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**Degree Program at TAU:** MBA

**Host University:** Ross School of Business at University of Michigan

**Exchange term:** Fall 2018

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**Exchange Experience**

**Location:**
Ann arbor is a really nice city. It’s clean and easy to navigate. It’s a college town that means that 90% of the people you’ll meet are students or university employees. The university is all over the city, it owns a lot of buildings and sometimes it’s hard to tell where the campus starts and ends. It’s located 30 min driving from Detroit, 4 hours from Chicago and 4 hours from Toronto, so it’s a good place for students who also want to travel in the mid-west.

**About the Host University:**
The MBA program is ranked 7 in the US. It’s a very good program, and the students take their studies very seriously (the Ross building is full of people who study even on Sundays). The academic level is very high. Don’t take this program only as a “vacation time”, but be prepared to study hard. The classes are demanding, but they are very practical and/or important for your career. My best recommendation is to be open minded and ready to learn from everything you do. Don’t do the assignments just to mark a V. No one, either the professors nor the students, care about grades, they care about you, learning and advancing your career. Personally, I liked it very much.

As I mentioned before, the students at ross are hard workers, so they are also somehow competitive. Generally, they are nice and they are curious about Israel but it doesn’t seem like they are looking to make new friends too much.

There are a lot of clubs you can join and other social activities that the global initiatives team organize for the international students. Sometimes they offer day tours to Chicago, Detroit or other activities. The Ross building is one of the newest in the campus. It has great facilities, a lot of studying area and rooms for group meetings.
Courses and professors:
The semester is divided into two terms, A and B. Classes credited for 1.50 and 2.25 points are half semester, and classes credited 3 points are full semester. Most classes are graded based on group projects, assignments, participation during the class, and of course there are the classes which require to do an exam. You are obligated to take at least 9 credits but not more than 18. If you take more than 12 credits you get an alumni status. I took 12 credits, 4 classes in the Fall A and 3 in Fall B, and it was very busy. I really recommend not taking more than that.

Tips:
(1) Try to build your classes schedule as soon as you get the Wolverine access. Unlike the Bidding system, their system is opened a few months before the semester starts. Spots in the class are taken fast. (2) Base your decision on other students’ recommendations. (3) Read the syllabus very carefully, check what the grades are based on, how many assignments, readings etc. it’s critical! You don’t want to be surprised in the first class by the work load. You can find previous syllabus in Kresge archive (the most updated one will be given on first class) (4) Most classes are Monday + Wednesday or Tuesday + Thursday, at the same hours. Build your schedule so it won’t be too tight and busy. You’ll need time at home to prepare for class. (5) All exams are taken in the same week. Make sure your exam schedule is not too tight.

The classes that I took:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Class's Name</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Communications</td>
<td>BCOM 530</td>
<td>Positive Business Communications Amy Young 3</td>
<td>The class I learnt from the most. Requires you to be open to reflect and discuss it in class. Readings and homework every class but relatively less demanding than other courses. I Highly recommend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Communications</td>
<td>BCOM 561</td>
<td>Management presentation Nancy A. Kotzian 1.5</td>
<td>Practical course, requires to give presentations in class. It is good for practicing and to overcome the challenge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology &amp; Operations</td>
<td>TO 515</td>
<td>VBA for Excel Hila Etzion 2.25</td>
<td>Basically, learning to code in VBA. Very practical for almost everyone. The Instructor is Israeli and very nice and helpful. I Highly recommend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An easy course, not demanding, academic level was a little bit lower than other courses.

Very interesting and important topics, but very demanding. 3-4 articles + a case to read every week.

Interesting but very demanding course. Participating in class is important part of the grade. A lot of readings and assignments every week. Will recommend only for marketing students, as a last resort..

Accommodation / housing:
There are two types of housing, “on campus” and “off campus”. On campus are dorms, i.e. rooms in buildings that the university owns. As far as I know, exchange students are not eligible for one. Regarding off-campus, it can be private houses offered for rent, or student buildings (short list: University Towers, Landmark, Zaragon, Varsity, 400 Maynard, Foundry loft and more).

The most important thing is to search for an apartment as soon as possible!!! it takes time, and the market is pretty hard. The main problem is that almost no one will offer you short term contract. All the contracts are for a year, and you can’t “break” them. You should look for a sublet, or insist to have a contract for only the 3-5 months. Eventually I stayed at University Towers. I can recommend it because it was sufficient for my needs and the best thing about it is that it’s walking distance from Ross. My recommendation is: always prefer distance from campus over price. It’s really worth it, especially during winter time and when considering the not-so-efficient bus system. I shared a 1 bedroom -1 bathroom with my boyfriend and we paid $1749 per month. That’s a lot, and you can definitely find places for less if you start looking in advance or willing to live further away from central Campus. Of course, it’s cheaper to share an apartment with roommates.

