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Major: Communication
Food Writing in Paris (Summer 2016)

Why did you choose the Food Writing in Paris program?

I chose this program because it seemed like the perfect combination of many of my interests. I had created a food blog the past summer, and was curious about what food writing meant in the context of the course. The location, in Paris, also couldn't be more appropriate given the city's rich history involving both writing and food. Not everyone was as interested in food writing as I was, but you didn't have to be. Everyone eats, so anyone can write about food and memories that have to do with eating!

What was the most memorable part of the experience?

While so many aspects of the trip were incredible, the most memorable experiences were the field trips. We visited many different markets, took a pastry class, and cooked in a commercial kitchen. We also traveled outside of Paris to visit a champagne cellar and a cheese cave, where we met families and artisans who have been making cheese and champagne for hundreds of years. All of these trips helped make what we learned really come alive, and were a great, interactive way to better understand French culture.

What was the most challenging part of the program?

Since I knew I was interested in the course very early on last year, I decided to take French both semesters in order to obtain some basic language skills. While I thought I would be nervous and uncomfortable speaking French, I realized that a true cultural experience would involve me practicing my skills. This was challenging because I didn't know very much French, but I realized that I knew more than I thought. It's really true that the French are much more accommodating and accepting if you simply make an effort to speak their language.

What was the greatest thing you learned while you were abroad?

Because of this course, I learned that talking and writing about food is not a trivial thing. Rather than focusing on restaurant critiques or recipes, a lot of the pieces we wrote and discussed were personal pieces about connecting food to family and cultural identity. I also learned that food writing is for everyone. You don't have to have a certain skill set, an extensive vocabulary about food, or even need to know much about cooking in order to write about food. After we all went through rounds of revision and personal reflection, I was extremely impressed by the sophisticated and inspiring food writing my peers created.

How would you say that your experience abroad influenced the remainder of your time at BC?

Because of this trip, I am definitely more interested in experiencing other cultures in a similar in-depth and interactive way. It was really unique that we were able to take an in-depth look at French culture, and discuss how we can apply the ways the French think about food to our

American culture. I'm really interested in participating in more international experiences where I can immerse myself in the beauty of another culture and learn how I can take inspiration from cultural beliefs and values different than my own. I will be studying abroad in Madrid for the spring semester, and am excited to continue expanding my cultural knowledge.

How would you say that your experience abroad influenced your post-graduation plans?

I'm not sure what I would like to do post-graduation, but because of this trip I'm definitely more interested in exploring options related to food and the impact that it can have environmentally, politically, socially, and culturally. I used to think that food was not a very important vehicle for change, and that I could be doing pursuing bigger, more impactful things, but I have learned that food is interconnected with so many larger issues. Currently, I am an Editorial Intern for the KITCHEN at the Boston Public Market, a year-round indoor market which houses over 40 local food vendors, and hosts cooking classes and workshops to encourage the importance of eating local, seasonal foods. Taking the Food Writing in Paris course definitely propelled me to apply for this internship, and taught me many valuable skills about writing and interviewing, which I use very often in writing blog posts for the KITCHEN.

What advice do you have for students interested in this program?

I would encourage students to apply even if they don't know too much about food writing, since the trip is an incredible learning experience for everyone. I would also advise students to learn some French, even if only a few phrases, because it really helps enrich the experience. If you speak to people, go to the markets, walk around outside of class and explore on your own, you start to think of yourself not just as a visitor, but rather as part of French culture even for the short period of four weeks.