

International Institutions: Responding to Global Threats

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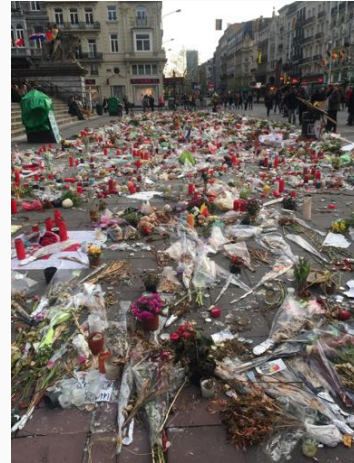
Responding to Global Threats

On March 22nd 2016, the city of Brussels was senselessly bombed by terrorists. The blasts hit the airport as well as a subway train station near EU headquarters. About 34 people were killed and about 190 were seriously wounded.



Rebounding from Tragedy

This year, the program was especially interesting because we had the opportunity to observe a country healing from tragedy. Belgium one month after the March 22nd bombings was similar to the United States after 9/11. There were public memorials for the innocent victims as well as heightened security measures on the streets and in the subway system.



Itinerary (April 30th - May 8th)

- Day 1: Arrival in Paris, bus to Brussels
- Day 2: Bus tour of Brussels, free afternoon, dinner at C'est Bonne C'est Belge
- Day 3: Information session and tour of EU Parliament, Info session and research time at the EC Central Library
- Day 4: Info session at European Commission, Role Playing game at the Parliamentarium, tour of Parliamentarium and museum
- Day 5: Visit and info session of the Euro Council, visit and info session of US Mission to the European Union, group dinner at Den Haag
- Day 6: Info session, lecture and discussion at ICTY (court hearing cancelled, witness failing to appear), tour of Peace Palace, boat tour of the Hague
- Day 7: Visit and information session to the ICC, US Embassy to the Hague visit, farewell dinner at Sol Beach
- Day 8: Free day, many students went to Brugge, Belgium or Amsterdam
- Day 9: Departure from Amsterdam :(

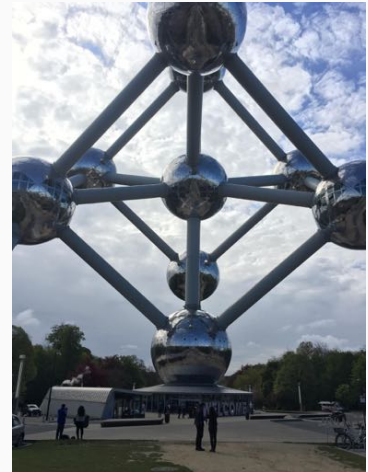
Day 1: When Life Gives You Lemons...

Because we could no longer fly into the Brussels airport, we had to change our flight last minute to arrive in Paris. Thankfully, we were allowed to spend a few hours exploring the city before heading to Brussels by bus. Our group even ate french fries...in France...under the Eiffel Tower!



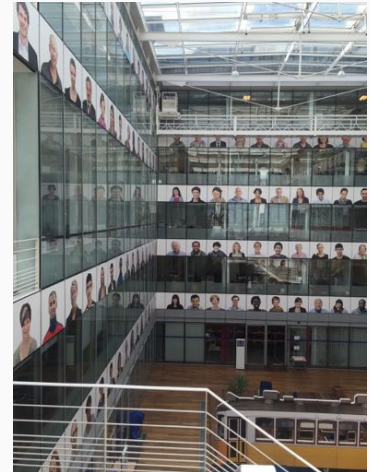
Day 2: First Day in Brussels

Day 2 started with a bus tour of the city, including a tour of the Atomium, followed by a free afternoon to explore Brussels and a group dinner at C'est Bonne C'est Belge, a traditional Belgian restaurant.



Day 3: EU Parliament and EC Library

We had the opportunity to attend an information session about the EU Parliament, as well as receive a tour of the Brussels Parliament building. We then had the chance to attend an information session at the European Commission Library. Here, we had time to browse the library and conduct research for our final research projects using resources at the EC Library. It offered a unique opportunity to obtain information that might not have been available back home in the States.



