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### Exchange Experience

#### The City and Campus

Welcome to the best time of your life in the best city in the world! This is not an overstatement. Where else will you find the greatest shows, art, culture, nightlife, food, faculty, and the most diverse people there are? The weather might not be as splendid, and the city is sometimes overwhelming, but trust me – it's worth it, and it's actually part of its charm. Also, NY is a great base for exploring North America (or even South America, depending on how much time you have).



On top of this, NYU Stern is one of the best business schools in the US and studying there is a truly exquisite experience. You get to learn from and network with the most powerful people in their respective fields, and can find classes on almost any (business related) topic that interests you. The facilities are convenient, and the location is perfect – right off Washington Square, in the heart of the Village, one of

the most fun places in town, which has a completely different vibe compared to its other parts.

Stern has a huge community of foreign students so you will not feel like you're standing out. The school and its various clubs also organize some career and social events. You should definitely take advantage of the career center's job pool and advisors.

## **Classes**

The course selection is large and changes between semesters. I took 6 classes, some of them were half-semester long. This meant that I studied 3-4 times a week, mostly evenings. Day time classes tend to have the full time program students, while evening classes are mostly attended by the part time Langone program students which are a bit older and focus more on their career (you'll notice this when you try to schedule project meetings with them...). These 6 classes are worth 12 points, which is actually the minimum you are required to take by NYU and the US student visa. 15 points are the maximum, but some classes can require a significant amount of reading and assignments, so make sure to leave some time to fully enjoy what this awesome city has to offer; after all, you did not come here strictly for school.

I took the following classes:

Conflicts, collaborations and negotiations workshop: mini-course, very practical, each week you receive a role and a scenario and spend half the class simulating a real negotiation. Then you spend the other half analyzing what went down. Recommended, but is taught by many different professors so I guess it varies.

Brand strategy: taught by the superstar-professor Scott Galloway. He is very charismatic, high-profile and interesting; but is also a no-bullshit type of guy who will cold-call on you, and will let you know if he thinks your answer is not up to par. A rather demanding course with reading and assignments, quizzes, attendance is imperative, and there is a weekly ranking system. This class is not for everyone, but is very good overall.

Television management: very niche. Taught by a CBS VP of research. A short, non-demanding class.

Managing growing companies: another star-professor, Glenn Okun. He really makes an effort to be funny, and some cases are interesting, but most are a bit dated. Not a very hard class.

Deal making in the business media: taught by a charming HBO VP, who is full with information about the business. Not as "lawyery" as it sounds. Very recommended if this field interests you.

Digital music industry: another niche class, taught by an ex-Universal executive. He has a lot of stories and the class is easy.

There are also great finance classes, with some of the most celebrated professors of finance in the world, including Nobel Prize laureates and professor Damodaran.

### **Accommodation**

Unfortunately, NYC is also one of the most expensive cities in the world. Expect to pay around USD 1,300-2,000 for a room (with flat mates) in Manhattan, and USD 3,000+ for a studio apartment. Farther locations, like the Upper East Side and Brooklyn are very nice and also a bit cheaper but you'll have to commute. Off-campus accommodation is not easy to find. The best way to find a place is probably through Stern Facebook groups.

Another option is to register (as early as possible) to the NYU Stern dorms, which are amazingly located at Union Square, a 10-15 walk from campus. It is quite near, but in the freezing winter can seem far... Also, they are very expensive at around USD 3,000 for a studio.

### **Visa**

As the semester approaches, the school sends out all the relevant documents. You then need to apply independently at the US embassy, pay the various fees and provide all the necessary documents from your end. You will receive a J-1 visa, which may allow you to work for a few months (!!!) once the semester is over, if you find a job related to your field of studying.

Note that if you travel abroad during the visa period, you need to stamp it at the Office of Global Services of NYU so it will not expire.

### **Transportation**

It is expensive, filthy and always in delay, but there is no avoiding the MTA. If you use the subway more than twice a day, it is best to buy a 30-day pass for around USD 130 (each ride currently costs USD 2.75, but it will soon increase to USD 3). Use Google or the Citymapper app for times and routes.

For late night rides and out-of-center destinations it is best to use ride sharing apps such as Uber pool or Lyft.

Biking is another good option. NY has CitiBikes scattered all over, similar to the Tel-Ofan in Tel Aviv.

Other than that – walking is one of the best ways to explore the NYC streets. Just beware: New Yorkers walk fast.

