg has a perfect location, being in central Europe.”

“Try to travel in France a lot. The south is beautiful and the west coast has a great culture. You can get good deals with SNCF and now the TGV is going more places than ever. Other parts of France are surprisingly different than Strasbourg, so it’s good to see another town or two.”

COURSES AND ICRP

“You go to class with other international students – it’s really fun to meet up with them outside of class! And some of them live in the dorms with French students so that’s a great way to meet local French people”

“One of my favorite memories was working in the bakery for my ICRP. I would highly suggest putting a lot of thought into picking a good place to intern because it is a great way to both challenge yourself and become a part of the community.”

“The homework was more like the work I had in high school with completing exercises in a notebook, but the actual classes were more like the FREN201 course I had at K with regards to class discussions. It was challenging but manageable”

FOOD

Try many varieties of wines and cheese - “Because Strasbourg is in the wine and cheese region of France, they are both super good and super cheap”

“If you go to Strasbourg, you HAVE to try tarte flambée. It is the traditional food of the Alsace region” Dragana Urdarevik K’09. “Think of it as a soft, thin-crust pizza with cheese and other yummy toppings. Eat it like a pizza but roll the slice in half – it makes it easier to eat!”

“There are delicious Creperies all throughout town; creators of my weakness—nutella and banana crepes.” Anna Hassan K’10

“I miss cheap baguettes and tarte flambée the most (regional favorites). Beer, wines, espresso, cheese, chocolate, and bread are STAPLES there.”

GENERAL ADVICE FOR STUDY ABROAD

“Arrive with an open mind and push yourself beyond the boundaries we all put up for ourselves. Many character-building experiences are complete with language barriers and culture shocks but make sure to participate and to not become solely an observer.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY
You will want to take a guidebook with you—perhaps one from the “Let’s Go” series, “Lonely Planet” series or a Rough Guide.

http://allabroad.us/resources.php - Contains resources to help find funding opportunities, information about making study abroad support career development, reasons to study abroad, information to support diversity in study abroad, and information about discrimination abroad.

http://www.diversityabroad.com/ - “…connects talented diverse and underrepresented students and graduates to international education and career opportunities that prepares them for leadership in an interconnected world.”

http://www.purdue.edu/cie/learning/global/toolkit/ - includes 8 modules designed to help students learn about cultural worldview frameworks, intercultural openness, intercultural empathy, and cultural self-awareness.

https://travellatina.org and @TravelLatina on Instagram


https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/lgbt.html - U.S. Government’s resource guide for travelers who identify as LGBTQ


https://baniamor.com/ - Bani Amor
Blogs, interviews, and posts that revolve around identity, place and the colonial nature of travel culture; Has a series of interviews with travelers of color and an article listing travelers of color to follow

http://matadornetwork.com/bnt/7-things-latino-travelers-understand/ - Luis Guillermo
7 Things Only Latina Travelers Understand

http://www.browngirlsfly.com/ - “A Melanin-Infused Perspective on Travel”


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Books


Various. Diversity Issues in Study Abroad, https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/student-resources/while-abroad/diversity-while-abroad
Collection of quotes from study abroad participants from Brown University who are from historically disenfranchised communities.


LGBTQ RESOURCES
http://overseas.iu.edu/living/glbt.shtml - NAFSA’s Rainbow Special Interest Group’s website. Includes numerous web links and a bibliography.

https://www.outrightinternational.org/ - The Outright Action International is an association of individuals and organizations dedicated to building a free and peaceful world, respect for individual rights and liberties, and an open and competitive economic system based on voluntary exchange and free trade. They currently have members and representatives in over 100 countries.

http://studyabroad.isp.msu.edu/forms/glbt.html - Covers some of the issues a LGBTQ student may wish to research before departure.

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree/index.jspa - Includes both general travel information and a special discussion section (Thorn Tree Forum) for LGBTQ travelers.

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