

**2022-2023**

faculty/college	Utrecht University, humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Filosofie

destination city & country	Avignon, France
how did you travel to your destination?	By car
name university abroad	Université d'Avignon
start date	05 / 09 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 01 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

The application was made clear at the International Office of UU, they have been very helpful. I also had to make an account at the university of Avignon when I was still in the Netherlands, which was sometimes a little bit confusing but it worked out. At Avignon Université there is a 'inscription administrative' which can be done from home and a 'administration pédagogique' which is for the courses you want to follow and which you complete in Avignon.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

The counseling was good; when I was not selected for the first round, I had a conversation with one of the support officers to explore my options. The International Office was always quick to respond.

#### academic preparation

I was a 5<sup>th</sup> year student, so this was alright. Normally this should not be a problem if you are in your 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year at university, because the academic quality of courses in Utrecht is relatively high.

#### language preparation

I had French in highschool, but I was not really motivated then so I had to do some work to improve my language skills. To this end, I followed three language courses at UU: Franse Taalkunde I, II en III. I would strongly recommend to follow these courses (especially I and II) or at least some kind of other language course, because most courses in Avignon are in French. Also it is really fun to learn a new language when you can actually use it in real life.

#### finances

I received the Erasmus scholarship (1000 euros) and also money from DUO for not using my public transport card in the Netherlands. This was 104 euros per month. Life in France was expensive, so I also had my student loans at DUO. I did my groceries at a big supermarket extra-muros (outside the city walls) to save some money, because the supermarkets intra-muros were very expensive.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

I was in Avignon for a semester and did the following courses: littérature du monde anglophone (9EC), grandes figures mythologiques (2EC), approche communicationnelle de la culture (3EC), sociologie de la communication

<p>(3EC), histoire des cultures et des arts (3EC), textes littéraires majeurs (2EC), littérature comparée (3EC) and Français pour étudiants non francophones (2EC). These were mostly firstyear bachelorlevel courses. As you can see, you receive a small amount of credits for each course, which makes it different and more complicated to plan your semester than at UU. So this was complicated in the beginning, not in the least because you can switch courses in the first two weeks if you do not like a course. However, you will find a way in this administrative process. The most interesting of my courses were histoire des cultures et des arts and textes littéraires majeurs.</p>
<p>academic quality of education activities</p>
<p>Not so high as at Utrecht University. A lot of courses had no working groups; it was just listening to lectures. This is a very passive method of learning which reminded me of high school. Sometimes the lectures were very interesting, but sometimes it was too easy. I chose to do courses at Licence 1 (=bachelor year 1) level because I was not completely confident in my language skills, however I found out that it was not very challenging to me. So if you are already in your third year, I recommend you try courses at thirdyear level or higher. You can always change in the beginning if it is not what you expected.</p> <p>Moreover, the level can differ depending on the course. I took one course of 'histoire moderne et contemporaine' in the beginning, a first year history course, for which you had to do a lot of work and attend multiple lectures in the week. After 1,5 week I decided to drop the course because I was not in Avignon to learn historical facts by heart.</p> <p>Note that not every professor uses a powerpoint in the lecture; this means that your level of French has to be sufficient to follow the course. However, you can always ask for notes of other French students. They are generally very nice and will help you out.</p>
<p>counselling &amp; support at receiving university abroad</p>
<p>It is okay, you can always find someone who will help you and the mobility team is very nice. In august, they do not react to their emails, which is stressing if you do not know if you have accomodation. As a general tip, it is always good to go see them in person if you have a pressing question; they are very nice and ready to help you and this way you get a quick response.</p>
<p>transfer of credits</p>
<p>Not yet completed</p>

