

London Study Abroad Program



Spring 2018 DMACC semester in London

Sources: Jan LaVille, Randy Jedele, Alan Hutchison, Maura Nelson, Maria Cochran
Compiled by Judith Vogel

<https://www.dmacc.edu/studyabroad/Pages/welcome.aspx>

The Study Abroad Program started as the Community College Consortium with a number of other community colleges including Iowa Central, Kirkwood, and Eastern Iowa. Maura Nelson represented DMACC. By the early 2000's, it became just a DMACC program since DMACC was supplying most of the students.

In 2000, Ruthanne Harstad was the first DMACC instructor to take students and went when the program was based in Cambridge, not London. Alan Hutchison was the first in 2001 to be based in London. For a long time, only Ankeny Campus instructors went. In 2011, Jan LaVille was the first instructor from a DMACC campus other than Ankeny to accompany students. She was the only one to offer journalism classes before and during the event. Her students published "Cheers."

The Curriculum Commission passed two courses (same course but students could take it for HUM or HIS credits) which all students going would be required to take. This course is taught by London locals, but the homework and grading is done by the DMACC instructor. The other courses offered are standard DMACC courses usually in the field of ENG, HUM, & LIT.

Instructors accompanying students:

*2018 Beth Baker Broderson
*2017 Lauren Rice
*2016 Eden Pearson
*2015 Alan Hutchison
*2014 Darlene Lawler
*2013 Randy Jedele
*2012 No trip
*2011 Jan LaVille
*2010 Michael Hubbard
*2009 Randy Jedele
2008
*2007 Sharran Slinkard
2006
2005
*2004 Alan Hutchison
2003
2002
*2001 Alan Hutchison
2000 Ruthanne Harstadt

Travelogue Spring 2009

Randy Jedele, DMACC Faculty Advisor for London Abroad Program

Post Date: Friday, February 13, 2009

First Week Completed

We have completed our first week of classes. For the most part, everyone has settled in and becoming comfortable with the tube and bus transportation. Some of the students hadn't used the tube until Wednesday, when I took them on their first field trip. However, now everyone has now been initiated into that method of transportation and some have switched from completely using the bus system. I was surprised at how easily I fell into the routine of walking, bus, tube, walking to the university.

Every class has had its first meeting, so the students are now responsible for homework and project assignments. They are a very talkative and lively bunch. We have already had incredibly good discussions in the humanities and literature classes. I have had the privilege of simply sitting back and listening to them carry on a conversation, sometimes even debate, about a topic or literary selection. The discussion of *The Taming of the Shrew* was, without a doubt, the best discussion on Shakespeare I have ever had with a group of students. I think I have much good to anticipate in the realm of academics this semester. A couple of the students are extremely well read and know quite

a bit about literature. (Thanks Bonne and Sharran for initiating them in literary terms and criticism.) I am anxious to read their assignments! Even during Bob Craig's first British Life and Culture lecture on the history of Great Britain/the United Kingdom, he was bombarded with interesting and intelligent questions. He loved it because it made for a very interesting and lively hour and a half lecture.

For their first humanities field trip, I took them to the Tate Modern. We had a great discussion in the morning class about defining art and what criteria might be used to determine if an object or event is art. I like the Tate Modern because I knew there would be pieces there that might even shock them. With each field trip there is a written assignment, mostly because I don't want them walking in and staying for only fifteen minutes. I want them to invest some time in the museum. They had three questions to respond to: 1. Write about a piece that you participated with and explain why you were drawn into the piece and why you like it. 2. Write about a piece that disturbs you and explain why it disturbs you. 3. Write about a piece that makes you wonder what it is or why it is included in the collection. The Tate Modern collection is huge and they rotate pieces in and out all of the time. For the most part, the entire museum had new pieces from my last visit in 2006, so it was like visiting an entirely new museum for me. I asked the students to venture on their own and not in small groups. As I encountered them in various rooms, each student was alone. Ah, they are listening well!

I'm off to the British Museum today because that is where their next field trip is and I want to plan a scavenger hunt for them. Several of them have already been there, which is a first because none of the students in 2005 went to a museum until I took them there. Again, the scavenger hunt will be a great way to get them past the first floor and first few rooms. I also have a scavenger hunt for the National Gallery, which ensures that they visit multiple floors and rooms.

Two of the students are off to Ireland for the weekend and four were planning on going to Wales. The rest are staying in London to venture deeper into the city. I know they are planning on going to Camden Town market on Saturday, so I am anxious to hear their comments about that experience. My first visit to Camden a few years ago definitely placed me in culture shock. I saw more piercings and colors of hair and hair styles than any other place I had ever visited in the past. It is Punk and Goth at its maximum level! Of course, Oxford Street and shopping was high on the list for some of the female students. For me this first weekend, I want to visit some of my old "haunts" and just relax. Unfortunately, I am still battling a cold; however, each day gets better.

It snowed last night and before I went to bed, I noticed as I stared out my attic window that the roofs and yards of the houses behind mine were covered in snow. Unfortunately, it had all melted by morning. The weather has been very damp and cold all week. Their seasons are also changing. The daffodils have not bloomed yet and they were in their full glory by the time I had arrived in February 2005. I'm better prepared this time, so I am not as cold in my homestay. Joan and Arthur had a new heating unit installed since my last visit. I hope the purpose for the installation wasn't to make the house warmer because if that was the intent, they have not received their money's worth! They are both well and I am happy to be living with them again.

I hope each of you has a good weekend. Cheers!
Randy

Post Date: Saturday, February 21, 2009

Second Week Completed

Actually, we wrapped up our second week with a trip to Hampton Court today. This was an optional Saturday excursion, so all of the students did not participate, but ten of them met me at the Google Street tube stop's platform this morning at 10:00, and we journeyed out of London. It's a beautiful Saturday in London and I think it is safe to say that spring has sprung here! The crocuses and snow

drops are in their full glory and with the last couple of warm days, the daffodils are waiting to burst. With that in mind, it was a lovely day to visit Hampton Court. Since this is the 500 year anniversary of Henry VIII, part of the palace is closed in preparation for the events to occur after Easter. However, there was still plenty to visit and they added some additional free tours to compensate for not being able to see the Great Hall and other rooms. It was so nice today that I sat outside for lunch and enjoyed the warmth of the sun.

