

GLENDON COLLEGE, YORK UNIVERSITY – MINOU KIMENAI

Major: SSC (Economics, Anthropology)
Semester of exchange: 5 (Fall 2015)
Period: 30-08-2015 – 24-12-2015
Place: Toronto, Canada

1. MOTIVATION

What were your initial reasons for going on exchange?

I love travelling and always wanted to live in another country and experience a different culture for a while. Also, I wanted to take more economics courses than UCR had to offer.



2. PREPARATION

How was the preparation in terms of timing and work? How did you find your exchange location? What would you do differently if you would do it again?

I spent quite some time looking at the different exchange destinations at the UU website and what courses all universities had to offer. I decided I wanted to go to Canada, and my top-3 consisted of two UU exchange partners and an UCR exchange partner. As my first choice was the University of Victoria, I applied at Utrecht at the end of December. However, my application at Utrecht got cancelled by UCR. The registrar thought that Glendon College was my first choice. The reason for this mistake was that my initial exchange request was disapproved because I did not fill enough courses for Glendon College. I was told to fill in the exchange request form again, but just the section for the second choice, Glendon College, was enough. When UCR had to communicate to UU whether the exchange was approved, they only looked at the second form and only saw Glendon on that one. Therefore, I advise everyone to always hand in completely filled in forms to the registrar, even when they tell you it is not needed.

The application at Glendon College itself went smooth. In the end of April I heard that I got accepted. The exchange officer at Glendon was very helpful and answered my emails quickly.

3. UNIVERSITY

Why did you choose for this specific university? How was the academic level of the university? Were there extracurricular activities?

Glendon College is the smaller bilingual campus of York University. It is most known for its international studies and political science programmes, but they also offer programmes in other social sciences, history, philosophy, mathematics and biology. The academic level and workload are comparable to that of UCR. However, exams make up a larger part of your grade. Most of my courses had 15 to 20 students and just consisted of lectures. Courses in which more students are enrolled often exist of a lecture and tutorial. Even though most of my courses were smaller than at UCR, they were less interactive.

There are plenty of clubs at Glendon that you can join. During the introduction week there is a fair where you can check them out. One of the clubs is the international club. They organize events on campus like a Thanksgiving dinner, but also excursions to museums. There is a gym on campus that you can join for only \$20 a year. Moreover, the Glendon Student Union organises pub nights on Thursday evening. However, if you live off-campus it will be a hassle to get home at night.

4. ACCOMODATION

How did you arrange accommodation? How was your accommodation in general? Would you recommend living on campus or private?

Glendon College does not guarantee a room in residence, and the chance to get one is very small. As a result most exchange students ended up living scattered over Toronto. Myself I found a room (on toronto.homestaybay.com) with a Canadian woman and her 12-year old daughter in the neighbourhood Forest Hill. By public transport it took 30 to 45 minutes to get to Glendon College and 25 minutes to downtown. It was a great to experience Canadian family life and to live in such a fancy neighbourhood. Breakfast and dinner were included in my rent, which was very convenient as I had classes till 6 twice a week. Of course this type of housing requires you to adapt yourself, but it was definitely a great decision. I ended up having a lot of fun with the family, their nanny and the other students. I definitely recommend living off-campus as it is the cheaper option, and will make it easier to explore Toronto. In residence you will have to share the showers and toilets with your floor, and you probably get a double room. Furthermore, you won't have kitchen access and the cafeteria at Glendon, where you can spend your meal plan dollars, does not have that many food options. Student housing around Glendon is scarce, but there are more rooms available at bit north of the campus or

closer to downtown. It is most convenient to live close to a subway station along the Yonge-University line.

5. COURSES

Which courses did you take? Did they positively contribute to your degree and your personal development? Did you have any trouble transferring credits?

