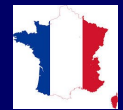




## Study Abroad Programs Student Testimonials 2015



### Daniela Molina, Honors France Study Abroad 2015



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Honors France Study Abroad 2015



Daniela Molina is a Public Relations major who spent July 2015 in Paris as part of Professor John Bailly's France Study Abroad program titled: *Art, War, and Human Rights*.

**MFJMCE:** What did you expect from the program? How did it meet or exceed these expectations?

**Molina:** Before starting the program, I had this image in my head of what everything would be like – from what my dorm would look like, to how my classmates and I would interact. To be honest though, I never gave much thought to the actual class itself. We didn't have to memorize dates and names, or even sit in a classroom for hours. Instead, we spent hours in museums staring at masterpieces, stood in Marie Antoinette's bedroom at Versailles and then her prison cell in the Conciergerie. The experience we had as a class is not really something I can put into words. I could never have expected to not only learn so much but actually change my way of thinking on things I was once so set on. But what made it so special was that I was with a group of people who genuinely cared and were all equally as excited to keep learning and exploring.

**MFJMCE:** What did you learn which was most applicable to your field of study?

**Molina:** I don't think studying abroad is better for one major and not for another. Studying abroad is an experience you have as a human. It changes you – and no matter what your major, you become a more cultured, well-rounded person because of it. What impacted me the most

throughout my stay was learning about the French Resistance movement. I was invited into the home of a holocaust survivor and spoke to a French Resistance fighter. Through this, I became aware of the responsibility and privilege that comes with being a citizen of a country, any country, and how fortunate we are to live the lives we lead. I tried to fully understand the struggles people went through to fight injustice for the good of their country and the generations to come. One of the holocaust survivors told us to "Never accept the unacceptable" and I think that's what stuck with me the most. I will carry that with me for the rest of my life and apply it to my career. Always stand up for what you believe in and be ethical in your job no matter what it is.

**MFJMCE:** Why do you think it's important to study abroad?

**Molina:** I think that no matter how much you may have traveled with your family, or how many times you may have visited your family in whatever country it may be, there's nothing quite like studying abroad and being alone for a month. I flew to a different continent I had never been in - by myself, lived with 20 people who I barely knew, in a country where I didn't speak the language, and it was the best experience of my life. It's important to step out of your comfort zone, try things you've never tried before, push yourself, and get to know yourself when you're not around your friends and family. I learned things about myself I didn't know before, but also about fostering friendships – things I probably would-

n't have realized if I were to have taken the class in Miami. You don't know how truly significant studying abroad is until you actually do it. You'll probably never again get this opportunity – take it.

**MFJMCE:** What was one thing you experienced while traveling that really surprised you?

**Molina:** It's so safe! For months before I left on my trip, the only advice people gave me always had to do with 'pickpocketing'. Every single person reminded me of how careful I had to be. Then there were the ones who had seen 'Taken' and made sure I knew not to share cabs with people. I was so surprised at how safe all of Europe was. If you are aware of your surroundings, and keep your things with you at all time, you will be fine. And also, French people don't hate Americans! Make an effort to speak the language of whatever country you're in, be respectful, and someone will help you out when they realize you have no idea what you're doing.

**MFJMCE:** Would you study abroad again?

**Molina:** If I wasn't graduating next summer, I would already be signed up for another study abroad with FIU. That doesn't mean I'm not already looking at flights out of here though. I've started thinking about taking it up a level and moving to France to study French. One-way ticket this time, though.

*By Stephanie Sepulveda*



For more information on France Art, War, and Human Rights program, visit the following page:

<https://globalaffairs.fiu.edu/study-abroad/programs/france/>