Yesterday, we had an all-day excursion to Stonehenge and Salisbury. The students loved both stops. We also had beautiful weather, so Stonehenge was incredibly beautiful standing in the full English sun. After nearly two weeks of cold and damp days, it was a relief to be outside and enjoy the weather. Bob Craig was our tour guide for this day. He is one of my favorite British Life and Culture lecturers and the students love him. He is incredibly knowledgeable about anything to do with Great Britain's history. His tour the Salisbury Cathedral was quite interesting and the students enjoyed what they saw and learned. The students are anxious for Bob's monarchy lecture this coming Wednesday; they have already been asking monarchy questions and he keeps putting them off, so that he has something to talk about on Wednesday. Currently, they understand who can become a king or queen and how.

We wrapped up our second week of classes with a walking trip to Charles Dickens' house and museum, which is about ten blocks from our University of London classroom. It was okay, but it's one of the "been there, done that" experiences. It was only £4, so it wasn't like we sacrificed our week's allowance for the entrance. At any rate, it was a great way to complete our discussion on Dickens' Great Expectations, which, incidentally, was a great discussion. I couldn't be more thrilled with their class participation and interest in learning! I must have "the luck of the draw" this time! Their humanities presentations this week were exceptional! They could use some improvement on their PowerPoint skills and their public speaking skills could use some work, but both teams of presenters provided great and extra information. They get bonus points if they can get the class out of the classroom. The group who presented on painting were very clever; they ended their presentation with a map of the Musee D'Orsay in Paris and where the impressionist paintings are, and then they focused on impressionism and some of the paintings that they will get to see when in Paris in a couple of weeks. (I gave them the bonus points for preparing for an out-of-class experience.)

I guess I was too industrious last week when I planned their scavenger hunt of the British Museum. None of the teams were able to complete the 30 questions in the two hours that we allotted for it. I said they could return and complete the assignment before we meet next week for humanities. They liked the assignment because it definitely took them all over the museum. A couple of them are trying to pull my leg because they said they found the Rosetta Stone in the Enlightenment Room and they even have a picture of it there. Well, now I have to go back to see what they are thinking is the Rosetta Stone. I promised them it wasn't the "real thing," and when one of the girls said that she touched it, I knew she wasn't anywhere near the "real" Rosetta Stone. I love it when they try to challenge me or pull the wool over my eyes.

Although a couple have already ventured out to the theatre, we will be attending our first performance this coming week as a group. We're going to see The Taming of the Shrew, which we have discussed in class and watched a video production. I'm hoping they have a good experience and enjoy themselves. Now that my cold has finally run its course, I intend to venture out to see some shows. I just didn't want to go to the theatre and sit and cough because other patrons would not appreciate my presence.

If it's a beautiful day tomorrow, it will be time to venture out to some of my favorite parks, like Regents Park and St. James Park. I also need to take a trip to the Tate Britain to plan Wednesday's field trip and assignment. It seems like I'm charging full speed ahead! I can't believe that two weeks have already passed.

All of the students have colds now, but they have not missed class. Their homestay families helped them find appropriate medicine and they're hanging in there. They're also beginning to make travel plans, such as Greece for Easter weekend and Ireland for next weekend. Three have been to Wales already and eight of them are heading for Scotland next weekend. I love their travel stories when they return. They are also doing a great job of getting out and experiencing London on their own.

Well, it's time for me to leave the office and head north to Muswell Hill. Unfortunately, I have to do some laundry this evening, so I won't be out and about the town. I have plenty of papers to grade, so I will be occupied while I try to use a British washer. Speaking of papers, a couple of the students thought that I was giving them too much work to do while here. However, another one chimed in and reminded them that the semester was a ten-week semester, so they should expect the work to be heavier. I just smiled and reminded them that they knew about the assignments before we even left the states.

Have a good weekend. Cheers!
Randy

Post Date: Friday, February 27, 2009

End of Third Week

Greetings from London,

We started our week with a Royal Shakespeare Company's performance of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Most of the students loved the production and because we had studied the play and had great discussions about it, they were well-equipped for the performance and not lost in the Shakespearean dialogue/language. However, when I arrived for class the next morning and eager to have a discussion about the play, I was surprised to find out that a couple of the students thought the performance was vulgar and disgusting! I tried to convince them that they had witnessed an excellent Shakespeare comedy, which by its rights, would have some bawdiness in it by the very nature of being a comedy. Oh, well, they couldn't be convinced, and I just chalked it up to Midwestern innocence. I am still hoping that they have broadened their horizons, so to speak, and they have a much better understanding of Shakespeare and maybe even theatre in general.

Classes went well this week. Most of the students are right on track with submitting their assignments, which keeps me busy grading, but I'm glad to see them keeping up with the curriculum. Even my seven students in composition submitted their first essays on time! Brilliant, as the British would say! (I would be the first to admit that they might not be the best essays I have ever read, but they are pretty much on par with what I receive as first essays on campus.) They have plenty of time to revise, while they begin working on their second one. I also received the first pieces of creative writing and most of them were surprised to see how much writing/comments I added to their "creative attempts." A couple of them already think they are budding poets and were quite shocked when I made multiple comments on their selections. What most of them don't understand or want to consider is that good writing takes multiple drafts. They believe the muse has already visited them and they have created poetic masterpieces. Actually the ones who submitted scenes from one of the "snap shots" from their lives, not really photographs, but a list of mental images we created at the beginning of the semester, really wrote some pretty interesting pieces. I'm all about revision, so we'll see how these pieces evolve.

For their Wednesday fieldtrip, I took them to the Tate Britain, which is England's art museum for English painters. The museum begins with the Tudor portraits from the 1500s and works its way through the twentieth century. The museum is set up chronologically and the rooms are based on themes or certain artists. I asked them to do a complete walk through, just to get a feel for the

museum, and then to return to a room they liked and write about the paintings in that particular room and how the paintings fulfilled the room's description. I also asked them to write about two or three pieces--paintings, sculptures, or installations--that they enjoyed and "participated" with in some fashion. I am anxious to read their papers. When I did my visit on Sunday, I encountered a couple of pieces that I loved. However, before I can write about them, I need to return and write about them while I view them, rather than try to pull from memory.

