

Margaret Shaw  
[margaretfshaw@gmail.com](mailto:margaretfshaw@gmail.com)  
Summer 2013, Independent Study

I decided to study in Denmark because I wanted to be surrounded by a culture oriented towards well-being, sustainability, smart planning, and participative democracy. Because I was doing a summer ScanDesign program, I chose to take a month-long summer course at the University of Copenhagen. I would not recommend this for future fellows - the class was geared towards Danish students and I did not have an easy opportunity to meet people.

I took Democracy, Democratisation and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective at the University of Copenhagen. Registration was very confusing, and I couldn't do much in advance of getting there. The course was very easy, but the ample time for discussion with fellow classmates was really beneficial. Also, the professor, Yosef Kamal, was very engaging and funny. I thought the course might have more a civil society focus, but it instead focused a more on democratization, which isn't as related to my studies at UW but is a topic I'm interested in.

Arriving in Denmark was easy - navigating yourself from the airport to the center of the city is very do-able. Going to hostels cafes and bars was probably the best resource for me, both for meeting people and for finding people knowledgeable about what to do and how to get around Copenhagen. I would strongly recommend hostel bars and cafes as a resource to future fellows.

I found my housing on AirBnb. Although I found a great location - a few blocks from the Meatpacking District - I would not recommend this to future fellow because it is very lonely and does not supply resources (eg - recommendations, directions, etc) for those new to the city. However, this was a much cheaper option. My rent for the month was \$750 USD, and I could save money on food by cooking at home or packing my lunch.

My Danish campus was beautiful, and very easy to bike to. It was near Orstedparken, a very nice park. I never felt unsafe, but I would recommend avoiding the redlight district at night, although it's a convenient way to get from downtown to the Meatpacking district.

It was very difficult meeting people in my class - most were bust grad students. The Danes are very difficult to strike up casual conversations with at the bar - I was only able to do it at times because I really put myself out there. That said, as I mentioned before, I would really recommend hostels bars and cafes where there a lot of people looking to make friends.

I learned about the program from the flyers up in Gould Court. I felt like there could be a bit more support and resources for summer students, although I realize I was one of the first ones to do this. Yes, the ScanDesign expectations were clearly communicated prior to receiving funds, but I would have really liked a reminder or two after my study abroad because I'd forgotten.

I had a great time in Denmark - and I'd love to go back! The biggest challenge was meeting people - because I did not participate in a program, my stay was often lonely.

I would love to volunteer for the program! I would like to see more alumni meetups!