To earn 16 UCR credits (or 30 ECTS) I had to take 6 courses during my semester at Glendon College. The normal workload at Glendon is five courses (3 credits each), but as UCR transfers 1 Glendon credit to 1 UCR credit, you will need to do a sixth course. As



long as you don't only take 3000 and 4000 levels this is definitely doable. Glendon offers quite some advanced economics courses, but many of them had clashing or overlapping timeslots, and some got cancelled or were in French. You have the opportunity to take courses at the much larger Keele campus, but only one or two. It takes 45 minutes to get there by shuttle bus, so this might be hard to actually fit in your schedule. So in the end the choice for courses was a bit limited like at UCR.

I decided to take two mathematics courses: Linear Algebra I, and Modes of Mathematical Reasoning. These courses had quite some homework and quizzes, but were of good quality and not too difficult. Furthermore, I was enrolled in four economics courses: Principles of Business Administration, Marketing and Consumer Economics, The Economics of the Multinational Firm, and Econometrics. I especially liked the course on multinational firms as we studied a challenging model and articles by well-known economists. Also, we played a business simulation game in groups. The econometrics course was also good, but our teacher could not get computer lab to teach us STATA. Therefore, the lectures ended up being very theoretical.

At the end of your exchange you will need to request a transcript on the York University website to be sent to UCR. The transcript was sent by normal post and took 4 weeks to arrive. Shortly after that my grades were transferred without any troubles.

6. LIFE OUTSIDE UNIVERSITY

How was life outside of the university? What should you definitely do or visit when you go on exchange to this location?

Before the semester starts there is a compulsory international student introduction and an optional Frosh Week. I would recommend participating in both as this enables you to not only meet other exchange students, but also Canadians. Most exchange students are French, and not that comfortable speaking English. It is much easier and more fun to mingle with the locals. Glendon is very multicultural, so you will be able to meet people from many different backgrounds. Frosh Week is a 10-day introduction with many parties, excursions and other events. Although most students will be younger than you and it includes a lot of crazy yelling, there are some very nice events like a trip to Wasaga Beach and to Canada's Wonderland, as well as a scavenger hunt in downtown.

You definitely won't be bored during your stay in Toronto; the city is so big that you won't be able to explore it all. In summer it is very nice visit Toronto Islands and spent time on one of its beaches. Unfortunately, there is no break during the fall semester, but you



will have the reading days and a long weekend with Thanksgiving to travel out of town. Myself I went on a two-day trip to Niagara Falls and Buffalo. You should definitely go to Niagara Falls as it is only a 2 hour drive, and is really beautiful. Buffalo is quite a ghost town outside the tourist season, so we ended up spending our time in one of the many outlet malls just over the border in the USA. After I finished my final exams, I also went on a trip to Montreal together with two exchange students and a Canadian student. This city feels much more European and has a lot of nice bars and shops. You should really try poutine or go to Schwarz for smoked meat if you happen to go there.

7. FINANCES

Was your semester abroad more expensive than one semester at UCR? What was the most expensive part of your exchange? Is there anything you would have done differently in financial terms if you went on exchange again?

An exchange semester in Toronto is definitely more expensive than a semester in Middelburg. Especially rent and groceries cost much more. I paid 850 CAD a month for my room (including breakfast and dinner). A room on campus is even more expensive. Other big expenses were my flight (€ 800), the mandatory health care plan (204 CAD), and books (600 CAD). As an exchange student you can also get the monthly post-secondary metropass (112 CAD), but you also need the photo ID

that goes with it. If you don't use the metropass the entire month it is probably cheaper to get tokens.

As distances to other cities are often big, travelling around Canada can be quite expensive. However, you can save a lot of money by booking your train or bus tickets early. Also many attractions have discounts for students and some museums have days that they are free for students.

8. WHY SHOULD YOU GO ON EXCHANGE?

It will be a life changing experience. You will meet many new people, live in another culture, and have lots of opportunities to travel around in a different country.

9. WHY SHOULD YOU NOT GO ON EXCHANGE?

If you don't like adventure or think UCR still has enough to offer.

10. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

If you have any questions about going on exchange at Glendon, don't hesitate to contact me: minoukimenai@hotmail.com

GLENDON COLLEGE, YORK UNIVERSITY – JENNIFER COTÉ

This is the experience not of a UCR student, but of a student from the University of Wyoming going on exchange to UCR. An interesting, different perspective!