We ended the week with a trip to the National Portrait Gallery. We had our usual guide, Bob Craig, so it was an exceptional tour and the students really enjoyed their time there. Of course, there is much more to see than what we could see in an hour and half, so I have encouraged them to return. We ended the tour at Elton John's HIV fund raising exhibit, which is a huge group of international athletes photographed in black and white nude poses. It is an incredible installation piece and deserves multiple visits. Interestingly, my girls who began the week with "vulgar" Shakespeare did not find this room of photographs disgusting! The photography is stunning. Of course, by using international athletes, you can only imagine how beautiful their bodies are. Of course, because it's a museum, they have an assignment. If an individual's portrait is included in the National Portrait Gallery, it's because of who the person was or is in British history, life, or culture, not because the portrait is a beautiful piece of art. However, several of the portraits in the museum truly are artistic. Their assignment for that museum is to identify two or three portraits that are, indeed, artistically rendered.

I have sent eight off to Scotland for the weekend. The remainder of us will have to be content with wandering the streets of London. I plan to secure some theatre tickets (I have found I get much better seats if I actually take the time to go to the theatre's box office, than attempt the online method), wander through the streets and maybe do some shopping at Portobello Road Market on Saturday. This market is a great place to do antiques in London. The streets are filled with stalls of interesting antiques and other collectables.

Most of our colds have run their courses, so hopefully we will be healthy the remainder of the trip. The weather is supposed to be warm this weekend, but then cold again next week, so I'm not sure when spring will actually arrive here. Most of the daffodils are in bud stage, so it shouldn't be too much longer.

I hope all is well in your worlds.

Cheers!
Randy

Post Date: Friday, March 06, 2009

End of Fourth Week

The days are flying by much too quickly. I can't believe we have already completed our fourth week here! I usually don't come to the office on Fridays, but I have a ton of grading to work through (these students keep handing in their assignments and they're keeping me busy!), so I thought I would work here for a couple of hours. However, yesterday afternoon, I discovered that the British Library, which is very close to my office, is a great place to go and work, so I'll probably head there after I complete my computer work and e-mails.

It's a small world! One of the students, Adam Foust, is competing this weekend in a disc golf tournament. The director of the tournament is a former DMACC student from West Des Moines. I'll have to get his name from Adam when Adam returns on Monday. In fact, Adam is staying with him for the weekend. Hopefully, Adam will return to London with some type of a trophy! If he does, we'll take a picture and write an article for the Chronicle.

The rest of the students are staying in London this weekend. Many are going to the Tower of London on Saturday morning and then meeting me in Greenwich at 1:00, so that we can go to the Royal Observatory, which is 0 longitude and we can all stand with one foot in the eastern hemisphere and one foot in the western hemisphere. The National Maritime Museum is also there and it has some interesting exhibits.

The British Life and Culture lecture this week was on the British class system. I couldn't have had a better lead into our next day's discussion of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. We had an excellent discussion on the novel. In fact, it was one of the best discussions I have ever had in a literature class. I don't know if it's this group, our location, or perhaps a combination, but they seem to be enjoying the literature class. We even had a great discussion on Tennyson's "Ulysses." They get so involved in some of these discussions that I have to actually ask them to be quiet because more than one is trying to speak at a time. What a great classroom management problem!

I think my greatest teaching struggle this semester is the creative writing material. Although I like the textbook I selected, mostly because it places emphasis on the process of creating and techniques of good creative writing, but I don't know if I'm challenging the students enough. I'll try to determine that when I read their work this weekend. They don't understand that good writing is a process and that revisions are essential. On the other hand, I love having the city of London as their back drop for finding people and scenes to write about. They are supposed to work on a couple of pieces while in Paris next week.

I think the highlight of our week was our Wednesday field trip to the Imperial War Museum. There's a great exhibit there about seeing the war from a child's perspective. I'll have to go back to spend more time in the exhibit. When I was there on Wednesday, I was sharing the space with about 100 elementary school children and it was pretty chaotic. The Holocaust exhibit at the museum is excellent. On this visit, I mostly enjoyed the special exhibits. One is entitled "In Memorium" and it is an exhibit honoring World War I veterans. It's not only educational, but it is beautifully presented. However, the best exhibit was "Unspeakable" and it is an exhibit of Holocaust paintings. It is the first time I have ever seen an art exhibit completely dedicated to paintings about the Holocaust. It was very powerful and I will have to return at least once just to spend more time viewing the paintings, even though they are painful to view. Three of the students are using the Holocaust for a back drop, so to speak, for final humanities presentations and finding this exhibit was very beneficial for them. Now they will be able to "marry" three or more of the arts--literature, music, painting, and photography--to create their presentations. I can hardly wait to see these presentations because they are also traveling to other parts of Europe--Amsterdam and Krakow--to complete their research and find materials for their presentations.

I ended my week with *Wicked* last evening. If you haven't seen this musical, you need to dash to the nearest opportunity and purchase a ticket. It was beautiful and exciting. The costumes are incredible and it's great fun. I didn't really enjoy the book, but now I might have to reread it because the plot of the musical was great and such a fantastic take on *The Wizard of Oz*. I'll be seeing the show again with the students later in the semester, but I wanted a really good seat for my first time and I had a great seat in the center of the Stall section about fourteen rows from the front. I'm off to see *La Cage Aux Folles* this evening.

On Monday next week we have our tour of the Globe for our British Life and Culture lecture. It's a great learning experience for the students, especially since we have already read Shakespeare and seen a Shakespeare play. I only wish the Globe were open while we are here, but since it is in outside venue, it's a little too chilly to sit for a theatre production. On Tuesday, we will be off for Paris for all of next week. This will be a great group to take to Paris because they are so excited about seeing and learning and doing. I'm hoping for great weather, but even if it's raining, we'll be in Paris! Only two of them have had French, so I'm pretty sure the "gaggle" will stick pretty close to me. On the other hand, this bunch is becoming pretty adventuresome and I won't be surprised if they take off on some of their own excursions. I do have several activities planned for them; they know what time

and where to meet me, what Metro line to use, and where to get off the Metro, so we should have pretty good success with navigating the city.

