



# Relazione di fine scambio

Scuola del Design

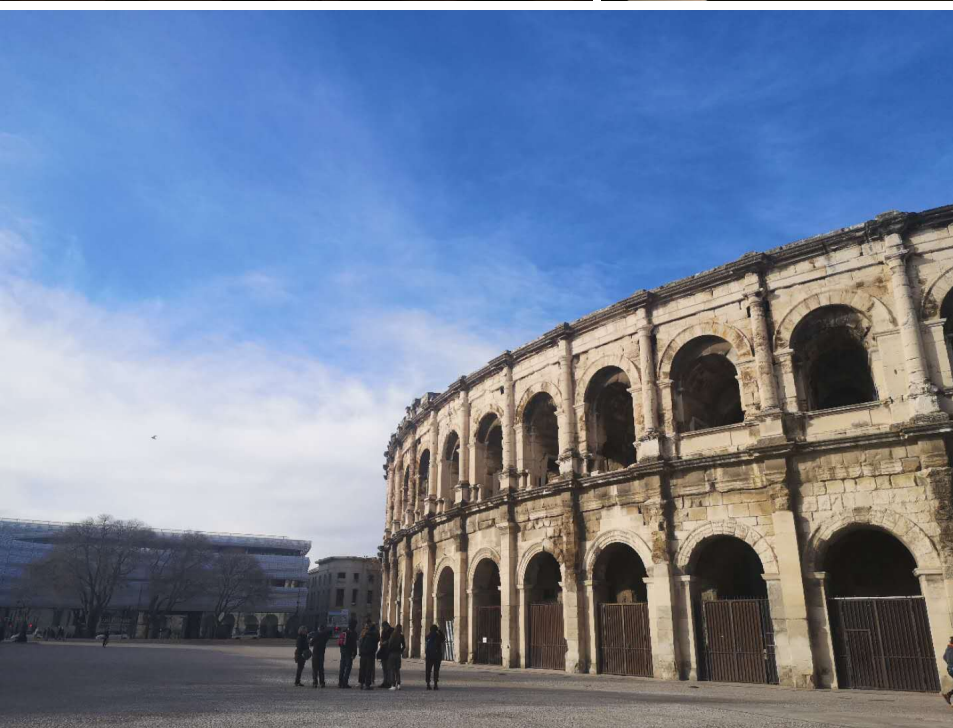
## Istruzioni

Indicare di seguito tutte le informazioni che possano essere utili ad altri studenti che parteciperanno a uno scambio. Preferibilmente in lingua inglese, lunghezza min. 2500 parole + possibili immagini, file di max. dimensione 2 MB in formato PDF. Questo documento sarà pubblicato nel sito web della Scuola.

## Informazioni generiche

Anno Accademico di Scambio:	2019-2020	Nome della Sede in scambio:	Université de Nîmes
Cognome e Nome:	Li Rui	Stato:	France
Matricola:	913715	Codice Sede:	3257
Corso di Studio:	Digital and Interaction Design	Tipo di scambio: (Semplice o Doppia Laurea)	Semplice
Anno di Corso:	2019-2020	Semestre di Scambio:	Second semester
Email:	rui2.li@mail.polimi.it	Docente Promotore:	Margherita Pillan

## Racconta la tua esperienza di scambio:







I am majoring in Digital and Interaction Design at Politecnico di Milano for my master's degree. In the past couple of months, I did my Erasmus exchange program at the Université de Nîmes, and I studied on the Design Innovation Society there. Overall, this was an inspiring and wonderful experience for me in my master's degree stage. I learned and grew up a lot.

The Université de Nîmes locates at the center of Nîmes, my campus is away from the center just by ten minutes walking. So there is no problem with daily mobility. There is no needs to take any transportation inside this city. Because it's very small but peculiar with beautiful scenery and clean streets. From spring to summer, it couldn't be better to live and study here. Because every day is sunny. The good climate motivated me to enjoy my studies in school.

