



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Memorial University
Semester & Year of Exchange	Fall 2019 (Semester two)
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	Indigenous Development

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
LWSO 3012 – Aboriginal People: Land, Law and Constitution	ENG	HUMS Paper	18
HIST/ARCH 3520 – Aboriginal History to 1763	ENG	HUMS Paper	18
FOLK 1000 – Intro to Folklore	ENG	HUMS Paper	18

Any comments about these papers?

I highly recommend LWSO 3012 if you want to learn more about the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the social and political challenges that they face. I found HIST 3520 challenging as I hadn't taken an archaeology or history paper in the past, but the lecturer is very passionate about the topic she is teaching which makes it an enjoyable paper. FOLK 1000 was a really fun and diverse paper, if you are interested in mythology, stories and material culture, than this is a really good introduction paper.

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

Overall my experience at Memorial was not dissimilar to my experience at Otago. The difficulty of the 300-level courses I took had a similar workload to a number of 300-level courses I had taken at Otago. Classes are a lot smaller and I'd say that the set-up is very similar to tutorials i.e. held in small classrooms. They still use chalk boards which was an interesting difference. Both of the 300-level course I took didn't have final exams but final papers, therefore I only sat one exam which gave me time to travel over the study break. I would recommend only taking 3-4 papers, so as to give you plenty of time to enjoy most of what Memorial University and St John has to offer.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in Squires House which is a part of Paton College. Accommodation is right on campus and it only takes about 10 minutes max to get from one end of the university to the other. I stayed in a single room, which I had requested before leaving NZ. I enjoyed being at Squires house, the people there were really friendly and there was always something on the go. Paton college is generally filled with first and second years, but I don't think that being an older student held me back from getting involved or making friends. I found that a lot of other international students stayed on campus as well.

Money matters

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

My accommodation and food was covered through the Tūrangawaewae Pōkai Whenua programme for Indigenous students.

Make sure to bring money for necessities (whatever you can't bring with you) i.e. Blankets, pillows, bedding, towels etc. I spent around \$150-\$200 CAD on necessities when I first arrived.

As I was only in Canada for one semester, I qualified for an ETA visa which is about \$20 NZD. I flew through America therefore I also had to get an ESTA visa for the States which was a similar price in NZD.

I paid about \$3300 NZD on return flights (from Wellington), flight insurance (there and back) and the compulsory health insurance required by Memorial University. It took 4 flights to get to St John.

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

I had a TransferWise account and a debit card. My TransferWise account allows me to hold multiple currencies on the one card. Depending on your method of payments, transfers go through straight away and can be done at any time through the app. The fees aren't too high (a couple of dollars per transfer) and you can withdrawal cash using your card. I also bought my NZ debit card with me just as a backup but didn't end up using it.

Visas & Insurance

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

Yes, I had both an ETA and an ESTA. It takes about 10 minutes to fill out the form online, then you have to wait a bit (maybe a couple of days) for your applications to be accepted.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes, there is a compulsory health insurance for exchange students, it's about \$250 NZD.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

I mainly attended events run by Squires House or ARO (the Aboriginal Resource Office). All of the residential houses frequently provided sporting and social event opportunities. The international office also runs events for students. I often went to ARO who frequently hosted elders from different Indigenous nations who would often come to speak with the students. I occasionally used the gym which was open to all students and there is also a pool that students can use during certain hours.

What was the university/ city like?

St John is a really charming city, very green and scenic. A lot of international students stay on campus so I was able to meet people from all around the world. The university isn't too hard to navigate, most of the campus is all in one location. They also have tunnels throughout the University that connect most of the major buildings.

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

Signal Hill, Cape Spear, Rec Room, Downtown.

Any tips for future students?

Make sure you make the most of fall as it can get pretty cold during the winter, but hopefully you'll get the chance to see the snow before you leave. Also, make sure to get out there and see the sights! I found the bus system really easy to navigate. Go on walks, be present and involved, visit the local stores downtown, and immerse yourself in the Newfoundland way of life. If you're looking for a unique cultural and social experience, then I definitely recommend going to Memorial University. Newfoundland has it's own unique presence from the people to the music and the lingo. You'll also get the chance to interact with Indigenous peoples from all around Canada. The simple act of having a conversation with someone whom you wouldn't normally meet under normal circumstances, were some of the best parts of this experience.

Overall Experience

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

A definite highlight of my trip was travelling to Montréal and New York. I spent a week exploring the sites, eating really good food, and I even went to see a Broadway play! If you have the chance, I definitely recommend doing a bit of travel while you're in North America. I loved my time at Memorial, I was definitely well looked after and really made to feel at home. At the end of the day, it's the people who make the experience worth it and I'd say that I meet some of the best kinds of people while attending Memorial University.