Well, I need to get busy. I won't write again until we return from Paris. More than likely, I will not check my e-mail between Tuesday through Saturday of next week. I hope all is well in your world!

Cheers!
Randy

Post Date: Saturday, March 14, 2009

End of Fifth Week

I'm not sure where to begin or how to capture our trip to Paris in one short e-mail message, but I will do the best I can.

First of all, we started our fifth week with a lecture about the history of theatre in London, which was very interesting and enlightening. The lecture was followed by a tour and workshop at the Globe Theatre. This Globe experience is one of the best ways to learn about Shakespeare, his plays, and the theatre scene in London when Shakespeare lived. Stratford is fine, but there is no replica of the Globe there. At any rate, the students learned about staging and acting in Shakespeare's time when actors did not have the luxury of hours of rehearsal or full texts of the entire plays; each actor only had his own script with three words preceding each speech. Using similar scripts as Shakespearean actors would have had, the workshop director had the students act out a scene from Julius Ceasar. They probably learned more in that hour and a half than in ten classroom lectures on Shakespeare.

We met at 12:00 noon on Tuesday for our pre-Paris departure to discuss meeting times and places in Paris and to practice with the Paris Metro map. Although the Metro is quite similar to the Tube in London, we rapidly discovered that changing lines in Paris is not necessarily more difficult, but much more time consuming than in London. Of course, trying to read the names of Paris lines in French is more complicated also. However, we were all at the Eurostar gate on time (even the two who forgot their passports at their homestays managed to get home and return on time for the correct departure) and we left for Paris. We had some complications and problems the first evening, but after that, everything went quite smoothly. First of all, it took me much longer to get to my hotel, check in and back to the students than I had intended. However, they were patient and waited for me. Two of the girls who stayed in a different hostel never found us that evening, but they certainly learned how to navigate on the Metro! We met at the Sacre-Coeur and after the students toured the cathedral, we walked the few blocks to the Montmartre area where the painters are usually sitting around the square and hoping that tourists will purchase their water colors or oils of various Paris sites. Much to my surprise, there were only four artists sitting there! I'm guessing the artists don't really take up residence there, in the evening at any rate, until the weather warms up. Because the restaurants were hoping for business, we had no problem finding a place where all us could sit together for dinner. Someone in the group ordered escargots, which set off a new trend for several, and every dinner meal after that included one or two orders of escargot.

The gypsies were a problem the first evening and the students were bothered by them before I arrived. I told them they had to be more assertive and not let them get close. Of course, I didn't realize that before we left the Montmartre area that I would have to practice what I preached. Near the bottom of all of the stairs that lead to Sacre-Coeur, we were accosted by a gypsy who wouldn't leave us alone until I got firm with him. When I was finished yelling at him, he threatened me with a gun and I proceeded to yell more at him and we walked away. Of course, the students are still talking about my "Clint Eastwood moment," as they described it, and I suspect I will read about it in several journals. Of course, I'm not sure what I would have done had he actually pulled a gun out of

his pocket. At the moment, I completely suspected he was simply trying to frighten a group of Americans.

We journeyed on and went to the Arc de Triomphe for our night cap, so to speak. The students loved being under the arc and seeing the sites of Paris that it affords, such as La Grande Arche in La Defense in one direction, and down the Champs-Elysees in the other direction. A corner of the Eiffel Tower can also be seen from there. What we couldn't see because it was night and dark, such as the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel or the obelisk in the center of Place du la Concorde, would be seen on Thursday when we intended to walk the Champs-Elysees. It was getting late, so I soon sent them to their hostels for the evening.

On Wednesday morning, we met in front of Notre-Dame and because it was early in the morning, we had no crowds to wrestle with. After touring Notre-Dame, we visited the Memorial des Martyrs de la Deportation, which commemorates the 200,000 French men, women, and children deported to Nazi concentration camps during WWII. Next, we visited Sainte-Chapelle, which has become one of their favorite churches so far this semester. By then it was lunch time, so we ventured to the Latin Quarter, where there is any area of pedestrian sidewalks and tons and tons of restaurants. We gathered after lunch and ventured on foot to the Musee d'Orsay. The rest of the afternoon was devoted to the Eiffel Tower. First, we went to the Palais de Chaillot for their photo opportunities and maybe Christmas card pictures of themselves standing in front of the Eiffel Tower looming behind them. I love taking people there because it is usually their first full glimpse of the Eiffel Tower and they love it. It's much better than first seeing it from the base of the tower, which was our next stop. Of course, I had some brave souls who wanted to go up, but they didn't want to wait in line to take an elevator from the ground, so they walked (I think it's 700 steps total) to the second level and a few ventured all the way to the top. By that time it was time to find dinner. The group split because they had different cuisine desires, but we gathered at 6:30, so that we could have a 7:00 Bateaux-Mouches Seine Cruise, which was a great way to cap off a perfectly beautiful day in Paris.

On Thursday morning, we regrouped under the Arc de Triomphe again and started our day with a walk down the Camps-Elysees and all the way through the Jardin des Tuileries to the Musee du Louvre. However, since the Louvre was one of their choices for their free time, we continued walking to the Musee National du Moyen Age, which used to be the Musee de Cluny. Only a few of us chose to go to this museum to view the famous Lady and the Unicorn tapestries, which are, in my estimation, brilliant. However, one of the students was disappointed because they weren't as bright and beautiful as she had hoped. (I'm not always sure what these young people are looking for when they view art and history, but MTV has certainly destroyed their spirits for discovery.) They had the afternoon to venture wherever. Most of them went to find Jim Morrison's grave at Cimetiere du Pere Lachaise. I think all of them, at some point in time, visited the Musee du Louvre. In my free time, I wandered through the Marais area to see the Hotel de Ville, and some now sites for me, such as the Opera de Paris Bastilled and the Place de la Bastille. I also found Delacroix's Christ in the Garden of Olives in the Jesuit church of St-Paul--St-Louis. I knew we were meeting for dinner, so I ventured back to the Latin Quarter to find a suitable restaurant for that experience. I also found time for glass of wine at one of my favorite Paris stops, Les Deux Magots. Because it would be our last night in Paris as a group, we had dinner at a nice little French restaurant where they could order three course dinners for either 10 or 15 Euros.

