

1. Where are you studying in Denmark? What made you want to study in Denmark versus the United States for grad school?

I am studying at Aalborg University in the Faculty of the Humanities, at the Center for Culture and Global Studies. I decided to go to DK for grad school mostly for economic reasons. I already knew I enjoyed the program from my time as an exchange student, and as a Danish citizen I was able to attend AAU for free, along with a monthly stipend from the government. (About 1000 USD a month.) I didn't really know where I belonged in the job world, and didn't really feel prepared to go out and find a job. So I decided that a free master's education, with some time to prepare myself, and specialize would be a good choice for my future. (The tuition for non danes is about 7000 USD a year for a master's program at AAU)

2. How did you get set up with your particular site? What steps did you have to take to apply?

As a Danish citizen the application process was very simple. I just had to fill out a one page application, and include my transcript. Because the government owns the schools, application requirements are grade based, and if you have the required grades, the school is required by law to give you acceptance. But the application process also takes a lot longer than Roanoke, and Danish students don't normally find out their status until June. Thus, I applied for special consideration due to my residency status, and found out a week before graduation at Roanoke.

3. What courses did you take while you were in Denmark?

I took a lot of the same classes as I had at Roanoke in the IR department, along with a myriad of courses aimed at integrating IR studies to the private sector. These induced courses on diversity management, national identity in the work place, and cross cultural communication. They have really helped me move away from classical IR studies of power, towards my more "applicable" IR. I am currently writing my master's thesis on the Danish relationship with Greenland, and how their move towards political and economic independence will effect business relationships in the future.

4. How is Denmark different from a semester at Roanoke?

At AAU, all courses are built upon something called "Problem Based Learning." This means that each semester you have classes for about 8 weeks. Here there are no tests or quizzes, and are more discussion classes, which are supposed to be used for inspiration. Then, typically in a group setting, you pick a topic which is puzzling to you, and involves a paradoxical problem which you would like to study closer. Here you take a question, find disagreements in the literature, conduct interviews with relevant parties, and analyze the problem to come up with a solution. When I studied abroad here, this type of course work really prepared me for senior seminar because I had twice already written a large paper on a single topic including theory and methodology.

5. Could you relate any material that you learned in your public affairs major to your coursework in Denmark?

I am really glad I took IR at Roanoke. I loved all the topics we talked about and see how they are relevant in my studies every day. However, I think the most beneficial classes I took were in the Economics dept. The Culture Communication, and Globalization program is set up so that students from a mixture of backgrounds can come together and learn about something new. This is great in theory, but I have found that when students lack the fundamental tools, their work is sub par for a master's program. I have been very luck to had classes such as Micro and Macro Econ, as well as Trade and Finance. They are the classes that pushed me the hardest at Roanoke, and made me look at IR in a different light. I also think that with a background in public affairs, my knowledge of issues is wide, and this allows me to connect issues, that are not normally compared.

6. Would you recommend studying abroad to other students, if so why?

Studying abroad was by far the best thing I did at Roanoke. I know it can be scary socially and financially for many students, but it completely changes your life. You become independent, and all of a sudden ready to take on the world. It gives you a chance to be independent, and in a way fly away from the Roanoke nest. Roanoke is a great place to grow, but there comes a time where you are ready for something new, but are just comfortable where you are. Its important I think in today's competitive market to be able to be self reliant, and not to have someone holding your hand through the process. And studying abroad is NOT a may term. Study abroad isn't typically an academic/educational experience. I would say that come second when thinking about the importance of study abroad. I believe that the core importance of studying abroad, is the personal growth.

7. Do you see yourself returning to the U.S. after you finish your masters?

I don't seem myself returning. Honestly, I love being able to just travel anywhere in Europe whenever I want, and I love the socialist system over here. Yes I will pay one of the highest tax rates in the world when I get a job, but at the same time, I will never have to worry about going bankrupt in the case I get cancer and can't afford the payments, or that I will be unemployed and unemployment will put me close or below the poverty line. I will also never have to pay for my children's 30,000 dollar a year plus education as it is also included in the tax system. I find all of this very comforting. My plan is to look for jobs here for in Denmark for about a year, and if it proves to be unsuccessful, I plan on widening my search to the rest of Scandinavia, Germany, and England.

8. What makes Denmark so different from the U.S.?

The biggest difference in my everyday is the fact that everyone bikes everywhere. It's not a strange for me to bike about 40 minutes to get out to school. Its annoying when its raining, but in the end I'm thankful that the culture is like this otherwise I would be fat from all of the delicious baked goods

9. Besides school, what do you do for fun?

I get to travel a lot. I was to the south of France, and to Florence. Also, Gothenburg Sweden is only about 3 hours away by ferry. Next month I'm going to Prague for a week to visit some other Roanoke Alumni! Other than travel, I volunteer with Save the Children here in Aalborg, and I visit the asylum center to play with the children there. I also play tennis during the summer here and take ice skating classes in the winter.