



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

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|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Anno Accademico di Scambio: | 2019-2020 | Nome della Sede in scambio: | TU Delft |
| Cognome e Nome: | Polo Margherita | Stato: | NL |
| Matricola: | 915232 | Codice Sede: | NL DELFT01 |
| Corso di Studio: | PSSD | Tipo di scambio: (Semplice o Doppia Laurea) | Scambio Semplice |
| Anno di Corso: | Second Year | Semestre di Scambio: | Spring Semester |
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Racconta la tua esperienza di scambio:

My past Erasmus experience has been one of the most intense and rich semesters of my course of study and I recommend everyone to try it, regardless of the exchange location. Unfortunately, it ends with a little sour taste and with a few moments of stress and difficulty, due to the particular situation that has arisen because of the COVID-19 emergency. In fact, I experienced the real university life at the faculty only for the first month and a half of exchange, while for the remaining part I followed the courses remotely, but always staying in Delft.

My arrival in Delft was a bit off-putting, due to the very bad and cold weather, but the days immediately following were surprisingly positive. In fact, all the exchange students were welcomed upon their arrival, with an Introduction Programme, in which, through some activities, it was possible to settle in and navigate better the campus and in the city in general. This first week was also a good opportunity to socialize with international students from different faculties and for a more gradual start to the semester of study.

The TU Delft campus and its facilities are nothing short of amazing, surrounded by greenery, with very well equipped workshops, spacious classrooms, many spaces for studying, and a wonderful library. In addition, the campus is full of options for having lunch at moderate prices and for carrying out sports and cultural activities.

The faculty of Industrial Design Engineering offers three Master's courses to choose from (Integrated Product Design, Design for Interaction and Strategic Product Design), plus a package of optional courses. For my exchange semester, I opted for the Elective courses package, so that I could customize my program as much as possible with courses that come closest to what interests me and my Master's degree in Product Service System Design at Politecnico di Milano. In this way, I followed many small courses, which in some moments proved to be a bit overwhelming, but which allowed me to deal with many different and stimulating topics and to know many more professors and students than by attending a big studio during the whole semester.



In particular, I followed eight courses divided into two quarters: seven of 3 ECTS and one of 6 ECTS. I suggest to anyone wishing to leave for Erasmus at TU Delft, to prepare a slightly lighter study plan, as sometimes it was quite difficult to keep up with the amount of work. Below, in short, a list of the courses I attended:

- **Design for emotion (3 ECTS – Q3):** A design seminar focused on the study of the role of emotions in the interactions between users and products or services. The course was very useful and inspiring to learn how to design to elicit specific emotions in users, to build emotional customer journeys, to learn techniques to interview users, and to use design dilemmas to generate concepts.
- **ZEN product design (6 ECTS – the whole semester):** a product design course concerning the design of a new daily ritual. The course is very focused on prototyping, an aspect that has been somewhat lost due to the impossibility of using the workshop at the faculty this semester. The process started with the realization of collages and the analysis of the current ritual scenario that were used as a reference for the generation of concepts. At the end of the course, the students presented the new ritual scenario and renderings of the products.
- **Sustainable Business Models and Sustainable PSS (3 ECTS – Q3):** a course on the exploration and comparison of different sustainable service systems operating in a chosen business area. The output of the course was a report and an analysis through a "Gigamap". The course was probably the closest to what I am studying at Politecnico, as we were analyzing some product-service systems with tools derived from service design.
- **Sustainable Consumer Behavior (3ECTS – Q3):** a course very close to marketing including a written theoretical exam and a report on a case study. The course was about how different aspects of product design and brand strategies can influence consumers in the purchase and use of sustainable options.
- **Prototyping for Interaction and Participation (3ECTS – Q3):** a course related to the realization of participatory stakeholder sessions, to obtain qualitative insights on a chosen research topic. In these particular circumstances, the sessions were carried out remotely via video call.
- **Design Consultancy Practice (3ECTS – Q4):** a more entrepreneurial course in which students create a business plan for their hypothetical design consultancy agency. The business plan is built week by week through some assignments that should be as realistic as possible.
- **Experimental Formgiving for Visual Information (3ECTS – Q4):** a course on the creation of a new system of interaction between users and a Dutch supermarket. In other words, User Experience design applied to a new experimental supermarket floor. The course required the creation of a presentation, a report, and a video.
- **SPD media (3ECTS – Q4):** a course, focused on storytelling, belonging to the Strategic Product Design package, in which students can choose among different media skills to improve. I chose the track "Animation", in which I made a short explainer animation with After Effects about one of my past projects. This course gave me a lot of satisfaction, because I was finally able to learn the basics of a software I wanted to start using for a very long time.