On Friday morning, I met the group at Gare Saint-Lazare. Our intentions were to journey to Vernom and on to Giverny to see Monet's house and gardens. After I totaled up the cost of train tickets and museum entrances in Giverny, I thought we were probably spending more than most of them would want, so we did an alternate agenda. (We later found out that Giverny wasn't even open. I would have been upset to travel there and the gardens not open, so it was a wise choice!) Instead we went to the Musee Marmottan, which is largely dedicated to Monet. Most of them loved their time there. We journeyed on to Musee Rodin for a tour of the gardens, where most of the sculptors are located. By this time, some of them were grumpy and tired of traveling so much in a gaggle. I sent them on their own and returned to London on my own.

Some stayed in Paris for the weekend, a couple flew to Krakow for the weekend and the rest returned to London at various times on Friday afternoon and evening. I have a hunch that it was a great trip and they had a good time. I'll know when I read their Paris assignments! I think I crammed as much art and culture into them in four days as possible.

It is our mid-term already! I will spend the rest of the weekend catching up on my grading and evaluating student progress. A couple of them need a heart-to-heart with me on Monday, so that I can hopefully light a fire under them, or they will be earning some pretty expensive Fs for grades. Because it's spring break in Iowa, we have more than one set of parents visiting this week, so hopefully that might be a reminder also about the need to do some homework!

I hope those of you on spring break this week have a wonderful time.

Cheers!
Randy

Post Date: Friday, March 20, 2009

End of Sixth Week

Greetings from London!

We have completed our sixth week, which was relatively calm after our trip to Paris. Although we have had absolutely beautiful weather all week long, it was a quiet week in London. I can't remember having so many days of sunshine in a row! In fact, because the weather was so beautiful on Wednesday, some of us escaped to Kew Gardens to enjoy the sunshine and spring flowers. Kew Gardens is a great botanical experience, both with the inside garden experiences such as the Palm House and the miles and miles of trails through outdoor floral extravaganzas! The grounds were literally covered with thousands of daffodils alpine squils. It was, indeed, a great way to escape from the world and the classroom and grading and reading, just to walk quietly through the gardens.

Actually, we started the week with our guided tour/visit to Parliament. I have had several tours of Parliament through the years, but the gentleman who was our guide this Monday was the best I've ever had. He was well-informed and very interesting. We also had a lecture from an MP from the Conservative party, which I thought was interesting, but most of the students seemed bored by his information. Oh, well, how often have they ever even met their senator or representative, yet they were in a room for an hour with Member of Parliament and could ask him any questions they wanted about British politics. It was a great Monday morning and great way to begin a week of classes in London.

Tuesdays are devoted to writing, so the Comp I and Comp II students work shopped papers and in creative writing we mostly discussed what assignments/projects they should have completed at this point. I have discovered that these writing classes are the most difficult because the students don't want to focus or accept the challenge that good writing is all about revision and rewriting. This idea about revision is especially true with the creative writing class. Their textbook emphasizes the need for multiple drafts, but I can't seem to get them to see that value.

What's most thrilling is seeing the students grow and mature through their travel and discovery experiences. Several of them have read *The Book Thief* and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* since arriving in London, but the two who journeyed to Krakow last weekend and toured Auschwitz were the two who had the most incredible life-changing experiences. One of the girls discovered the London Fashion Week and went to some of the events. Her experiences were, in her own words, "one-in-a-lifetime experience." In fact, because of that adventure she and I have altered her final project in humanities to include fashion, which may not be one of the "arts" in the textbook, but certainly takes extreme talent, and eventually wrapping her presentation around costumes and theatre experiences from their shows here in London, *The Lion King* and *Wicked* in particular since

they are seeing those productions and both shows have outstanding costumes. And finally, the two girls who presented their humanities chapter on sculptor not only pulled examples and pictures from the textbook, but stretched themselves to discuss many of the sculptors we have seen in London and Paris this semester. I loved the application of previous museum visits into their presentation. Maybe they are learning something?

We had our own St. Patrick's Day celebration at O'Neils, which is an Irish pub in our neighborhood where most of us are living. Although the students stayed much longer than I did, it was fun for me to see all of them have a good time together. I think some interesting bonding happened that evening. A couple of parents/families from Iowa also joined in our festivities. I am happy to say that everyone--a few late--made it to class the next morning.

Several are off to Amsterdam for the weekend and a group ventured to Ireland. I'm investing in more theatre experiences this weekend. This evening I'm seeing Hairspray, which I think is also playing in Des Moines this coming week, and while I'm sure the Civic Center production will be good--probably outstanding--it's just not the same as seeing the show in London's West End. I also need to visit a couple of museums to plan our Wednesday excursions to them. The National Gallery is huge and it is better if I guide them through it and help them bypass centuries of religious art. If I forced them through all of those galleries, they wouldn't even remotely appreciate what I want them to see by the twentieth century artists. I also need to see what's at the Serpentine Gallery.

I hope those of you who were on spring break this past week had a good and restful break. It always seems so long for spring break to get here and then once it's here and gone, the rest of the semester just flies by! Take care and enjoy the spring weather.

Cheers!
Randy

Post Date: Sunday, April 4, 2009

Post Date: Monday, March 30, 2009

End of Seventh Week

It's hard to believe that we have completed our seventh week already! With only three weeks left, the students are beginning to panic about their final projects and papers, as well as taking one final exam for the entire semester. (I have told them not to worry about the final exam. They cannot study for it because they have, in essence, lived it throughout the semester.) However, I am looking forward to their final humanities projects. I am anxious to see how creative they are with "marrying" two or more of the arts together into one presentation. I remember in 2005 when they presented these final projects, I was amazed at how well they were put together. This bunch is far more creative with the use of PowerPoint and making the Internet provide images than the group in 2005, so I think I can anticipate some good work.