Our class was different from Polimi, which was composed of only 15 students in the master class. And all the teaching professors knew me and also kept contacts with me, which was really useful for me to adjust myself to study in French. In the beginning, it was really not easy to follow the courses in French. While my classmates were very friendly. They translated for me when I asked them what I didn't understand. And also, the professors would like to reply to me in English if I asked them questions. After I was adopted for this learning environment, it was not a problem at all even if everything in French. In another perspective, my French learning was much more improved than before. I was studying with the students in Master first year since the second year's class already finished all the courses only on internship. I really liked the course distribution and course plan. Even though all of them are much more theoretical, compared with the master courses in the police. But these courses explained the design knowledge from different perspectives. For example, in the Anthropology of Project 1, this course is an anthropological approach to the project which aims to identify the diversity of situations, to identify invariants, to understand how the project works in different cultural sets, to question the way in which individuals, groups, cultures construct and live their relationship to time. I studied the tools of observation and investigation, analyzed field data. After finishing my individual exercises, I start to appreciate my own observation and sketch, which is I never haven't before. I was unconfident about expressing my sketch and put too much attention on the drawing technics rather on the observation. Thanks to Professor Watkin's teaching, I found the key points. I started to transmit my more attention to observation and rapid recording. From this course, I strength my capability on design observation and capture. In Professional Ethics, it's to understand the relevance of the theoretical concepts developed by these authors in order to shed light on design issues. I learned some classical theories in ethics, and adopt an approach based on knowledge of ethics to describe, analyze, criticize, and propose improvements for a project situation in design. In the Project of Design and complexity, this course was made from real orders given by public institutions, local communities, or social organizations to help them design solutions in a human and creative way. And I studied and diagnosed with use via interviews, in-situ observations, analyzes of user journeys, and qualitative surveys. We worked by a team, and did co-creation and animation of workshops with users, to promote collective intelligence and the involvement of all stakeholders in the development of new ideas. Then we designed and prototyped frugal solutions, to quickly shaped ideas and tested them with future beneficiaries. However, we didn't actually do a user test as for in lockdown. We transferred it into an online website visit and collected users' feedbacks. In this project, we collaborated with a local hospital that's called CHU. The aim of this project was to help patients who were suffering from lumbar spine pain. Our team's direction was to think from the outside environment especially on the society part. From this specific project, I strengthen my capability on design observation and capture. At the same time, I also learned a lot from my teammates. The way they think about patients and the social environment that patients are meeting is very a fresh perspective for me. Except for curing the patients' physical pain, they always won't forget considering the mental part that patients. And they tried to bring as much care as possible to patients physically and mentally, which absolutely inspired me that a design project can be full of humanity and warmth. In the project management and innovation, this course aims to give tools to organize from start to finish the smooth running of a project. This notably involves planning the project over time, implementing an adapted methodology, controlling the risks, reaching the desired level of finish, involving many stakeholders. We did a project of researching, organizing, data visualizing by website presentation in a team way. Everyone has a role to play. My role is as a UX designer for website design.

Unfortunately, when everything was going well on my courses. The lockdown period started in the middle of March in France. All my courses were held in an online course. Every day we had lessons in the morning. In the afternoon, we did team discussions and reviewed it with professors. During this period, actually I was so in mess at the beginning of the online course. Because it's extremely hard to understand what the professors were explaining. First, it's as for the knowledge was very theoretical. Second, it's just by speaking. There was no more interaction during the lesson. Before the COVID-19, I could ask for help from my classmates. They translated for me. But during the lockdown, everyone was in a mess in a day. What I can do was to review the professors' presentation again and again. Sometimes I could write an email to ask.

Another challenge was the cultural difference, which directly or indirectly led me can't comprehend some contents from the lesson, and also a bit hard to understand my classmates' ideas. While they were not a big deal in any way. Because I considered it as a process of comprehension and learning from others. The reality was exactly what I expected. I am gradually knowing more and more about French culture and French education. In this process, I started to appreciate their culture and their language. In a sense, I perceive the intelligence of our ancestors. Because I feel French and Chinese(my mother language) are very similar to the expression when it comes to a sentence. The biggest difference in culture for me, it is that French culture essentials are in people's quotidian. I saw how they embrace individual rights and freedom from real life. And how they take care of everyone inclusively.

My vision of design is really getting broaden and inspired by my exchange in France. Because I observed my classmates and my flatmates how they work on the design. I found that their work seems to tell me that design starts from life. They think from nature, from the environment that we are living, from the city we are sharing, from the community that we are relying on. Then I continued on my observation. I enlarged into the citizens in Nimes. People in southern France are looking forward to the countryside life. They desire to be back to nature which is the beginning of life. Start from there, refresh from there, insight from there.