<p><b>STUDENT LIFE</b></p>	
<p>welcome &amp; orientation programme</p>	<p>There was a nice introduction week in the beginning, where you meet a lot of new people and explore the city and campus and you get information, for example how to use your ENT (Espace Numérique Travail, basically the digital platform of the university). The university also organizes language courses each day, which are nice. At the end of the second week, the uni organized a trip to the Camargue National Park and Saint-Marie au mer, which was great. In these first weeks, you meet a lot of new people, which is exciting.</p>
<p>accommodation</p>	<p>Finding accommodation was hard and stressed me out in the beginning. First, I applied for an appartement at La Garidelle, which is the student residence. However, I did not confirm my application in time, and I did not know if it came through in the end. Also, I was really doubting to live there because I wanted some space for myself, and in the residence you share your appartement with someone. So I looked online, but I did not find an appartement before my departure. I arrived one week before the start of the introduction week in France, so I had this week to find an appartement. I simply went by 'agences immobiliers' and asked if they had an appartement for me. This was not easy and I visited a lot of these agencies, but in the end there was a real nice one (la Foret), which helped me find an appartement in the city centre. The rent of my appartement-studio was</p>

430 euros, without water and electricity, which made it around 480 euros. It was really important for me that it was intra-muros, because it is a lot better in my opinion than outside the walls, although I had a friend who lived outside the walls and his place was not bad either.

After my experience with finding an accomodation, I'd recommend you start early looking for it, at least earlier than me. You can use a site like Leboncoin, but you need a french phone number to use this site. The website 'Bien ici' does not demand a french phone number.

leisure & culture

Avignon is a city of culture, there are a lot, really a lot of theatres. I recommend to take a look at what they are performing and going to a theatre, it's cool. Moreover, you can buy tickets for a reduced price with the 'Patch culture', which you can get at the university (at the infodesk). This is also valid for the cinema (Cinema le Vox is cool). The bars I can recommend: La souricière (with live music) and Pipeline. At Place Pie there are multiple cafes. Be aware that Avignon is not a big city, so you can not really go to the 'club', except outside the city there is a techno club 'District', but that is really far away so I went only once.

Furthermore, there are also museums to visit and Ile de Barthelasse is nice for taking a walk.

suggestions/tips

In the weekends, you can visit cities around Avignon, which you can easily go to by train. I can recommend Arles, Montpellier, Orange, Nimes et Marseille. Furthermore, there are possibilities to participate in sports organized by the university, which is a great way to try new things and meet French people.

**CONCLUSIONS**

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would recommend Avignon as destination. Note that it is a very small city with one of the smallest universities in France. On the one hand, this means that it misses the citylife of Paris for example, and there are not a lot of places to go out. On the other hand, it is an authentic city in the Provence, which makes it easier to feel at home and which makes it possible to visit the cities surrounding Avignon. The university is beautifully located (at least campus Hannah Arendt) intra-muros. And by far the most important reason to choose for the south of France: the sun shines a lot.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you are thinking about doing an exchange, I can only say to you: do it!! It is really a great experience in which you learn a lot. If you want to learn the language, this is the perfect opportunity to speak French! Everyone is learning the language, so it is not a problem if you make mistakes. Even with the internationals I spoke most of the time in French, which helped improving my skills. Therefore I recommend speaking French as much as you can.

I wrote a blog on my experiences, if you are interested you can find it here: <https://www.students.livin-france.com/post/commencer-la-vie-%C3%A0-avignon-les-premiers-jours-d-un-%C3%A9tudiant-erasmus>

**2018-2019**

faculty/college	humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	French language and culture

destination city & country	Avignon, France
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name university abroad	Université d'Avignon et des Pays de Vaucluse / Avignon Université
start date	03 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	14 / 01 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

