



## Student Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

Annie MacDonald

<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	Bachelor of Arts	<b>Major(s)</b>	PPE
<b>Host University</b>	McGill University	<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	2017 S2

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
<b>Oral &amp; Written French 2 (FRSL 322)</b>	French	FREN 334	18
<b>Biomedical Ethics (PHIL 343)</b>	English	Unspecified PHIL	18
<b>Philosophy of Law (PHIL 348)</b>	English	Unspecified PHIL	18
<b>Art of Listening (MUAR 211)</b>	English	Unspecified Arts	18

*Any comments about these papers?*

FRSL 322

- At McGill, the French papers are all streamed and you need to do placement tests (online and in person) to ensure you're in the right place. Do this as soon as possible so you make it into the class rather than the waitlist (see below)
- At first, I felt the level was higher than 300 level French at Otago as the lecturer (Sarah Anthony who was awesome) spoke in French the entire time and we had to also, but in actuality the grammar etc. was the same if not lower than at Otago.

Philosophy papers

- I would recommend both these papers although the lectures were slightly on the dry side, the content is really interesting
- Also, you don't need previous philosophy experience so if you are a philosophy student you have a bit of an advantage

MUAR 211

- This infamous as the easiest A at McGill but bear in mind the stream with Vanessa is slightly more difficult but probably more rewarding
- I did this paper to ease my workload but learnt a lot and really enjoyed it

*How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?*

#### Enrolment

- The system bit strange as classes fill up and so you have to go on the waitlist which means you wait for others to leave, but for the first few weeks continue to go to the class (although it's not a big deal if you miss the introduction week)
- Mostly you get the ones you want, but I think French is understaffed so get onto those classes sooner rather than later!
- Pro tip: sign up for Get a Seat which texts you when spots fill up in papers you want

#### Academic experience/workload

- McGill as a top university, has a much more intense atmosphere than Otago. At first this can be intimidating, but actually I found it made tutorials and lectures more interesting with interaction and prepared students. However sometimes it is a bit annoying so just remember you're only pass or fail!
- I found the workload higher but the standards lower than Otago

#### Accommodation

*What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?*

I stayed in an independent flat complex called Clark Street Housing by the corner of Sherbrooke and St Laurent. If you're interested, email me on [anniefmacdonald@yahoo.com](mailto:anniefmacdonald@yahoo.com) and I can put you in touch with the landlord.

#### Pros:

- Great location
  - Close to university (max 15 minute walk) but also out of the McGill bubble so got a better feel of the city
  - St Laurent is a street with lots of bars and clubs
  - 20 minute walk to the Plateau and Mile-end area or Old Town in the opposite direction
- Independence
  - Living away from university suited me, and I heard mixed things about the University accommodation so I personally would not risk it!
- Lovely flatmates
  - This was luck, I found them on the Montreal International facebook pages and chatted to them a bit before so you can get a feel if you will mesh well
- Good price
  - \$750 month (utilities included) which was good for the area
- 6 month lease
  - like Dunedin, this is unusual so we were lucky!
- Landlords
  - They weren't the gold star, but trustworthy and pretty reliable

## Cons

- In the basement
  - Our apartment was underground and industrial looking
  - If you come to this complex, try get above ground!
- All exchange students?
  - Originally I had wanted to sublet room in a flat of Montrealers but this proved difficult/almost impossible. I did have friends who managed it – some enjoyed it and some didn't – but I ended up making friends both on exchange and at McGill so didn't impact me too much, in fact I think it improved my stay because my flatmates were all on the same exchange, travel, experience etc. buzz

## Money matters

*Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance*

### Visa

- You only need an ETA! Super easy and about \$15

### Insurance

- I purchased mine through STA travel – ranges from \$950-\$1450 depending on coverage and excess

### Flights

- I travelled in the US prior but direct flights are about \$2300

### Accommodation (above)

### Food

- I cooked with my flatmates which was cheap and awesome – I didn't meet anyone else that did this though so most people cooked alone which was of course a bit more pricey
- The main supermarkets are similar prices to NZ but there are good cheap places if you're in the know..
  - Segals on St. Laurent (an experience in itself)
  - Marche Lobo on Parc for sometimes questionable but very cheap fruit and veges
  - MacDonald campus market
  - Provigo on Parc can have good deals

*What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)*

- Open a BMO bank account and transfer your money over with Transferwise – it'll honestly save you hundreds of dollars
- Cash passports are also okay if you do a bit of travel before you get to Montreal

## Visas & Insurance

*Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?*

Very easy, online at:

[https://ecanadatatravel.org/?gclid=EAlalQobChMly4iZ4rmJ2QIVgny9Ch1tTgybEAAAYASAAEgJWOPD\\_BwE](https://ecanadatatravel.org/?gclid=EAlalQobChMly4iZ4rmJ2QIVgny9Ch1tTgybEAAAYASAAEgJWOPD_BwE)

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

Yes – you can't get out of it and its about \$300

## **Extra-curricular/Social Activities**

*What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?*

Frosh-week

- Yes it's full of first-years but it's very fun, well organised and a good way to meet other exchange students

There are so many clubs at McGill so just go to the open days and find out about them all depending on your interest

Skiing

- I don't ski, but there is a ski club and that looked fun!

*What was the university/ city like?*

Montreal is a very awesome city. It's perfect for exchange because it's small enough to not be overwhelming and easy to walk around, but is still a big city with lots going on.

Highlights:

- Markets (Atwater and Jean Talon)
- Bixi bikes
- Café hopping around Plateau/Mile end
- Christmas markets
- Biking around the canals
- Old town
- Mont Royal
- So much more, just walk around the city and you'll be sure to find awesome stuff

*Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?*

Above. There are so many places to eat, Montreal has amazing food – just search on Yelp for recommendations, prices etc.

## **Overall Experience**

*Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!*

Exchange at McGill was awesome, you've chosen a great city and you will not regret it. I made an awesome group of mates and loved the experience of living in a new place. Montreal has very distinct seasons, which I enjoyed as you got to see Fall colours and proper snow. However, winter is an absolute shock to the system so if you're going in winter term make sure you purchase some good gear!

Photos: Niagara Falls, Fall colours in Ottawa, McGill Upper Field in the snow & Toronto!