The life in France, especially it is southern France, which changed me a lot. Maybe it's because I lived with a French flatmate who taught me a lot, from studying cooking, then to how to live like a desiring lifestyle. Once I had some doubts about homework from one of the courses that she already took last year. I asked her how it could be to operate that task within our professor's exceptions. Then she shows me the work that she already did. I was very astonished by her sketch, which described the footprints of living in Nimes, how people look like in the local market, how they act differently at different times. In fact, she didn't have a very good skill in drawing the buildings, in sceneries. But she explained the moment that she captured very well and vividly. From then on, I realized one thing, which is no matter how the painting skill is good or not. That won't stop us paint at all. In the past, I put too much my attention on the skill itself. So I told myself that I am not good at drawing and my drawing is not good-looking. In this attitude, I gave up a way to record and tell a scene that I had in my mind, which was actually very regrettable. As a designer, the sketch is a very important thing, especially in explaining your ideas to others. The idea itself is the primary thing, then it's a skill. I cognized it from my French flatmate. So I chose to start to do it during the pandemic period. I observed all the things in our house, including the plants, the table decorations, the kitchen, the flowers, and our neighbors' houses. I tried my best to capture one frame that touched me or let me notice first. And then I tried to revive it on my sketchbook with my understanding of objects and together with my feelings at that moment. I did it! I presented to my flatmate and also my professor for that homework. They liked it and gave me a lot of encourages, which really motivated me a lot and started a way for me to keep recording my life by drawing. I almost drew everything in our house by different tools, like watercolor, acrylic paint, crayon. Forming this habit, offer me a wonderful life at least not boring during the lockdown period. Everyone was very negative with a strong funk to the virus. And also, the media was really negative. In fact, I also feared the virus, especially I was not with my parents, staying in a foreign country. Everything was unknown. However, once I had this hobby to paint, I can spend my time and transfer my attention to worries on it, which really help me a lot during that period. At least I was not in a very bad situation. It was not a completely good exchange period, but I learned how to adjust myself to such a difficult condition.

On the side of learning French local culture, my flatmate also helped me a lot. In another word, it's she who enlarged my visions about life. She grows a lot of plants and vegetables in our house. Because we can not keep a hight frequency for going out. We decided to grow Bio vegetables once we finished eating the vegetables that we bought from the supermarket. Then we use the rest rhizome or seed. We put them in the water first in order to get the young rhizome. After that, we put them under the soil. For some vegetables that grow up and multiply quickly, such as tomato, lettuce, we can eat them around two weeks. In this way, we did not visit the supermarket as always. This experience took me to the beginning of life, which is about how to live as humanity itself. And also it reminded me of the ecosystem that we were living in. Especially after the COVID-19 happened, I realized that we really damage nature. I started to think about how we can keep development in the case to protect our home. As a designer, I think to take my initiative on this topic, which is

a responsibility. When I start to do a design project, I put it in my mind. Another side about back to the beginning of life, it was about creating things. We always tacked design is for sloving a problem, but actually we are producing a new problem sometimes. That's the point of deserving we think about it critically. In the industrialization age, we are producing and reproducing many products. While some of them didn't bring values. By contrast, it was damaging our earth. Now before I start to do a design project, I really have not the courage to think about ideas to deal with a problem without knowing the real problem. It's not an easy thing. But I would like to insist on having this habit. Because I don't want my design work to become a waste.

In general, this Erasmus exchange program was going well. I gained a lot. And most of them were out of exceptions. From study design, what I learned most was the standpoint of thinking about the targets that we are going to design for them. Because the program at University de Nimes was about society design. There was a complex relationship system within it. That means a variety of stakeholders. In a sense, what I learned was to analyze and build a healthy and happy relationship for them. The knowledge of personnel relationships applied to design was really something new for me. I think it is a very good perspective for UX design, particularly on the socialization. From the side of language, my spoken and listening on French were greatly improved, thanks to keeping talking with my flatmate and classmates. I was also learning by following the language course on the Erasmus exchange program platform. From watching local news reports or some cultural TV channels, I also got improved. This was actually a very recommended method to learn a language. Because learning a language also means to know the culture behind this language. By watching local real-time news and traditional costume, we are not only learning some new vocabulary but also learn to know new things, which is easier to help us understand this language. Because the patients' intelligence was reflected by both sides, craftsmanship as well as language. From the side of life, what I learned was the attitude of back to nature, the thinking of living itself. I don't know how to explain it exactly. But I would like to say this experience change me most was on life perspective, which will have a long influence on my whole life. I can not see what it specifically change me. However, I know that I found the meaning of living better, and also how to create a better life by my hands. This mindset and attitude of life are playing an important role. It tells me no matter how big a challenge that I will meet in the future, I can overcome it and push my boundaries to run on a new road. Therefore, I really value this experience. And I want to gratitude Politecnico di Milano and Université de Nîmes, also the Erasmus Committee, for giving me such a good opportunity to expand the personal horizon and improve myself. At last, I am very grateful to all the professors that I met in the partner school, and also my coordinator in Polimi Professor Pillan. They are very friendly and they help me a lot. Thank you!

Firma:

*Rui Li*

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