<b>PREPARATION</b>	
exchange application process	<p>The application process was quite easy. I received an email of Avignon University with a description of the application process and they sent me an handbook with all the information I needed for my exchange like the information for my application process.</p> <p>First of all I needed to make an account on the website of the University and I needed to fill in a form with all my personal details and I had to send some documents by mail. After my inscription on the website I could make an appointment for the start of the semester for the confirmation of my inscription in Avignon.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>At the beginning of September, when I arrived in Avignon, I had to go to the appointment where I had to sign a number of documents. That was all for the application process itself.</p> <p>The registration of the courses was slightly more difficult. On the website there were lists with all subjects of all studies and you could choose your subjects yourself. It was only difficult to choose all the courses so that it would fit into your schedule.</p>
academic preparation	<p>My academic preparation was good enough. I was in Avignon in the first semester of my third year. So I had a lot of experience with studying and writing essays, etc. I followed second and third year courses in Avignon and I was able to follow the level very well. The academic level was not very high in Avignon and the testing was also not very complicated. I had 3 presentations and only exams for the rest. So that was not too difficult.</p>
language preparation	<p>My language preparation was good enough. I studied French language and culture and I was already in my third year. In the beginning I found it very difficult to follow the lectures. I had only chosen history courses, so it was difficult to follow those lectures with all names and dates. Fortunately my French improved fairly quickly and I was able to follow the lectures better and better.</p> <p>It is important that you already have a good level of French, otherwise it will be very difficult to follow the lectures. You have to take notes of what the teacher tells and there are no powerpoints.</p> <p>The University offered many opportunities to improve your French. For example, during the introduction week I had French lessons every day in which all the basics of French were quickly explained again.</p> <p>In addition, I followed a French class for 1.5 hours a week throughout the semester. Although the level of that lesson was very low, it was still useful to get grammar lessons every week. The lessons were only with other Erasmus students, so it was also an easy way to get to know other Erasmus students and to practice French.</p>
finances	<p>I received an Erasmus + scholarship of about 1000 euros. That scholarship was enough to pay the rent of my room, which was about 210 euros per month. In addition, I received a fee of about 80 euros from the DUO because I did not use my public transport card during my period in Avignon. I could also have received an additional scholarship from the French government, of about 80 euros per month, but unfortunately I was a little too late for that.</p> <p>Life in Avignon was not extremely expensive, perhaps slightly more expensive than in the Netherlands.</p>

<b>STUDY ABROAD PERIOD</b>	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	<p>I was in Avignon for a semester. In that semester I followed 6 courses in total. Those courses were between 3 and 7 credits, I had in total 30 ECTS. I had a total of 12 lectures per week of 1.5 hours, so it was a full program. As I already described above, it was quite difficult to choose courses. You had to find out for yourself whether the courses fit in the schedule. In addition, there were no course descriptions, so you did not know what you had chosen. But, it was really nice that you could change courses in the first two weeks. So if there was a course that was not so interested, you could easily change.</p> <p>I only followed history courses and they were all very interesting. The teachers were all very nice and helpful too.</p>
academic quality of education activities	<p>The academic quality was not very high if you compare it with the level in Utrecht. The exams were not very difficult. But, because all courses were in French, it was only good that the level was not too high. Otherwise it might be a bit too difficult to follow the courses.</p>
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	<p>The counseling &amp; support in Avignon was very well arranged. The people at the International Office were very nice and helpful. They helped very well with the questions you had. The organization of the university was really well organized! The teachers were all very friendly too. When they heard that I was an Erasmus student, they were very helpful. When I had some problems at some point, they really helped me a lot!</p>
transfer of credits	<p>I have been back in the Netherlands for about 7 weeks now and I have not yet received transcripts or records. So unfortunately that does not go so fast. I have already seen on the internet that I have achieved all my courses.</p>

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>	
welcome & orientation programme	<p>A very nice introduction week was organized. You got a French language lesson every day in the morning and in the afternoon there were all information meetings such as: a tour of the campus, a meeting about the library and the computers. In addition, there were also plenty of opportunities to meet the Erasmus people. The ESN also organized an activity every evening during the introduction week.</p>
accommodation	<p>I lived in La Garidelle, which is a student complex next to the university. Almost all erasmus students lived there. The bachelor students could only get a shared studio there. I had a pretty big studio there, which I lived with a female Hungarian student. Even if it was difficult at first because you had to share everything, I was very happy with the studio. The studio was quite large and had two 'floors'. There was a ground floor with a private kitchen and a bathroom. There was a staircase to a room with 2 beds.</p> <p>The studio was a bit dated and very very basic. Nevertheless, I recommend the studio. You live close to other Erasmus students, it is very nice to share a studio, you live next to the university and the rent is very cheap. I only paid 200 euros a month. You only have to take into account that on top of that amount you also have to pay electricity and a home insurance. You have to arrange both yourself.</p>
leisure & culture	<p>Avignon is a very cozy and beautiful city, with a beautiful palace and the famous bridge of Avignon. The city was only a bit smaller than I had thought before, but that was not bad. I've got to know the city very well. Avignon is a cultural city, there are many theaters to be found and every year a theater festival is organized. Because there</p>