My impression of the courses and teaching is overall positive. Unfortunately, the particular situation of this semester made it more difficult to take full advantage of the lessons and get to know the professors and students more thoroughly, and for some courses, the transition to remote teaching was rather difficult and caused some loss of precious time. Furthermore, personally, it was often difficult to find the right motivation and enthusiasm that usually characterize a period of study abroad, especially seeing many students and teammates going back to their home countries or even giving up the Erasmus experience altogether. Despite this, I am happy with my choice of courses and the new skills and concepts that I have learned, that I hope will turn useful for possible future projects.

In particular, I found the different relationships between students and professors interesting, a bit more conversational and direct than in Italy, and the many mutual feedback and review sessions between students, despite taking a lot of time, are an interesting approach that helps to develop critical thinking.

With regards to everyday life in the Netherlands, Delft is a wonderful city, with its canals and typical Dutch historic houses, a kind of "miniature Amsterdam". I highly recommend doing the grocery shopping at the market on Thursdays and Saturdays, perhaps eating a typical herring sandwich, relaxing on the banks of the lake not far from the center, and enjoying the view from the top of the bell tower of the Nieuwe Kerk. The city is surrounded by greenery, halfway between Den Haag and Rotterdam, both reachable in about 15 minutes by train or 50 minutes by bike. A positive aspect of life in the Netherlands is precisely the ease and speed with which you can reach different locations. In particular, it is great to be able to travel by bicycle on spring days, on the endless networks of cycle paths in the country. On the other hand, public transportation is quite expensive but very efficient.

During the semester, and in particular, in the last month of stay, I had the opportunity to visit many places. I recommend visiting the beach of Scheveningen, the city of Lisse, and its surroundings in mid-April, in the period of flowering of tulips, the island of Texel, and the cities of Utrecht, Gouda, Groningen, Giethoorn and Dordrecht. Obviously it is a must to go through Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Den Haag and visit the most important museums in the country, that have been a real panacea after a long time at home.

The Netherlands is a country, in my opinion, very underrated, full of wonderful historic towns and beautiful green landscapes and sandy coasts. Unfortunately, the climate is not always the best, especially in February, the strong winds and the incessant rain make travel and everyday life a little difficult, and can also darken the moods of even the most positive people.

Nonetheless, the beautiful days arrive quickly and to make the experience unforgettable, despite the weather and the difficulties, it was above all the people. In fact, in these six months, I have had the opportunity to meet many interesting people and to build beautiful friendships.

In fact, even more than an educational growth experience it was an experience of human and personal growth, which allowed me to develop a good dose of adaptation spirit and an openness of mind difficult to achieve while staying in one's own country. What will remain indelible about these months are the bonds I have created with the wonderful people I have met, with their different backgrounds and experiences, the beautiful memories that I share with them, and the strong personal enrichment that I built in this intense period of my life.

Despite the difficult moments, without any doubt, it's worth it, and I recommend everyone to have a study experience abroad!



More practical information:

- Your bicycle will basically become your best friend: I recommend getting one rather quickly on arrival. There are basically two options, the first is to buy a second-hand one on Facebook or Marktplaas (some are very cheap and in good condition), the second option is to take advantage of services such as Swapfiets, which allows you to rent a bicycle by paying a monthly fee, having access to additional assistance services (a Dutch bank account is required for this service).
- To find accommodation before departure, I recommend taking advantage of the Duwo foundation, affiliated with TU Delft. Finding a home on your own is, in fact, quite difficult and expensive. The Duwo apartments may not be the coziest, but they allow you to have the bare essentials to live comfortably without much effort, and, in the end, it is only for six months... time flies!
- For all types of public transport, it is possible to make a card at the Delft station, to be used in order to pay only the distance actually covered by the trip.
- Do not bring too much cash, you will pay for everything by credit card or debit card.

For any additional information regarding the courses, practical matters, or life in the Netherlands do not hesitate to contact me!

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Data:

3/08/2020