Major and Tracks: International Studies and History
Semester of exchange at UCR: Academic year 2014-2015 (all year)
Period of exchange at UCR: August 2, 2014 – May 15, 2015
Place: Toronto, Canada

1. MOTIVATION

Why should people go on exchange to your university? What are the main differences with UCR?

Glendon College is the best way to enjoy a quieter university experience while having all the benefits of a big city. Our campus is very very green, and only half an hour from downtown Toronto. We have plenty of raccoons and lots of Frenchies compared to UCR. The population is a bit bigger too – Glendon has closer to 3,500-4,000 students, but still feels like a small community.

Our classes are separated into lectures and tutorials. In lectures, the professor will just talk, and you take notes, asking questions when you need to. They're a lot less interactive than at UCR. It is in tutorials that you'll have discussions and maybe a presentation or two. However, over all, grades are much more based off of a midterm, exam, and maybe two or so assignments in between. Of course, each class is different, but on a broad level, much less interactive than UCR classes and less based on group projects and presentations.

2. PREPARATION

Do you have any tips for exchange students applying to the program at your own university? Is there anything they specifically need to keep in mind?

Toronto is a big change to Middelburg.

3. UNIVERSITY

Why should exchange students choose for your university? How is the academic level of the university? Are there extracurricular activities?

Glendon takes its academics really seriously and has an excellent International Studies and Political Science program; it's a great school to study globalization, law, politics, and social sciences.



Glendon is HUGE on community life and enjoying time with fellow students. Thursday's are pub-nights, and we have a charity ball in the winter, and a spring formal. We do not have a bar on campus – just a little coffee café – so we often go out on the town to have drinks. Glendon has a plethora of clubs and teams to participate in. We have drama clubs, sports teams, games clubs, an LGBT group, etc. There's a gym on campus - \$20 for the whole year – which has a weight room, pool and free classes. We also have a shuttle that runs between Glendon and Keele – York University's main campus – where you have access to all the clubs, societies, etc of the main campus.

4. ACCOMMODATION

How is the accommodation arranged? How is the accommodation in general? Would you recommend living on campus or private housing (if that is possible)?

Depending on availability in Residence, you could get a dorm room – just a single room with a bed, dresser, desk, and a common bathroom area. You also would have to apply for kitchen access to cook food, or you eat cafeteria food. You can also look for a place in Toronto for the semester, but most places are unfurnished, so you'd have to look for a place with roommates or make sure to request a furnished room. Because Glendon is a bit north of the city – located in North York – rooms are a little bit cheaper compared to downtown.

5. COURSES

Is the university specialized in any specific tracks? How does the credit system work?

Each class typically goes for one semester – September – December and then January – April. Each class is worth 3 credits. So, we take 5 classes at 3 credits = 15 credits per semester. If a class is listed as a 6 credit, it is a full year class.

Glendon is specialized in French, International studies, and Political Science. We also have an economics degree, translation classes, drama, English, etc.

6. LIFE OUTSIDE UNIVERSITY

How is life outside of the university? What should you definitely do or visit when you go on exchange to this location?

Toronto always has plenty of things going on, no matter the time of the year. Festivals and Blue Jay's games in the summer/fall are always a lot of fun. Toronto International Film Festival – TIFF – is so much fun every fall and you just may see someone famous. Halloween is big in Canada, so October brings Oktoberfest and then haunted houses and costume parties.

One of the best parts about Canada is that you really get to see all the seasons – fall brings beautiful reds, oranges, yellows and browns into our trees and nature. Visiting the Scarborough Bluffs for a walk, or even in the forest behind Glendon shows the beauty of the Canadian Fall. Winter brings ice and skating and hockey games. Going to see a hockey game is a MUST DO in Canada.



