

FALL 2005 STUDY ABROAD INFORMATION SESSIONS

Note: All sessions are in the EMU International Resource Center, unless otherwise noted.

AFRICAN COUNTRIES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4
2:00-3:30 P.M.

FRENCH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4
3:30-5:00 P.M.

IE3 GLOBAL INTERNSHIPS

(40+ countries)
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5
3:30-5:00 P.M.

SPANISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES (#1)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6
2:00-3:30 P.M.

ITALY PROGRAMS (#1)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6
3:30-5:00 P.M.

UK/IRELAND/ NETHERLANDS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10
12:00-1:30 P.M.
EMU Walnut Room

ITALY PROGRAMS (#2)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10
2:30-4:00 P.M.
EMU Walnut Room

GERMANY & AUSTRIA

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10
3:00-4:30 P.M.

JAPAN & KOREA

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11
3:00-4:30 P.M.

SPANISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES (#2)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12
12:00-1:30 P.M.

SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12
3:30-5:00 P.M.

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13
12:00-1:30 P.M.

GREECE/TURKEY/ JORDAN/ISRAEL

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17
1:30-3:00 P.M.

CHINA/TAIWAN/ HONG KONG

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17
3:00-4:30 P.M.

INDIA/NEPAL/ MONGOLIA/TIBETAN STUDIES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18
12:00-1:30 P.M.

STUDY ABROAD FAIR

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16
11:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.
EMU Fir Room

Hamid Olimjon Square
Tashkent, Uzbekistan.



◆ JACKSON KELLOGG

Report from the Field.

A YEAR IN TASHKENT

Editor's Note: Post-bac student Jackson Kellogg worked in Kyrgyzstan as a Peace Corps volunteer from 2001 to 2003 before spending the past academic year in the Uzbekistan program.

Tashkent was built to be the model Socialist City, a place that Soviet leaders could bring leaders from other countries to tell them, "This all could be yours, if you embrace our system."

Most people think of camel caravans and sand dunes when they think of Uzbekistan but, in fact, Tashkent is a very modern city, complete with a subway system, freeways and high-rise housing developments. It has an excellent and inexpensive cultural life; it is possible to see a symphony concert or a famous opera almost every night of the year.

With a population of 2.3 million, it was the fourth largest city of the Soviet Union, right after Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. It was a Soviet center of heavy industry and is famous for its manufactured products, ranging from airplanes to tractors.

Tashkent's subway system is perhaps the world's most beautiful. The Soviet Union's best artists and craftspeople labored for years to decorate the palatial stations, making lavish use of gold, marble and hand-painted ceramic tile. The station "Independence Square" is decorated with polished marble and lit with crystal chandeliers.

Another station near my apartment, "Kosmonatlar," pays tribute to the Soviet space

program. Large paintings of medieval Uzbek astronomers and modern Soviet cosmonauts appear to float in space against a blue tile background. Like much of the architecture in Tashkent, the subway has a bold, futuristic style, although it also seems a bit retro — as if from a cool, 1950s sci-fi movie.

I lived in a modern part of Tashkent in a comfortable one-bedroom apartment inside a four-story mid-rise built for KGB employees in the early 1980s. I had cable television, hot and cold running water, and dependable heating and air conditioning. My tree-lined street had an electric tramline. I lived within a fifteen-minute walk of two metro stops, a medium-sized supermarket and a large, covered market. Quality produce was available all year for less than I would have had to spend in the United States. Occasionally, shiny red apples from Washington State even appeared in the supermarket!

Tashkent is a cosmopolitan city with people of at least eighty distinct nationalities represented. In addition to Uzbek — the language I had come to Tashkent to study — everybody speaks some Russian, and some people speak Russian as their first language.



Still, despite 150 years of Russian influence, almost all Uzbek people speak the Uzbek language.

I studied Uzbek with three different tutors for at least three hours every day except Sunday. One tutor specialized in grammar, one in literature, and the third made "field trips" with me around Tashkent, providing conversation practice in everything we saw. On one trip, we visited the Old City and knocked on doors, asking to see the inside of the old houses. My tutor assured me that this would be a fine thing to do and, in fact, most of the people invited us in.

