



Exchange report
New York University
Stern School of Business

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I. Monthly Activity Log

August:

- a) If you come in during the fall semester, the compulsory orientation hosted by IBEX (International Business Exchange Program) would be held at the end of August. Important tips and information would be offered over lunch, and you would have the chance to meet with your fellow exchange students at Stern. A short tour would be given by the local Stern students around the Kaufman Management Centre and the Tisch Hall, where you would be having most of your classes.
- b) The first day I arrived in New York, I discovered Midtown Comics --- the largest chain comic book store around the corner of my apartment. As a die-hard fan girl of Marvel comics and Transformers, the place was a heaven on earth for me. New York would be good news for you if you are a nerd like me. They have comic book stores big and small, from the largest Midtown Comics located at Times Square, to the sci-fi shop Forbidden Planet near campus. You can find a decent amount of graphic novels, back issues, action figures, cool T-shirts and other pop culture related gobbets in these stores.

Speaking of which, browsing book stores is one of my favorite things to do in New York city. Besides the gigantic chain stores such as Barnes & Nobles, the ground of Manhattan is covered with unique independent book shops. The one that I highly recommend is the Strand Bookstore near Union Square. They have an amazing selection of discounted second-hand books selling under five dollars lying about the street corner. Whatever genre you are interested in, you would be able to find a decent amount of books in your category. I'm particularly impressed by their collection of books on gender and queer studies, and the vintage leather-backs that occupied the entire third floor.



September:

- a) I'm an animal lover, so during the lovely weather of September, I took the one hour subway to get to the Bronx Zoo. We went on a Friday, so there were very few people, and we basically had the park to ourselves. You can get student discount for tickets, which means you could enjoy your whole day at the zoo for under twenty dollars. Their animals are quite different from the ones we usually see in Asian zoos, especially for people like me who didn't know what an Okapi is (a nice combination of zebra and deer, if you ask me). There is a very cute petting zoo where you could feed llamas, sheep and chicken. Just remember to wash your hands afterwards.
- b) Nature and History Museum was probably the only regular tourist spot that I went to in New York. I was mainly attracted by their animal specimen, but they also had an awesome exhibition of dinosaurs at that time. It's definitely a place worth spending the whole day at. I didn't bother visiting the Metropolitan Museums because I never understood visual arts of any form, but if you are a painting lover then I would say go for it.



October:

- a) OHHHH THE NEW YORK COMIC CON! (using capital letters to stress my excitement here) This is why I chose to exchange during the fall semester rather

than spring, because the oh-so-famous New York Comic Con is held in October every year. You have pay attention to the ticket on-sale time months before the actual event. I bought tickets to every day of the four-day con, and had a marvelous experience of their wonderful exhibitions, panels, artist stalls and cosplays. The highlight part for me was definitely the Stan Lee panel, the father of Marvel. Meeting the entire cast of The Walking Dead and the creators of Gravity Falls was really cool for me as well. A must-attend event for my fellow nerds! I can not express my love enough for this thing!

- b) The New York Film Festival stretches out from September to October. Most of the films are showed at various cinemas at the Lincoln Center. They have a nice selection of films and some very impressive guests from the industry. I attended the talk given by Ang Lee on his new film Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk, one of my favorite directors.
- c) I booked a two-day bus tour to the Niagara Falls just before it got too cold at the end of October, a perfect destination for the weekend. If you could bunk with a friend and endure the 8-hour bus ride, you would be able to get a fairly decent price from local Chinese tour companies.
- d) I went skydiving! How cool is that! None of my friends had the nerves to go with me, but I got lucky and found an event organized by a local Chinese student society. So for a bit over two hundred dollars, I took a jump from the sky of Long Island, and breathed in the wonderful view of the sea. And it wasn't terrifying at all! I recommend you all try it for once.



November:

- a) November is when Thanksgiving happens, and most exchange students would utilize the holidays to travel a bit further beyond NYC. I, for one, spent one day at the Universal Studios at Los Angeles, one day at Las Vegas and one day at the Grand Canyon, all of which proven to be more than satisfactory. For Vegas, you can't gamble or drink if you are under 21, so I would recommend getting hold of a real gun at some shooting range instead. Some strip clubs are also open to 18 and above, the Chippendales and Thunder From Down Under are both excellent options for young ladies, though I'm biased towards the Chippendales. The magic show of David Copperfield was a bit of a disappointment though, I would recommend Chris Angle instead if you want to see some more modern tricks.
- b) I nearly forgot to mention that I went to the live taping of two television talk shows: the Daily Show with Trevor Noah and the Tonight Show with Stephen Colbert. Most of the American talk shows are filmed either in New York or L.A.. Besides the two shows that I mentioned above, shows filmed in New York also include The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon, Saturday Night Live and Last Week Tonight with John Oliver. You can get directions on how to score free tickets on their official websites, but sometimes they can be hard to get, especially for SNL, which only draws lottery once a year.
- c) The New York Comedy Festival happens at the beginning of November, a fantastic event for people of stand-up comedy. I saw many of my favorite comedy stars, including Tim Minch, Bill Maher, Louis C.K. and Jon Stewart. Most of the popular shows were held at the Beacon Theatre and the Madison Square Garden.