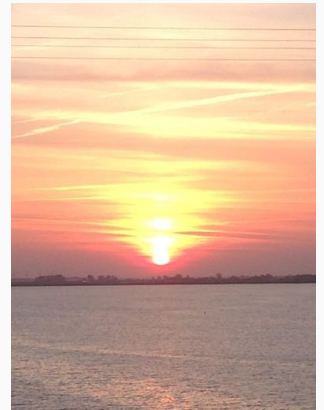
Day 4: EU Commission, Role playing game, Parliamentarium

Day 4 featured a role playing game at the Parliamentarium in which students simulated the process of passing legislation in the EU Parliament. Each student was assigned to a party and was tasked with forming alliances, defending the party's stance, and meeting with interest groups in order to pass legislation and compromise. This learning experience was supplemented by an information session at European Commission, and a tour of the Parliamentarium and museum.



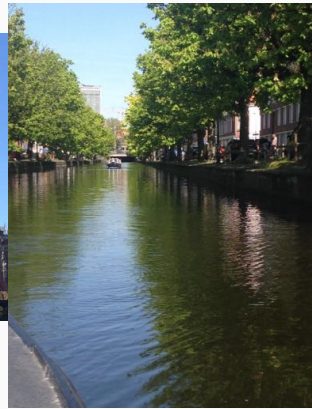
Day 5: European Council, US Mission

We departed the hotel for the European Council, and attended an information session in which we sat in the positions of Council members and learned about EC functioning from a staff member. We then went to the US Mission to the EU and heard from a US ambassador. That night we departed Brussels for The Hague, entering the city as the sun set over the water.



Day 6: ICTY, Peace Palace, Boat Tour

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia was located a few steps away from our hotel. Unfortunately, the trial we were scheduled to see was cancelled due to witness intimidation, but we were still able to hear from a staff member about the operations of the Tribunal, the defendants, and court proceedings. We then had a tour of the Peace Palace and a boat tour of the city.



Day 7: ICC, US Embassy in the Hague, Scheveningen Beach

On day 7, we had a brief informational session at the International Criminal Court, and even had the opportunity to see one of the courtrooms. We then visited the US Embassy in the Hague where we talked to two members of the Embassy about their experiences in foreign service. We finished the day and ended the official itinerary for our trip with a group dinner at Scheveningen beach at a restaurant called Sol Beach. The restaurant brought out grills and food for us to use to cook. We had fun working together during dinner and spending time on the beach during our beautiful last day of exploring international institutions.



Day 8: BRUUUUUges

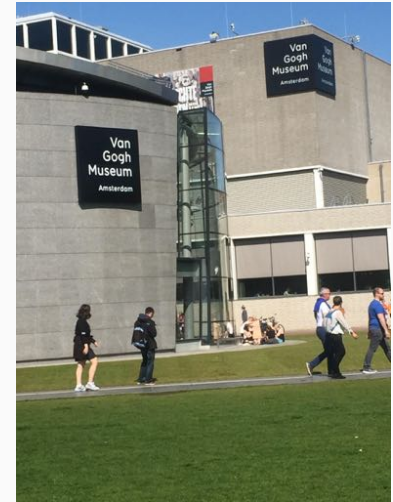
Day 8 was a free day, with groups going to Amsterdam, staying in The Hague, and travelling to Bruges, as well as other destinations. Some of the members of this group took a train to Belgium to the town of Bruges, and spent the day exploring the town, shopping, and visiting historical sites.



Shoutout to the best amateur tour guide ever!

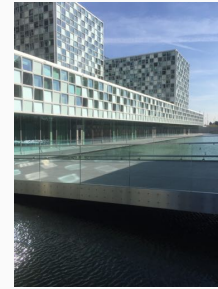
Day 8 (cont.): Amsterdam

On the free day, students went to various cities in Europe. A few of us took an hour train ride from The Hague to Amsterdam to explore the city.



Institutional Policy Changes

Throughout the course, students were granted unique access to international institutions. In addition to classroom learning and policy analysis, students attended tours, question and answer sessions, and observation in Belgium and The Hague. In this way, students not only learned about International Institutions in theory, but also experienced how they function in practice. This interactive learning shed new light on institutional policy, allowing students to think critically about challenges and solutions.



ICTY Compliance Policy Change

Challenge: Despite the success of the ICTY, state compliance with the court's rulings and needs for prosecution have been a challenge. This is due, in part, to a limited outline of compliance in UN Resolution 827, the document establishing and outlining the ICTY.

Solution: In order to codify compliance mechanisms into international law, the United Nations Security Council should amend Resolution 827 to include the use of sanctions, force, or other forms of incentive in order to facilitate compliance. In this way, the ICTY and the UNSC will have more leverage in enforcement.



Why and how is the program valuable?

