

Semester Abroad Testimonial



From Gabriela Palencia, Juris Doctor Candidate May 2010

I took courses in EU and International law, EU Competition law, Human Rights law, and NGO law in the European context. My research project consisted in NGO law in the EU, and it focused on two initiatives that have been undertaken by scholars and lawyers to draft a European Foundation Statute, which would significantly reduce the legal, administrative, and economic obstacles that NGOs, wishing to operate in a pan-European basis, currently face. I became very close with my research supervisor, who is still advising me on my research.

But aside from traveling and learning about Moravian culture, I was also fortunate to attend classes and conduct research at the Faculty of Law at Masaryk University. Studying at Masaryk meant gaining an education from a different perspective than the one I am used too here at John Marshall. Classes at Masaryk were more open for discussion, and they relied less on cases and more on statutes. My professors at Masaryk were very interested in knowing the American counterpart to some of the statutes and cases discussed in class (especially in my Human Rights class, where I was asked to discuss landmark US civil rights cases), thus, they were very receptive with the idea of having exchange students in their classes, which I must say made my semester a very good one.

The school facilities are great (the library at the faculty of Law is impressive), the teachers are very approachable, and the students are very helpful. I met many students who knew who Professor Seng is and where The John Marshall Law School is. Many of these students told me about their desires to study here, and they have attended lectures given by JMLS professors who visit the University. My coordinator, Martin Glogar was also incredibly helpful. He helped me from everything from visa and housing issues to issues concerning my courses and even my research project.

As you can see, I have nothing but good things to say about Masaryk and its faculty and staff. During my stay I lived in the University's residence halls, which was very convenient as many other exchange students also lived there. The rooms are shared, but they are spacious and include a kitchen and bathroom. It is located near a tram and bus stop so it is very easy to get anywhere in Brno from there. It is also within walking distance to the center, although in the winter most people take public transportation.

I had a wonderful experience at Masaryk, and I would encourage everybody to at least consider the possibility of studying abroad. Studying in another country exposes you to a different educational, legal, economic, and political system. It broadens your horizons in every way, not just in the legal field.