By this time in the semester, we have definitely set in a routine and our lives in London seem as ordinary and usual as our lives in Iowa. In fact, I was so routine yesterday that I never left the house, I never changed out of my jammies, and I never once thought about getting on the Tube to go somewhere. Instead, I graded all of the assignments I had, read another great novel, and just relaxed.

This week, we completed all of the chapter presentations from the humanities textbook. The last chapter to be presented was the one on photography, which the two guys had. Attempting to earn the out-of-classroom bonus points, they decided to take us on a field trip to London's Photography Museum. We worked our way to the spot only to discover that the museum has been moved! Oops!

no bonus points yet. (I had told the guys to go ahead a day or so, so that they could be well aware of what was in the museum for us to see, but they didn't.) However, we were close to the National Gallery, which was where I had planned to take them for their Wednesday afternoon field trip. The National Gallery is London's equivalent to the US's National Gallery and the Louvre in Paris. It is a huge museum and the first half of it is devoted to countless paintings and pieces of art devoted to Christ and the Virgin Mary, as well as numerous Bible stories. I decided they could do that part of the museum on their own. After all, how many paintings--gilded paintings, I might add--can one person look at in an afternoon? Instead, I had them concentrate on Monet, Manet, Van Gogh, Degas, Cezanne, and others like them. I also had them view the four Beuckelaer paintings which emphasize the four elements of earth, fire, water, and air. Each painting also has a biblical scene worked into the canvas, so we did have some religious painting!

Because their literary papers are due soon, we used Thursday as an opportunity to work on these papers and use me as a resource. For some odd reason, when I wrote their syllabus, I left Thursday off of the literature syllabus, so I guess it was meant to be that they had some time to devote to their papers.

On Thursday evening, I went to see the new West End production of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert. It was quite the show. The costumes were absolutely outlandish and the production numbers were incredible. It was a long show--nearly three hours--but I enjoyed it and I am glad that I saw it here in London. It is playing to sold out crowds. I was lucky to get a ticket and I had a great seat. A couple of new shows are opening this week, so I might try to see them before I leave. I was about to purchase a ticket for Judi Dench's performance in Madame de Sade, but when I googled the show to try and learn more about it, I discovered that she had sprained her foot and would not be performing until sometime next week, so I'll have to wait to see that one.

On Friday, we had an all-day field trip to Oxford. Although it was windy and pretty cool, we had a nice day for the trip. Since the majority of the day was intended to be spent outside, it would have been miserable if the weather would have been rainy. Oxford is a beautiful city and we enjoyed seeing the sites, plus we had time to just wander around and do some discovery on our own. Of course, during our free time, it was lunch time and it's always difficult trying to find a good spot for a lunch. After walking around and investigating several possibilities, I finally settled on an old pub and had bangers and mash with onion gravy. However, the bangers were made from pork and rhubarb. YUM!

Although most of the students stayed in London for the weekend, a small group journeyed to Amsterdam and another small group went to Ireland. They are becoming seasoned travelers.

Those of you who can read the articles in the DMACC papers have had the privilege of reading some of their accounts from their points of view. I'm proud of their attempts to write for their peers at home in Iowa and get their articles published.

Well, I'm writing this on Monday morning, so I'm a little later than usual. I need to go to our classroom because we have a morning lecture on the European Union. Our lecturer had to cancel last week and we have rescheduled for this morning. One final note: London is supposed to have huge riots this week in the financial district. I am advising the students to stay away from the area. Hopefully, they will heed my warnings. I hope the transportation system functions as normal.

Cheers!
Randy

End of Week Eight

Greetings from London! It's a beautiful spring day and well worth anyone's time to journey to St. James Park and Regents Park to see the tulips! The gardeners are so clever; they have planted tulip bulbs amongst the primroses and pansies. Of course, the tulips are a different color, so there might be bright yellow tulips blooming in the midst of deep red primroses or orange parrot tulips blooming in a bed of purple pansies, The colors are astonishing and quite lovely. In the meantime, the thousands of daffodils are fading, yet the huge beds of roses are rapidly growing and will come along much faster if the weather were warmer. Unfortunately, I will miss the roses.

It has been a pretty quiet week of routine classes. However, I know the students are working on their final presentations for humanities and trying to wrap up their other papers and projects. Next week is Easter and many of them are going to Greece for the holiday. Because the University of London literally closes down for this holiday, it is difficult to have classes. We changed our meeting time for literature because those going to Greece were able to get a much cheaper ticket if they left on Thursday. I had toyed with the idea of travel myself, but have purchased theatre tickets for the week instead. I plan to see Calendar Girls and A Little Night Music, and maybe one more show that week.

About half of the group went to see The Lion King this week. One of the students didn't want to go, so I bought her ticket from her. We had great seats and it was great fun for me to see the show again. The students loved the animal costumes, masks and puppets.

For our Wednesday afternoon field trip, we went to the British Library, which is within easy walking distance from the university. At this time, there is only one exhibit to see, but it's the one that showcases part of the literary collection that is available, such as a Beate's exhibit, which includes sound. Part of the museum is interactive, so they could listen to authors reading their materials or others reading the materials of famous British authors. There is also a music section and it's exciting to listen to some great compositions. And then on Wednesday afternoon for British Life and Culture, we had a great lecture on the "special" relationship between the US and England. Not knowing that he is from Des Moines, the lecturer ended the lecture with a piece from Bill Bryson's Notes from a Small Island. She loves him as a writer and thought the ending of that book was very appropriate way to end her lecture. Actually, we read it out loud. Each person read one sentence. There just so happens to be 18 sentences in the cutting she selected, so we each read a bit.

Also on Wednesday evening, AIFS had a going away party for all of the students because one of the groups ends its semester on Friday. The theme of the party was the London Underground and they wanted everyone to dress up and represent a Tube stop. For example, wearing a crown and being Queensway, or attaching yourself to six other people and being Seven Sisters, or some such silliness as that. I did not attend the party. To the best of my knowledge, only two of the DMACC students attended. I am not sure what their disguise was.

