



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Boston College
Semester & Year of Exchange	S1 (Spring Semester) 2024
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Law, major in Psychology, minor in Criminology

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
APSY2240 Personality Theories	English	Unspecified 300 level CRIM
PSYC3387 Behavioral Neuroendocrinology: Sex, Love, and Aggression	English	Unspecified 300 level PSYC
PSYC4433: Addiction, Choice, and Motivation	English	PSYC330
APSY2241 Mental Illness: Social and Clinical Perspectives	English	Unspecified 300 level CRIM
FREN1109: Intermediate French I	French	Unspecified 200 level FREN

Total Otago credits gained: 54 points 72 points 108 points _____

Any comments about these papers?

I loved all of my courses! I would say that they might have even been my favourite courses that I've ever taken. All of my professors were very nice, intelligent, and willing to help students out if they needed anything. Even though it's a hard choice, I think my favourite course was Addiction, Choice, and Motivation because it was the only seminar class that I had, and we got to examine a range of different drug accounts and research, including the professor's own research which I found really interesting. For this class, and Mental Illness: Social and Clinical Perspectives attendance was mandatory, so just be aware if you choose these courses and want to go away that you will have to have a valid reason and provide a medical note. Otherwise, the other professors were pretty relaxed. Mental Illness was also really interesting to learn about and involved some group projects and was all internally assessed.

Personality theories was also one of my favourites as it was something that I was passionate about learning. I enjoyed this class, Mental Illness, and Behavioural Neuroendocrinology because we got given leeway to write about topics that we were interested in rather than getting a set topic by the professor. Also, Behavioural Neuroendocrinology was the only class that had recordings, which I found helpful as it was very scientific and let me go through the lectures again to revise on topics that I struggled with. The tests were also quite hard as there was a lottt of information and specific hormones that you had to remember.

For French and other language courses, you have to sit an online placement test which helped me decide which class to enrol in. This was a very fun and relaxed class as it only had 7 people in it, and the professor was super helpful and understanding with people's different abilities. The intermediate course I took was all conducted in French which was intimidating at first, but I didn't find it to be an issue after a few classes. If you are finding a class too difficult or easy, then it is very easy to change during the add/drop period, and also make use of the professor's office hours.

During course registration, I would advise people to enrol in as many classes as you can during the add/drop period so that you can get a feel for the classes and decide which ones you like the most. Because the classes are small, I would also advise to regularly check registration to see if anyone has dropped out of the class. One of my classes was full so I emailed the professor and she let me override the set number of students.

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

All of my classes were a lot smaller than those at Otago. They ranged between 7 and 40 people max which I particularly enjoyed as I able to get to know the people in my class and feel more comfortable with participation, as it one of the core components of most classes at Boston College. I had never taken a seminar class at Otago before, so I really enjoyed this compared to large lectures.

Another aspect that I found different but enjoyed was the fact that assignments were spread out across the semester. At Otago, my courses, particularly for law, are weighted 75% or 100% on the final exam, but my final exams at Boston College averaged around 20% which took a lot of pressure off during the final weeks. Overall, the workload was higher at Boston College since I had assignments due every week, but I found the content to be a lottt easier than my work at Otago. As long as you keep up with assignments then it's not a problem.

Also, the marking at Boston College is very different to Otago. A+ is between 94-100, and the teachers are very lenient and willing to give students 100%, whereas I found this very rare at Otago. For example, in some of my tests at BC, the class had an A average. However, of course it all depends on which classes you take.

Accommodation

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

I had a different experience from most other students as I was staying with family so did not have to pay for accommodation or food. The pros were obviously the financial costs, but I lived around 30 min away from campus and the buses stopped at 10pm which meant that I had to catch Ubers home.

Most of my friends either stayed on campus or flatted in the Brighton area which is nice and close to campus. Also, it is worth noting is that if you are going to stay on campus then you have to pay for a mandatory meal plan which I think is around \$3,000USD. Unfortunately, the food on campus is very overpriced and not the best so worth considering whether you want to live on

campus or not. My friends enjoyed either option, but personally I would prefer to live off campus so that you have more freedom.

Money matters

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

Accommodation as above. I travelled Europe before going to the US and am doing a year long exchange so am staying overseas, so I can't comment exactly on flight costs.

You have to get mandatory health insurance which is quite expensive, \$2,338USD for the spring semester. I have a US passport so I did not have to pay for a visa, but I know that you will have to go to the US embassy in Auckland to get the visa if you need one.

The recreation centre also costs \$180USD for the semester but is definitely worth it! There is multiple floors of weight rooms, cardio, gym classes, squash, tennis, and basketball courts, a pool, sauna, and running track. I also paid for a transport pass for the semester as I was catching the bus from my home to campus every day, and Boston College is around 40 min in public transport from downtown Boston.

Boston is one of the most expensive cities in the US, so it is worth making sure you have some extra money in case something were to happen or you want to do extra activities in the city like going out for meals, drinks etc. The public transport is veryyy slow, and you should always check to see if the trains are still running because otherwise you will have to catch an Uber if you are downtown and these can get very expensive! Especially at peak times during the night after going out, and in winter. One time my friend and I could not find an Uber for less than \$90USD and had to walk 1.5hrs in -10 degrees to find a cheaper Uber :(((

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

I used Wise and Revolut as my international travel card options and would recommend both of them. They are super easy to navigate and upload different currencies onto. I also got a part-time job as a waitress while I was studying in the US so I opened up a US bank account. A few of my friends also worked in catering on campus and would recommend getting in early if you want a job as they fill up fast.