Around Toronto, you can get to Montreal in Quebec, Ottawa, Quebec City, Niagara to see the falls and try our famous Ice Wine. Even bus to New York City! Climb the CN Tower, visit Dundas Square and the Toronto Islands, the Rogers Centre and Hockey Hall of Fame. You'll never run out of things to do in the city.

7. FINANCES

Would you consider that the semester abroad is more expensive than one semester at UCR? What is the most expensive part of the exchange? Any tips to keep the costs low?

You will always pay more on exchange that you would at home because you want to travel and explore and try new things in a new country.

The best way to keep costs down is to think economically in how you travel and where you stay. Also, spending money on activities opposed to little things like lunches out and coffee is always a good way to save – even if you save a few dollars a day it adds up. Unless you're getting a Tim Horton's coffee. Then it's part of the culture and you should 100% spend that toonie.

8. WHY SHOULD YOU GO ON EXCHANGE?

Getting to live and experience life through the eyes of a different culture is an honour that not everyone has the chance to experience. It is wonderful to meet different people, to try new things, to expand your mind and just learn. Learn about people and cultures and the world we live in. Learn about yourself and what you're capable of. Learn from your mistakes and learn as you grow as a person.

9. WHY SHOULD YOU NOT GO ON EXCHANGE?

If you have no interest in trying new things, if you hate travel, or if you just have no desire to emerge yourself in a different way of life, then exchange might not be for you.

GLENDON COLLEGE, YORK UNIVERSITY – OLIVIA FULLERTON

This is the experience not of a UCR student, but of a student from Glendon College going on exchange to UCR. An interesting, different perspective!

Major and Tracks: International Studies & Gender Studies
Semester of exchange at UCR: Spring 2014
Period of exchange at UCR: 15-01-2014 – 25-05-2014
Home university: Toronto, Canada

1. MOTIVATION

Why should people go on exchange to your university? What are the main differences with UCR?

In attending Glendon College you get to experience the best of both worlds - a small campus (only 2600 students) and a big city. Similar to UCR, Glendon has small class sizes averaging 24 students, but is a part of the much larger York University (50,000 students) and thus offers all of the research and resource benefits that come with a bigger institution. The campus itself is absolutely beautiful! Located on the Don River, Glendon is situated on a large treed lot with amazing gardens, and several nearby hiking trails; it is also home to a wide variety of wildlife from foxes to coyotes. Just beyond the campus gates you will find a TTC bus stop that can connect you to the whole of Toronto for only \$3.00. In 25 minutes or less you can find yourself downtown in the business, arts, or distillery district. Toronto is not as walkable as Middelburg and you will find yourself relying on public transit and taxis to get around but with a little practice, you'll find the city is not at all hard to navigate. As the most diverse city in the world (with a neighbourhood for nearly every country) there is always something to see and do!



2. PREPARATION

Do you have any tips for exchange students applying to the program at your own university? Is there anything they specifically need to keep in mind?

There are many services set up at Glendon to help incoming international students. Just remember that the time difference between Middelburg and Toronto can make quick communication difficult. Most messages will be responded to within a few business days but do allow extra time as both the Fall and Winter (referred to as Spring at UCR) terms begin following national holidays when no one will be in the office.

In registering for classes, it is important to remember that there are two campuses at York University - Glendon and Keele. If a course does not specify which campus it is held on the answer is likely Keele. You are more than welcome to take classes at both but remember that the two are roughly 45 minutes apart by car, meaning you can't schedule back to back classes at different locations. There is a shuttle that runs between the two campuses roughly every hour - it is free to students as long as you have your YU student card with you.

Upon arrival at Glendon you will find that everyone is very friendly and willing to help. If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask!

3. UNIVERSITY

Why should exchange students choose your university? How is the academic level of the university? Are there extracurricular activities?

As mentioned above, Glendon offers a small academic community within a larger institution. Like UCR you will find yourself in small classes with roughly 24 students. If you are looking for more variety in course offerings consider looking into the courses offered on the Keele campus - there you can study a wide variety of disciplines including 19 different languages! The academic level at Glendon is very similar to that of UCR. Courses tend to have fewer small assignments and presentations, and more essays and exams but the grading scheme and number of hours of work is fairly equivalent.