is not much to do in Avignon, it is very nice to the weekends a lot to travel in Provence. By train you can easily get into the surrounding towns such as Nîmes, Orange and Arles. In addition, it is also easy to go to Marseille and Montpellier. Nature in Provence is also very beautiful. If you really like going out, I would not go to Avignon soon. There are many cafés in Avignon, but there are not really nightclubs. The ESN Avignon organizes an activity almost every week.

suggestions/tips

I would travel a lot in Provence. With a Carte Jeune from the SNCF, it is not expensive to visit other cities. In addition, it is also very nice to go to the theaters.

### CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would definitely recommend Avignon! It is a very nice and cozy city. The city is not very big, but very beautiful and you can travel very easily in Provence. The University is not too big, but the atmosphere is very good. The teachers and the international office are very helpful. I would particularly recommend Avignon to students who are looking for a small and cozy city.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Enjoy your stay!

### 2016 – 2017

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Information and Communication

destination city & country	Avignon, France
name university abroad	Université d'Avignon et pays de Vaucluse
start date	15 / 01 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 05 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

exchange application process

The first application online and quit clear. You will receive a e-mail with your username and password for further process. The inscription at the University of Avignon itself was on the other hand very complicated. There was much help needed from the pedagogic office to complete all the questions being asked.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

There was a lot of paperwork asked by the International Office. Even though it was a lot (and sometimes a little stressful), they still helped really good by explaining what to do and what to hand in. They were good at explaining it in person (at the desk office) as well as in e-mails (if something was uploaded wrong).

academic preparation

I was at the end of my bachelor before going on the Erasmus. It is not a must to almost having completed the bachelor Information and Communication, but it helps with following the courses offered by the university of Avignon. That way I already knew a part of the content that was being taught.
language preparation
Fortunately, I took a French class for 4 weeks in Nice, 2 years before I went to France. This was also a personal test if I would like to stay in France for a month before going on a Erasmus. I highly recommend taking a language class in some sort, whether it being offered by the University or outside. A basics in French is much needed, especially to complete all the administration in the beginning. Be aware that not a lot of people in France speak English very well.
finances
With the support of the student grant (studie financiëring) and the Erasmus+ grant, I could pay all the costs that where needed like rent and everyday life (f.e. food). For travel expenses, you can also get a monthly payement from OV, because you study abroad and you're not using the card in the Netherlands.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
The courses at the University of Avignon are different than the courses by the University of Utrecht. Instead of 2 courses every 9 weeks, I followed 10 little courses for five monthes. Most courses are only 3 credits of worth, that's why I needed to take 10 to receive all the 30 credits needed. This way you get a lot of different information, which resembled a more 'high-school' organisation. Make sure to check with the supervisor of your study to go over the exact content of the courses. (I just received a list to chose from without any additional information). I followed a few basic courses like theories about communicaiton models, two communication/theater courses (which were really fun to do) and couple more acadamic courses (like how to build a research report on jazz in Avignon). Because the courses are quit 'small' (1,5 untill 3 hours per week), they were not that profound as well. Still they can be difficult because of the language barrier.
academic quality of education activities
Like I mentioned earlier, the way the courses are thaught, reminded me of high school. Instead of focussing on debates or interaction, the University of Avignon worked more with a teacher that tells you what to do and what to know.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
As far as administration for the international students, we were assigned to the lovely mister François Bigaud. With the basics in French he will help you very well and make complicated things clear. He could answer every one of my questions and was very quick with replying urgent mails for documents needed by the international office.
transfer of credits
I still have to hand in my transcript of credits.

### STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
I took the introduction week which was really helpfull. You will be able to find your way even if you don't take the introduction, but it made it really clear where to be for which purpose. I recommend taking this first week, not only to be well orientated, but even more so to meet the new Erasmus students (and by connections the Erasmus students from the first semester who stay the whole year). There I immediatly found a group of friends

and we all begin at the same time, knowing the same information. I realised that the students who didn't take part in the first week were a little lost in the beginning :P.

accommodation

I stayed at 'La Garidelle', which is the student residence especially for Erasmus (and French) students who study at the University. I highly recommend to stay in this residence, because it is not only around the corner (maybe 100 meters) from the University but it is quit inexpensive as well to live there. It is not a five star hotel, but a lot of Erasmus students stay there. You will share a room with a roommate, but this was more pleasant than I thought. You will have someone to talk to and you can just visit other people in the same builing. For example, I had a couple of 'movie nights' with friends staying to floors above me (I just walked the halls in my pyjama's :P). Even if you don't like roommates, I would still try it. I knew a couple of Erasmus students that lived elsewhere and they got lonely from time to time, and sometimes missed out on the parties organised by Erasmus students.

leisure & culture

Avignon is not a big city, it is actually quit small (smaller than I thought). There is a wall surrounding the city center, where you will find all the things in to do. I would say that the people make the city instead of the other way around. Because it is quit small you will have to go out, walk around, and look for those nice spots. The popular one to go to is Place Pie for terasses (like the popular Wall Street Café) and Cubanitos (little Spanish vibe) and Bokaos for 'clubbing'. Unfortunately you can't really 'shop' in Avignon'. At the main street (Rue de la République) there are only the H&M and Zara to be found and some expensive boutiques. There are some shopping malls, but you will have to take a bus to go out of the center of Avignon. Avignon is a very cultural city and a theater to be found at every corner of the street, so participating in some cultural activities (like a movie, theater piece, or opera) was very popular amongst students. I myself wasn't really a 'going to café's person'. So for the nature and sport fanatics, there is a nice boulevard on the other side of the brigde and some nice fields to run or to talk a walk. (You can also walk to Villeneuve, the village next to Avignon or run around the wall which is 5 km).

suggestions/tips

Since Avignon is small, I would suggest strolling trough the streets and going on adventures with friends. For example, every time a I had to go to Carrefour (supermarket) or the city center, I took a different route home and got to discover new areas, like the parc (with a panoramic view of Avigon and the 'Pont d'Avignon'). By the way, you will never get lost, because you will always end up at the wall and know your route back home. I would also really recommend discovering other cities as much as possible. Try to go to different cities in the area (like Montpellier) in the weekends and big cities further away (like Nice, or Lyon) in the vacations. Everyting is really easy by train (but it is expensive though). You can use an app like Bla Bla Car (the European version of Uber) for short rides, that is way less expensive. The only thing I regretted, was that I didn't really hang out with French people (students). Because the Erasmus students formed a group it was really easy to hing out with them, but most of the time English was the main language spoken. I suggest making friends in your class and really try to get a cup of coffee with them from time to time. They are really friendly with foreign students as well ;). By speaking with French locals you will REALLY learn the language and all those little expressions that are not taught in a academic book.

**CONCLUSIONS**

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, if you are a big fan of that 'cosy feeling'. I spoke with a lot of people who came from big cities, that really liked Avignon, because you will always bump into people you know in the streets and really get to know Avignon and its café's and theaters that it comes with.

do you have any additional advice or comments?



**France – Université d'Avignon**

Before you go, make sure WHY you want to go. If you want to speak the language, you will have to speak with the locals. If you want to go for the courses I would focus more on the study and the content of the courses. If you can miss a couple courses than you can party and hang out more with the other students. It all depends where your focus lies.