Traditional houses in Uzbekistan, like houses in most parts of Central Asia and the Middle East, are focused on the interior space. From the street they are very plain and mostly look the same. A contrast exists between a severe plain wall and metal gate on the outside, and the pleasant courtyard and comfortable house on the inside.

When I visited homes in chilly November, colorfully dressed women were sweeping away the snow. As I write this in August, I can imagine them sitting in a courtyard, drinking green tea under the branches of an apple tree. ■

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minutes, a train for five, and then walked the rest of the way.

In the beginning, I felt privileged to be placed in a comparably urban home-stay, sure that my immersion experience in Shinjuku would quickly shed light on my inexplicable draw to the towering metropolis.

Five weeks in, I hated it. I hated the crush of people, the overwhelming blur of light, and the indecipherable smells. Most of all, I hated the noise. From every street corner, shop girls and competing merchants screamed bargain prices over megaphones. In department stores and restaurants, employees hollered "Welcome!" and "Please give us your business!" to potential patrons. Even the white noise of traffic was punctuated by train crossings and motorcycle engines. Lost in a sea of chaos where I barely spoke the language, I found myself cracking at the edges for want of an uninterrupted train of thought.

I had to find myself in Tokyo or risk going under.

I was in shock and I couldn't see it. The world around me: signs, shops, cars, and people — all seemed so deceptively normal, so Western. I would fall into an illusive state of comfort, just to have the ground drop out from underneath me when something or someone didn't proceed in the way I expected. Japan, I thought, was out to get me.

Then one day, toward the end of fall, I found myself stopped in front of a shop, a very Japanese building, which I had passed many times before but never seen. The shop was closed, the windows covered with paper yellowed by the patina of age. Like most Japanese family-run businesses, it was small,

set adjacent to the street with no yard or driveway so to speak, and had an upstairs residential quarters.

What first struck me about this building was the way it sort of leaned over onto the much larger concrete structure next door, as if it needed support. In fact, it was penned in on both sides by newer, bigger, better buildings, and with just a few plastered-over earthquake cracks.

There seemed to be nothing so extraordinary about this shop that it should have entranced me so, until I realized that it was made entirely out of wood. It was a "survivor" of the extensive Tokyo fire bombings in World War II. Wooden buildings, except in parts of the Shitamachi (lower city), are a rare find. But here, nestled among everyday businesses, was this remnant, still standing as if forgotten.

From that day, I stopped more and more, often with camera in hand, to stare in wonder at some lovely little contradiction I'd found. Many times I confused passers-by by gawking into traffic mirrors placed at complicated intersections. I was captivated by the reflection of everyday life, past and present.

Tokyo is growing, expanding while it changes, forgetting while it remembers. There are tens of thousands of tiny Shinto temples and Buddhist shrines sprinkled throughout the back streets, some as new as the city sprawl and others patronized by the same families for generations.

And so, with some chagrin, I learned to put up with the construction outside my window. It is, after all, the law of returns in the city. Instead of spending late Saturday mornings in bed with a pillow over my face, I got up and got on the train. Despite the efficient public

transportation options of the Tokyo trains, subways and busses, I walked many more miles during the ten months I spent in Japan than I ever have or probably ever will.

I took my camera around the main city circuit to Shibuya, Harajuku, Ginza, Tokyo, Takadanobaba, Shinbashi, Akihabara and more. I poked around back alleys, into temples, and even the red light district. Once I got started, I couldn't get enough.

More than anything, I got to know Shinjuku. The crazy business, shopping and pleasure district that is the setting for Sophia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* was also my playground and my backyard. At first I could only spend an hour or so out in the city before becoming overwhelmed by it all. I felt faint, I had migraines, I sweated profusely. But as time passed and the months rolled by, I spent more of my days and nights wandering the streets of Shinjuku than I had the streets at home.

My host family was appreciative, almost overly so, of the time I spent touring their city. They saw it as no small feat when I walked somewhere rather than taking the train, or bought anything from a sweater to a commuter pass by myself. Whenever I showed them my photographs, they ooh'ed and aah'ed, though what impressed them wasn't the content itself but that I found so much interest in things they took for granted.

The more time passed, the more I wanted to see. Instead of becoming gradually more ordinary, my life in Tokyo seemed more extraordinary each day. Every meal was an experience; every bus ride, a journey. Long before I returned to America, I knew that I had found the wonder needed to transform everyday life into something beautiful and unique. ■