

Rutgers Newark – Exchange Program Spring Term 2008

Studying at Rutgers University is a great way to get to know the American education system, American students, and enlarge your international experience. Rutgers, and especially the Global Affairs program, sticks out among other programs because of its diversity and interdisciplinarity. The Department of Global Affairs offers classes in anthropology, political science, economics, law, and sociology. So we took advantage of this variety and attended classes from these different fields, like Anthropology of War; Economics for Global Affairs; Urban Government; Culture, Media, and Conflict; Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights; etc.

At Rutgers we enjoyed the small number of students in our classes. Because of the smaller classes at Rutgers, American universities offer more space for intense discussion. To our surprise, the discussions during classes were conducted in a more diplomatic and less aggressive way than in Germany. Compared to Germany, students are expected to read more and write weekly papers in preparation for classes. In general, the workload is higher and more time-consuming than in German universities. Nevertheless, we got to appreciate the frequent practice in writing. After a while, we became used to writing papers and needed less time to complete the tasks. In contrast to our experience at Kassel University, the social contacts among students are less intense. Unexpectedly, cooperation among students is not as prevalent as in our master's programs in Kassel. Nevertheless, we met a lot of nice students at Rutgers and formed many hopefully long-lasting friendships.

Rutgers University has three campuses: a main one in New Brunswick, one in Newark, and one in Camden. The Global Affairs program is located on the Newark campus; the department of political science can be found mainly in New Brunswick. As students of the Global Affairs Program, we could take classes with both departments.

Newark seems like a suburb of New York City, being just 30 min. from Manhattan. Newark is a stark contrast to the wealth of some parts of Manhattan. As a former industrial city of the Northeast, the urban population in Newark is mostly black, suffering from the closing of factories and unemployment. Since Newark is a highly urbanized place, Newark faces a lot of challenges especially in regard to poverty. Nonetheless, we found that Newark had a lot to offer and we liked living in Newark. People were helpful and friendly. The only difficulty was buying groceries, as there was no grocery store close to campus. However, the university offered a shuttle to several supermarkets twice a week. There is a Brazilian-

Portuguese neighborhood called "the Ironbound," which offers groceries within walking distance from the Newark Campus as well.

Rents and other living expenses are higher than in Germany, but thanks to the DAAD-scholarship and the favorable exchange rate, life was affordable for us in Newark.

Studying at Rutgers University was a grand opportunity for your professional and personal life, contributing to the further development of our studies. Living in the area of New York, getting to know American university life, as well as contacts with American students was an enriching experience for all of us.

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