December:

- a) I went to Disney World at Orlando at the end of the term. As a huge Disney fan, I was absolutely thrilled! There are four parks in total at Disney World, and I recommend one day each. Do not forget to download the official app to get FastPass if you visit there! If you are Star Wars fan, the Hollywood Studios park would definitely work for you. If you like traditional Disney cartoons, then Magic Kingdom should be your top priority. Animal Kingdom was no comparison to the Bronx Zoo, but the petting zoo was cute as well.
- b) A traditional Christmas activity in NYC is to visit the lit-up Christmas Tree at Rockefeller Centre. So I went there and absolutely hated it. I do not understand why people would endure such terrible crowd to have a peek of a giant pine tree decorated by lights.



One thing I have left of is the theatres of New York, simply because I have went to too many of them every month. I went to more than 40 musicals, plays and operas in total, on and off Broadway. The most memorable experience was me lining up outside the theatre for six hours in order to get a last-minute cancellation ticket for Hamilton. There are a lot of ways to get cheap tickets for these shows. For starters, most shows have rush tickets in the morning and online lotteries. There are also promotion weeks for both Broadway shows and off-Broadways shows during the falls, where you can get half-price tickets and last minutes tickets for twenty dollars. As a student, you can also become paid members of the discount programs of Theatre Development Fund and Tix4Students, both of which I found very helpful in saving money.

II. General Exchange Information

- a) **Accommodation:** If you come to NYU in fall, there is a high chance that you may not be granted campus accommodation, which means you'll have to rent your own place. After a series of desperate attempts, I found a place in Chinatown on Airbnb, which cost about 1800 dollars a month. However, I think you can find something more affordable if you pay attention to the sublet Facebook groups built by NYU students, or if you are willing to live at a less ideal location. I chose Chinatown because it would be convenient for me to shop Chinese essentials, and it was only 20 minute walk to school, close to subway as well.
- b) **Course Registration and Teaching Methods:** I took four classes in total, and I managed to cram them all into my Monday and Wednesday schedules. I have to say I did not pay my best efforts at studying given the amount of fun I had, but generally I didn't find myself struggling for these classes either. I would say if you want to be a good student and take five classes, it wouldn't be too hard to manage. Do pay attention that they only allow you to select one class outside of Stern, which is pretty annoying if you ask me. The four classes that I took were:
- i) Futures and Options by Stephen Figlewski. I liked the professor very much, though some considered the course a bit demanding. There is a requested textbook, but I didn't purchase it, because I found it enough to follow the course if you pay attention to what's taught in class. Homework were usually small excel projects every other week, and there were six in-class quizzes and one final exam. The final exam only accounted for 35% of the total grade, the rest of which are embedded in the homework and the quizzes.
 - ii) Intro to Psychology by Edgar Coons. This is an old professor that owns an astonishing collection of hats, which he wears to every class. There is also a required textbook and a study guide, but I also didn't buy them. But if you wish to utilize them, you can rent or buy them cheaply on Amazon. There were a lot to memorize, and I found going over the handout of the course before each class very helpful. No homework, but you have to participate in a certain number of psychology experiments to pass the course. There were four exams in total, attendance is also recorded.
 - iii) Intro to Probability by Edward Melnick. This is a Lagoon class, which means it's open to undergraduates, post-graduates, Phd and MBA students, and is held in the evening. I found the level of the course acceptable if you pay enough attention. There were homework questions every week, and only one final exam.
 - iv) Forecasting Time Series by Clifford Hurvich, another Lagoon class. The course teaches how to handle time series data with Minitab and R, which I think is quite useful. You'll need some foundation in statistics to fully appreciate the course. Weekly assignments are given on about handling

data in Minitab and R, and there are also two individual projects. I liked all of these courses, especially the fact that the professors had their own line of teaching instead of simply following the textbooks.

- c) **Climate:** Do bring some warm clothes with you since it snows from December to January. Thick blankets or duvets are not necessary since there is heat indoors.
- d) **Transportation:** The MTR is the main way to get around in New York. Unfortunately, it often suffers from delays and reroute. Get yourself a monthly Metro Card if you like to roam around the city like I do.
- e) **Finance and Banking:** It's not necessary to open up a bank account in America if you have a Master/Visa credit card and a Union Pay debit card with you. The latter can withdraw cash from any Citi bank.
- f) **Visa application:** Visa procedure is standard. NYU would send you relevant materials, and you can just follow the guidelines on the website to apply for the Visa.
- g) **Sports and Recreation:** There are various gyms around NYU campus and the most famous one is near the Palladium hall. NYU also has a small theatre where some student plays take place.
- h) **Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities:** There is a career fair in Spring semester you can meet various employees, and a Club Festival in Tisch Hall where you can visit NYU student clubs' booth.
- i) **Food:** There are various food trucks outside NYU buildings, so it's not necessary to purchase a dining plan. If you are looking for Chinese food, you can go to Chinatown or Flushing.
- j) **International Service and Activities:** The IBEX exchange team would prepare various activities for exchange students, including Orientation Activities, visit to UN headquarters, boating in Central Park, etc.
- k) **Health and Safety:** There is a compulsory health insurance around 1000 dollars, which include HPV vaccines. So do make use of that!

III. Items to Bring

Warm clothes

Power plug converter

Credit card

U.S. SIM card

At least six thousand dollars of money

IV. Useful links and Contacts

International Business Exchange Program at Stern: stern.nyu.edu/ibex