Throughout the trip, each student was able to experience an interactive learning environment tailored not only to the subject of the course, but also to their specific research topic. This unique cultural and educational experience lead to valuable takeaways from each student.



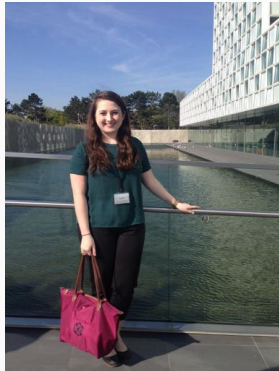
Why and how is the program valuable?

Alesha: “It was a unique experience to learn about particular international institutions in a classroom on campus and then actually have the opportunity to visit those institutions the following month. As a student not studying political science, the class prior to the trip challenged me because I came into the class with little to no knowledge of some of the institutions discussed. I found it interesting that the United States is not a part of many of these institutions even though we, as a country, tend to involve ourselves in most international conflicts. Both the class and study tour component taught me more than I could have ever imagined about the impact of globalization on international relations.”



Why and how is the program valuable?

Catherine: “This trip was a unique combination of tourism and education immersion. Most of the time, when learning about how a government institution or political theory works, it is through a textbook or in a lecture hall, even if the institution is located locally. Being able to learn about international institutions halfway around the world and then experience them firsthand was incredibly information, in addition to being able to ask questions of staff and members of the institutions.”



Why and how is the program valuable?

Rachel: “To me, the program was valuable because it allowed students to research based off of firsthand knowledge while facilitating cultural immersion. The theme of the class was explored in depth in the classroom, this background knowledge allowed students to expand beyond theory to truly grasp the inner workings, challenges, and purpose of International Institutions while studying abroad. This unique experience allowed me to grow as an international affairs and political science student, expand my research skills, and to explore a new culture with like-minded students.”



Why and how is the program valuable?

Hannah: “This program offers such an incredibly unique opportunity for students and I’m so grateful that UC and UHP offer it! It was great to be able to discuss and research international institutions and the impact of globalization on them but the study abroad component added a completely different level of learning to the program. After the trip, I truly feel that I understand the EU system and I can appreciate the intricacies of its role in the EU and around the world. I also feel like I have a better understanding of the various international courts and legal systems as a result of being able to travel to them and learn about them in person. The whole experience was made even better by being able to have it with great faculty, staff, and friends.”



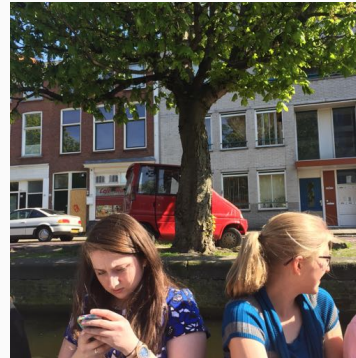
Why and how is the program valuable?

Shannon: “This program was extremely valuable because it enabled students to enhance their knowledge on international institutions first-hand. As a third-year Political Science and International Affairs student, I thoroughly enjoyed visiting the institutions and observing some of the theories I have studied for the past three years in practice. The other students and I were able to supplement our research with expert analyses and other primarily sources that would not have been available in the United States. I gained a greater understanding of international law, world politics and economics, and specifically, the role of the United States in the international landscape. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to explore each city’s culture, history, and the unique contributions of its people. This program assisted me in achieving my life-long goal of being a globally conscious individual.”



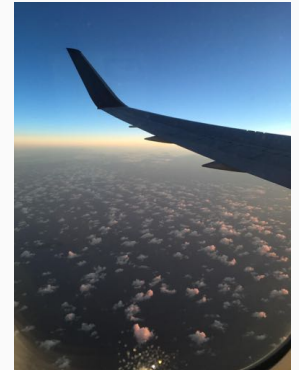
Why and how is the program valuable?

Connie: “This program was a huge deal for me personally because many of the people we met with were working in career paths that I am considering. I was able to speak to three different foreign service officers, as well as plenty of experts in international business and law. This was an incredible opportunity to see what diplomacy looks like up close and personal, and I have a much better idea now of what to expect in these fields and how to prepare. Beyond that, the EU in particular is a really complex system, and it’s so much easier to understand when you see it firsthand. That will serve me well now and in the future.”



Thank you!

We would like to thank Dr. Ivanov and Neil Choudhury for making this class and study tour possible. This trip would not have been the same without the two of you. We would also like to thank the University Honors Program for organizing this study tour and providing a grant to all participants. This study tour was an invaluable experience that we will never forget.



Sources

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