There are numerous clubs and intermural sport opportunities at Glendon and on the Keele campus. At the beginning of each academic year all of the clubs on campus will put together small booths in the cafeteria for you to ask questions and sign up. If you are arriving in the Winter, you can always drop by the GCSU (Glendon College Student Union) for a full list of clubs and contact information - new members are always welcome! The campus gym (Glendon Athletic Centre or GAC for short) is open to all students for only \$15 per year. There you will find a

pool, fully equipped weight room, squash courts, and many group fitness classes. Pick up sport matches and intermural leagues will also generally be run out of the athletic centre.

4. ACCOMMODATION

How is accommodation arranged? How is the accommodation in general? Would you recommend living on campus or private housing (if that is possible)?

Living on campus is not generally possible for incoming exchange students as space is very limited. Unfortunately, with Glendon College being in the wealthiest neighbourhood in the entire country, the housing market is very expensive. Consider looking for accommodations outside of the immediate Glendon area. If possible, aim to live either on a subway line or near the Keele campus - both of these options will allow for easier and faster commutes to and from campus and will likely be much more cost effective.

5. COURSES

Is the university specialized in any specific tracks? How does the credit system work?

Glendon College is a fully bilingual liberal arts campus with courses offered in both French and English (any assignment for any class can be handed in in either language regardless of the language of instruction). Classes with both French and English in the title are taught in both languages and may have lecture, assigned readings, and class discussions in both languages - stay away from these if you aren't able to communicate well in French.

To complete a full semester and earn 30 ECTS, you will need to complete 5 courses throughout the semester (each with 3 hours of instruction per week). The term is only 12 weeks long (plus a four-week exam period), so course deadlines tend to approach quickly. With an extra course to balance you may find yourself with more work than you are used to, but with each class being three hours once a week you will likely have at least one or two days off each week to make up for it. Be sure to plan your time in advance as to not end up with five major papers all due at once.

6. LIFE OUTSIDE UNIVERSITY

How is life outside of the university? What should you definitely do or visit when you go on exchange to this location?

There is always something to do and see in Toronto! Any tourist resource will give you a full list of common attractions to visit while in town. As you will be staying longer than the average tourist, expand on this list by visiting as many of the city's little neighbourhoods as possible. You will be able to travel the world and eat food

from every culture imaginable without ever leaving the city limits.

7. FINANCES

Would you consider that the semester abroad is more expensive than one semester at UCR? What is the most expensive part of the exchange? Any tips to keep the costs low?

A semester abroad is generally more expensive than one at UCR, no matter where you go. Remember that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to study and live in a new place so the added cost is well worth it. Housing will likely be the biggest expense you have while in Toronto. There is not much you can do to remedy this, but remember that as long as you live on a transit line you can commute to Glendon - you will just need to find a balance between cost and commute time when deciding where to live.

Alcohol and tobacco products are also much more expensive in Canada than in the Netherlands. Consider stocking up at duty free before making the trip across the ocean. Alternatively, try to limit the amount that you consume while out at the bar by having a few drinks at home first (remember that you will likely also have to take a taxi home afterwards which can be pricy depending on where you live).

Most stores and attractions will have special discounts for post secondary students. With a little bit of research, or by asking an employee you will be able to find out when you are eligible for 10% discounts and which days you can have free admission to attractions like the Art Gallery of Ontario and Royal Ontario Museum. It is definitely worth asking!

8. WHY SHOULD YOU GO ON EXCHANGE?

It is not often that you have the opportunity to pick up and move to another country to study and live for a semester or a year. Though it may be more expensive, and a little frightening at first, it is absolutely worth it! You will have the opportunity to experience so many new and exciting things and will return to UCR with more lasting memories than you ever imagined.

9. WHY SHOULD YOU NOT GO ON EXCHANGE?

If you are able to go on exchange (financially and course flexibility wise) you definitely should. UCR will always be there for you when you return.