### **Insurance and Health Services**

The university will require you to purchase a very expensive health insurance. The one you have at home is not eligible. If you can find something cheaper that fulfills NYU's requirements, try to get the university's approval and waiver. Please note: never buy an external insurance before you are cleared by NYU. If they don't approve, you will just end up paying for 2 very expensive insurances. Also, make sure you're paying exactly for the semester, and not for a longer period of time (unless you plan to stay).

### **Living expenses**

As mentioned, NY is very expensive, and this goes across the board. To minimize the damage as much as possible, use your NYU Student card! This will give you discounts in many food places and shops, especially around campus, and will also grant you free entry to some of the city's most famous museums, such as the MOMA and Whitney. Also, scroll through NYU's Box Office website frequently – they offer discounted tickets for Broadway shows and sports events (NBA, NHL, MLB etc.), and sometimes even free tickets (mostly for new Broadway shows in previews).

Below is a general breakdown of estimated expenses, which will of course vary according to your lifestyle and preferences: (the numbers are approximate)

Rent: USD 1,300-2,000 per month.

Food: a normal meal will cost around USD 15-20 (remember to tip at least 15%). You can of course find cheap eats (try MacDougal St. near campus or order in through the Seamless app) and shop for groceries (but supermarkets are also pricey). Alcohol is also not cheap: a glass of wine can cost USD 8-10, cocktails USD 15.

Subway: USD 130 for a 30-day pass.

Mobile phone: plans are rather expensive and limiting and can cost anywhere between USD 35 to USD 70.

Health insurance: USD 1,100.

Books and class materials: USD 100.

Travelling: save a few thousands for exploring your area and the States, it can even be done while in school on weekends, or on spring break. It's very easy to rent a car to go anywhere, gas is cheap.

## **Hanging around and night life**

There are so many touristy things to do, but living in the city is way different than visiting there. You'll find that New York is a wonderful place to simply wander around and hang. You'll stumble upon amazing art (both high end galleries and equally amazing street art; best place for murals is definitely Bushwick), green parks, outdoor events, interesting people, their well-dressed dogs, cute coffee shops and bars, and much more .

The most exciting night life areas in my opinion are the Village, Lower East Side and Williamsburg (which has amazing rooftops with views of Manhattan, and is also a great area for brunching). The options are endless, be sure to check out if there are any special parties/events (for information try Timeout, New Yorker, NY Facebook groups, Bands in Town app etc (.

There are always fun food festivals around, such as Smorgesburg on weekends (in Brooklyn).

## **Tips**

Books and course materials: they are very expensive, especially in the NYU book store. Don't buy in advance and try to share costs with your classmates – most materials are available in digital format anyways. You can also get books for cheap on Amazon.

Bank account: It is quite easy to open a bank account in the US. If you need proof of address, NYU can printout an enrolment confirmation with your address and usually it will satisfy the bank. Most banks offer free student accounts, but only students under the age of 24 are eligible. At the time, I found that Capital One offered the best option for regular accounts – no monthly fee if you maintain a balance of over USD 350 (however any other activity is subject to fees).

Guest lectures: Occasionally Stern has interesting guest lectures from CEOs of high profile companies and such, which are open to all students. They publish this in their newsletter, register in advance.

Shopping online: As students, you get Amazon Prime for free for 6 months. It gives you free 2-day shipping for a wide variety of products (you'll use it all the time) and also access to the Amazon Prime online video streaming service which has a lot of shows on it. You probably won't subscribe to a cable service (why bother), so this is a good option. Netflix, HBO Now, Hulu and other SVODs offer one free month trials, so you can switch between those.

Attending TV shows: In my opinion, one of the best free attractions in town is being an audience in live TV shows such as Jimmy Fallon, Stephen Colbert, the Daily Show

etc. You need to watch out for tickets on the show's website or 1iota.com and book in advance, and you'll of course spend some time waiting in line, but it's a unique experience. If you have half a day off and are looking for something to do, consider this.

### **Overall**

This once in a lifetime experience is so worth the hassle of leaving/taking a non-paid vacation from work, spending a nice amount of money and missing your friends and family. It is fun beyond words, but it will of course be what you make of it. If you're outgoing and mix well with your fellow students (especially the exchange group), you'll absolutely love it. However, it is a huge, busy, noisy city and one can get lost in all this blur. It is important to make as many connections as possible; this city is much more fun when you experience it with friends.