Well, I'm off to Saturday Evensong at Westminster Abbey. I attended Evensong there yesterday and it was wonderful. The choir consisted of lay Vicars. Today's choir is the Westminster Choir and I expect it to be even more wonderful. In the meantime, I am grading papers and trying to keep up with the students.

Cheers!
Randy

Post Date: Thursday, April 09, 2009

End of Week Nine

Because of the Easter holiday and the University of London shutting down for the break, it was a short week for us. (I allowed the students to talk me into changing the meeting time of Major British Writers, so that they could capitalize on cheaper flights to Greece.)

On Monday night, we went to see *Wicked*. What a wonderful production! I'm not sure when this musical is coming to Des Moines, but if you haven't already purchased your tickets (they went on sale this week), I suggest you get online or call the box office immediately. When I see it in Des Moines, it will be the third time this year for me, and I would probably go again in a heart beat, except there are other shows I want to see before leaving London. The students loved the show and we had excellent seats.

For Creative Writing on Tuesday afternoon, I sent them out into the city to write a description of a journey that I specifically created. Two students had the same journey, but I wanted each student to have the experience alone and then come back to the classroom to share with their partner. I was hoping to teach them about point of view, but maybe, in fact, it would have worked if they would have walked together, but took separate notes. Oh, well, I was also looking for other elements of craft to appear in these descriptions. I still can't seem to get them to see that creative writing is crafted. They seem to think that the muse visits them instantly and their first draft is as good as it gets.

We had our discussion of Ian McEwan's *Saturday* at O'Neill's, the neighborhood pub. Actually, it was a pretty good discussion. We were able to take over an entire corner of the upper level and the students ordered food and drink. We were able to create one long table for us all and we had a lively discussion about the novel. Of course, they were disappointed when I didn't have a quiz for them! However, before leaving for Muswell Hill, several of us went to Fitzroy Square, which is only about four blocks from the campus, where the novel is set. We were able to determine which corner of the square is, more than likely, Henry Perowne's flat and we walked around the square. One of the students commented that just walking to the square made the novel better than if we had read it in Des Moines. On our way to the square, we walked right by the Spearmint Rhino, which is a gentleman's club referenced in the novel. They love finding these "real" places. We were also able to locate the street where Henry has his Saturday morning car accident.

On Wednesday morning, we started their final projects for Encounters in Humanities. I love these projects and wait patiently all semester for them to be presented. This group has been very savvy with their Internet and PowerPoint skills, which have enriched their presentations tremendously. These presentations are inspired by their London and travel experiences. After I watch them, I realize that I could never have these types of presentations in Iowa. Most of the presentations used photos that they had taken themselves, which also enhanced the presentations. One used photos from various cathedrals and churches because the presentation was on stained glass windows. The photos were beautiful. One presentation was on Royal Residences and the architectural differences between castles and palaces. Another presentation was about the Holocaust and using art--sculpture, painting, and photography--to tell the story. I can hardly wait until next week to see and hear the rest of them.

For British Life and Culture, we had a lecture on England and War, which included both The Great War and WWII. Since we had already been to the Imperial War Museum, they were able to relate much better to the lecture and some of the pictures in the presentation.

Last evening I went to see *A Little Night Music*, which was very well done. It is an older musical currently being revived on the West End. At first, I didn't enjoy it, but as the plot played out, the humor pulled me in and I enjoyed the music and characters. Tonight I am seeing *Calendar Girls*, which is a new West End production that just opened. I'm not sure what else I will do with my long Easter break, maybe see some more theatre. There is a performance of the *Messiah* on Monday evening at St. Martin's in the Fields, which I may go to.

Also, at the beginning of this week, my friend Liz from Des Moines and her friend Yvonne from New York were here. It was great fun spending time with them. We had some wonderful meals and some great moments of laughter. They had beautiful weather for their entire visit. It's somewhat ironic that

today, when they are departing, that the weather has turned cooler and darker. I'm grateful for the sunshine they brought to London!

Happy Easter!

Cheers!
Randy

Postcard from London



By CAITLIN PALAR
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Fellow DMACC students, you may be wondering what a classmate of yours is doing in London, England. Let me demystify this for you. DMACC is part of a program called American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS) which allows for students from all partnering schools to sign up to study in London for a semester. I am here with four other DMACC students and a DMACC professor who teaches us four out of five of our classes here. Our fifth class is British Life and Culture which is taught by a British professor. The duration of our semester is ten weeks and our classes are Monday through Wednesday each week. This gives us four day weekends to experience the city and travel to other European cities. Also,

for BLC class we participate in day trips to places like Stonehenge and Bath. The day trips have been so enlightening. We got on a bus in central London two weeks ago, drove two hours west, and spent the day exploring the ancient Roman Baths. Last week we drove almost the same distance and pulled up to Stonehenge.

The city of London itself is full of history. At first glance, the streets may look like any other modern city street you would see in America. If you tilt your head back and look up, however, you will notice the architecture that reflects the age and value of London. Sometimes the feeling is overwhelming when I reflect on all the history I am surrounded by. For instance, the first time I walked by myself through the city I passed St. Paul's Cathedral on my way to the Globe Theatre. When

I crossed over the Thames River on the Millennium Bridge life slapped me across the face and said, "Wake up! You are a part of all this!"

Most of the time life in London is very normal. The Londoners have molded their modern lives around the history that dwells here. A great example of how the locals live with the aged city is O'Neills Pub in Muswell Hill. Muswell Hill is the area of North London where I reside in a home stay.

The other DMACC students live in the area as well. We meet several days a week at O'Neills which is a converted church. The atmosphere is spiritually inviting and provides for a good time.

Good times are easy to come by in London. How on earth do we get any school work done? We may not be in the midst of several blizzards like you are at home, but we do have many rainy days that are perfect for staying in and doing homework. We save the walks along the River Thames from Big Ben to London Bridge for sunny days.

This is only my third week here and London has already changed my life. I encourage you to look into the DMACC study abroad program. Seriously consider adding a trip to London to your future plans. It is a life launching experience that you will not regret.