Visas & Insurance

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

As above.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

As above: \$2338USD for the spring semester.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Throughout the spring semester the university holds a lot of events for students, such as Marathon Monday where they set up a concert on campus before going to watch the runners run past campus at Mile 21. This was one of my favourite days, and we had T-Pain perform for us for free. Another highlight of the semester was the last day of classes where they set up another concert for us, and Del Water Gap and Neon Trees performed! There are also a lot of

dance and music performances by the associations on campus that you can watch. Another fun activity was where all the gingers (included me) had to run through campus in celebration of St Patricks day.

For exchange students, the college also holds social events for everyone throughout the semester. Luckily I met some of my closest friends during orientation on the first day. There are also hundreds of clubs to join, so I would recommend signing up for those!

I would definitely recommend watching the ice hockey and basketball games that are held in the Forum on campus! It felt like a true American experience which was awesome. Unfortunately, I didn't get to go watch the Celtics at TD garden but I've heard it is an amazing experience and would recommend going if you can. Also, a lot of people go to Fenway stadium to watch the baseball.

What was the university/ city like?

As my family lives in Boston, I had already been there a few times and the city never fails to amaze me! Boston is a beautiful city (one of the best in the US in my opinion) with hundreds of universities, and sports opportunities. Downtown area like Newbury street, Fenway area, and the port are some of my favourites. You should also look around Cambridge and visit Harvard University.

Boston College campus itself was also gorgeous! When the weather finally started to get warmer, you would see everyone gather outside studying and having lunch which was such a nice vibe! Boston has a lot of nice bars and restaurants downtown, however it can be quite expensive so often we resorted to a bar called "The Circle" near campus during the week.

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

As above. Eating out is very expensive so I did not go out a lot to eat. Many students go travelling during the semester, particularly during spring break as Boston gets extremely cold! I was lucky enough to find cheap flights to Miami which was a lot of fun! Other students often go to Mexico or the Caribbean islands.

It is definitely worth going to New York while you are in Boston as it is reasonably close and you can find very cheap train tickets if you're lucky. I also recommend going to Chicago! It is one of my favourite cities in the US. Maine is also a beautiful state for outdoor activities and seafood. Sadly, I didn't get the chance to go this time, but some of my friends went to Washington DC and really enjoyed it! Also, most of the museums there are free.

Any tips for future students?

Make the most of your time on exchange and try to enjoy every minute as it goes by very very fast.

Overall Experience

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

Overall, I really really enjoyed my time at Boston College! It was my best semester yet, so I would definitely recommend going an exchange if you have the chance to. Say yes to all the opportunities that come your way, go out of your comfort zone, and I guarantee you will have the best time wherever you decide to go on exchange! It can be hard to put yourself out there at first, but remember that everyone is in the same boat. I've made memories that I will always

cherish and some of the most amazing friends by going an exchange. If you need any advice or more recommendations then feel free to message me on Insta @claravoogt or email me claravoogt@gmail.com :)))

Campus in winter



Chicago downtown



Campus on the first day

Ginger run before St Paddy's day



Isabella Gardner Museum



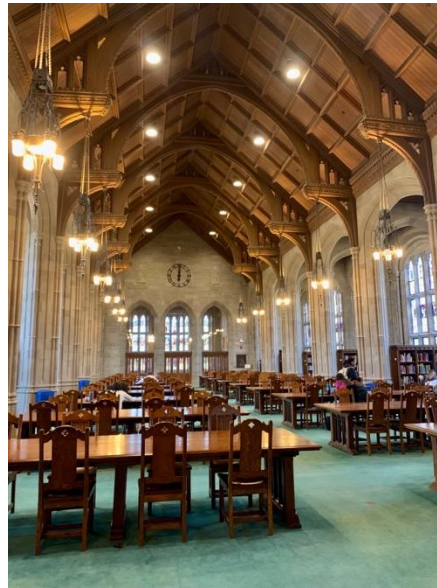
Key West during Spring Break



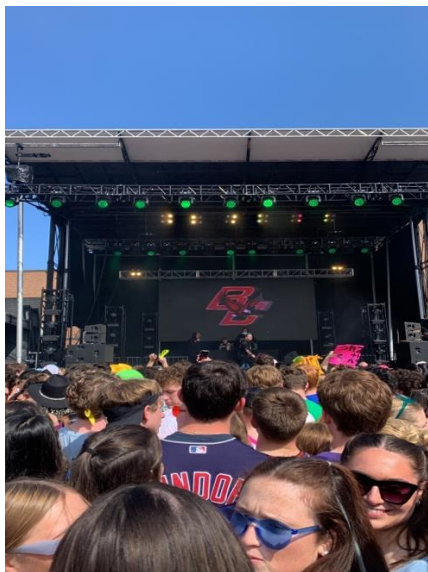
Last day of classes



Boston College library



Marathon Monday concert



Miami



Massachusetts State House