Post card from London Part 3:

Exploring Scotland

Hello fellow DMACC students,

I have been in London for the past month, and since I have been here I have done many things that will stay with me. The most memorable experience that I've had since being here is when I went to Scotland. While I was there, I learned about different kinds of castles and then I had the experience of being able to stay in a hostel, which I never thought I would do in my lifetime.

In Scotland, I saw many different castles I thought were interesting. We saw the castle that was in the movie "Made of Honor" as well as the castle that was in "Monty Python and the Holy Grail." The castles that we saw were all extremely interesting, most of them were in ruins but they were still cool to see.

All of the castles we saw were made out of masonry for the simple fact that it is a better material than wood to use and will not get destroyed easily upon attacks. Although there were a few castles we saw that were in ruins, most of them are still standing to this day and still look somewhat new. When we saw the castle from "Monty Python and the Holy Grail," it made me think of the movie. As we were sitting outside of the Daunc Castle ("Monty Python and the Holy Grail") I got to laughing and quoting lines from the movie, just thinking about the coconut horses makes me laugh every time. As our trip continued through Scotland, we saw many other castles and learned much about them from our amazing tour guide.

The Sexy Castle, as our tour guide Dan would call it, is the location of a James Bond film. The castle that was originally there got destroyed but was rebuilt by an architect who had a dream of what he would build. The original blue prints were lost and the plan that he dreamed of was built. A few years after completing the new castle, they found the original blue prints; the design was so close to the original that it was 95% accurate.

The castles that were no longer standing were destroyed with a boom of cannons while the Scots were fighting one of the many battles that Scotland would have. The castle at Loch Ness was one of the castles that went boom in one of the fights. Our tour guide told us that the Scottish government has done many things to keep people from taking pictures of the castle without paying to go and see it. We were lucky enough when we went that the trees had no leaves on them so we were able to see it. The government built a viewing wall but they put signs up telling people not to climb on the walls. Of course, the sign makes one want to climb on it, at least for me it did.

After our day filled with looking at castles and many other places throughout Scotland, we went to our hostels. We stayed at three hostels Morags, Saucy Marrys, and Smartcity. They were all really fun and had many things for us to do and since the drinking age over here is 18, all the hostels had a pub and everyone in the program went there to hang out and talk. Saucy Marrys was the only place we stayed at that was a bit sketchy, but it was on the Isle of Sky and that made up for the sketchiness of the hostel.

Everyone who went on the trip really enjoyed it and it is an experience that I would recommend to everyone. It is a life changing experience to get to see all the wonderful scenery that Scotland has to offer.

Levi Wellborn

Levi V

Lond



From left to r
Sater, Ellie K
Wianecki, an

Welcome to Fallins Rock National Park by Kid Shaw

Post card from London Part 4:

Home away from home

Hello fellow DMACC students,

I'm starting my seventh week here in London and it seems like home. I pretty much have everything important finished: school, the tube, and even the homestay. Contrary to popular belief, not all homestays are as bad as some people might portray them. As long as you introduce yourself beforehand, respect their property (remember you are a guest), and ask questions and speak up, you are guaranteed to have a euphoric experience.

When I was given Jan's e-mail address (my homestay mom) and was asked to introduce myself to her via e-mail, I was scared but also extremely excited. It took me a couple of hours to get up the nerve to e-mail her for the first time. I introduced myself and told her my rituals on sleeping, eating, and studying and told her my habits and hobbies. I then asked about her.

I was on pins and needles waiting for her response. Had I been too forward or not forward enough? I wondered: Will she hate me and request I not be in her house? These thoughts were running through my mind like a rabbit searching for a carrot. That was, until I read her response.

I remember like it was yesterday. I feel in love with London all over again. Granted, my love came through books and documentaries, but I love London. I couldn't believe that I was talking to someone that actually lives in another country and that person would be my landlady for the next 10 weeks. All worries went away when she welcomed me and she had never even met me before. She told me about herself and where she lives, who her family members are, and what she expects regarding her home. I felt like I had no worries in the world and, looking back, I laugh thinking that I was actually scared sending her that first e-mail.

After all the e-mails had been sent and received, after the plane ride, and finally after meeting Jan in person (along with my roommate Gillian), we were both informed of what to do and what not to do. For example, call and let Jan know if we are not going to return home for the night. Take shoes off (she is eco friendly). She is extremely adamant about recycling: She has a green bin, a black bin, and a garbage bin. Don't leave dirty dishes in the sink. Don't fill the bathtub all the way up and, most importantly, let her know when there will be guests over and no guests when she is not home.

Even though we are a paying guest in their home, we can speak up if things don't seem right. The homestay family provides breakfast each weekday morning. They are to let us do laundry at least once a week. We were told that it will be cold in the bedrooms so we should bring heavy sleeping cloths. All of this information was given to us before we left home, but it's still important to be able to speak up. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you are not receiving food for breakfast, if they won't let you do laundry, or if you have no heat in your room or even for your shower.

Such things become a health issue and that's when you speak up and inform AIFS so it can be resolved. If necessary, AIFS will move you to another family. If you don't speak up, you may end up having a terrible time in London. I know a person who lived in a homestay with no hot water and heat, but now he has moved into a good homestay and has no regrets about asking questions.

With my homestay I feel like I hit the jackpot and it has given me the best experience in the world. Jan has helped me out immensely when it came to the culture and. For example, right away she told my four classmates and me what tube to take to get to school and she let us have a spaghetti night and movie night in one go. Jan is worried about me having the time of my life and will suggest places to go and eat. She has listened to me speak about my family, and we even debate important topics. She is my second mum.

The best way to experience this adventure is to immerse yourself in the culture and a homestay is a great way to do that. Remember: Introduce yourself no matter how cheesy or ridiculous it sounds, respect their property, and ask questions and speak up. I found my second family here in East Finchly, London, and it's a wonderful one. First impressions will last a lifetime.

Tiffany Sater

Tiffany Sater

London, E



From left to right: Tiffany Sater and Mindy Roney on their trip to London.

CHEERS

Spring 2011 DMACC London Study Abroad



‘Watching the DMACC students expand their horizons and live a life-changing experience while they studied in London and traveled throughout Europe has been the pinnacle of my teaching career.’
Randy Jedele, 2009 London study abroad professor

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