Recommended websites for apartment search: [http://offcampushousing.umich.edu/](http://offcampushousing.umich.edu/), [Zillow.com](http://www.Zillow.com), (don't trust Craigslist!) and also in Facebook groups such as “Housing, Sublets & Parking (Official)”, “Ann Arbor Roommates and Housing”, and more. Of course, you can also
search on Airbnb. I have a lot to share on this section, so if you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Visa:
I didn’t need to issue a visa, please see other students’ reports.

Transportation:
- Buses are free with Mcard (and it’s valid for 5 years, in case you’ll ever be back in Ann Arbor 😊). Their routes are pretty weird, not the most efficient way to take you from one point to another (look at the map and you’ll understand what I mean). Although, the buses are comfortable and not as crowded as in Tel Aviv. University towers, where I stayed, was walking distance from Ross. I used the buses only to get to supermarkets and to the mall.
- Other common ways of transportation are Uber and Lyft. It’s like a taxi, but the advantage is that the price is set in advanced. It’s not too expensive (similar to the prices in Israel) and a lot of times it’s much more comfortable than the bus. Tip: download both and always compare the two! The difference can be significant. Also, open and close the apps a few times when looking, the prices are changing all the time.
- To/from the airport: the closest airport is DTW, on the way to Detroit. As far as I know, there is only one way to get to/from the airport by public transportation. It called The Ride, you can find the timetable here: https://www.theride.org/Services/Airport-Service/Schedules . If you book in advance, one-way ticket cost $12, otherwise it’s $15. The service is very efficient and comfortable. Although- when you first arrive to Ann Arbor I recommend taking a shuttle- it’s much more expensive but it’s better to get in the easiest and fastest way after the 15 hours flight. I took this shuttle: http://www.annarborairportshuttle.net/ . you can also take Uber/lyft to/from the airport- it costs around $30-$40.
- To/from Detroit: the public transportation between the two cities is just awful. There are very few buses during the day, and not in comfortable hours. There’s also a train, again not that comfortable. I was expecting to spend a lot of time in Detroit but eventually visited there only once. If you do decide to go there, rent a car. Otherwise it doesn’t worth it.

Insurance and Health Services:
As a foreign student you are obligated to participate in the university’s insurance plan. They publish the prices in their fact sheet. You can try ask them for a waiver but it’s really rare to get it. For more information, please see other students’ reports.
**Living expenses:**

- **Course pack:** in some classes, students are required to pay for course materials. Costs vary, I bought 2, one for ~$25 and one for ~$80. Also, you might need to purchase books- the easiest and cheapest way is on Amazon, you can also buy in book stores as Ulrich or Barns and Noble.

- **Groceries:** about $100-$150 a week, depends on your budget, food preferences and if you share your groceries with someone or not. In general, the less healthy the product, the cheaper it is. Vegetables, for example, are expensive. Overall, I was surprised to see that prices are relatively similar to Israel.

  I felt that Walmart was the cheapest, but it’s also the farthest from the city (recommended for buying stuff for the house and kitchen). I also liked Kroger. The Ann Arbor people love Meijer (a mid-west chain). Trader Joe’s and Whole Foods are the places to find healthy / organic / kosher food, but it’s also ridiculously much more expensive.

- **Housing:** costs vary, depends on location (closer to central campus = more expensive) and wether you live with roommates or not. Remember to take into account that all places require security deposit (mostly in cash). Pay attention what bills are included in the price. I for example, paid $170 in advance for water, ~$30 a month for electricity, but heating was included.

- **Restaurants / bars:** beer is really cheap. Comparing to other big cities (Chicago, NYC) Ann Arbor is really cheap, thanks to low taxes. Food chains and restaurants near the campus will be cheap, the “regular” ones (for example Mani Osteria) will be as expensive as in Tel Aviv.

- **General:** I can’t say for sure how much I spent, because I shared expenses with my boyfriend, but it was approximately $11,000 including housing and trips to Chicago and NYC, not including insurance and flight from Israel, for a 4 months stay. Don’t be afraid by this number because it’s very individual. I can imagine that in big cities like Chicago and NYC the expenses are much higher, so I’m glad I chose Ann Arbor.

**Food:**

As a foodie who love food and enjoy good food, I was kind of disappointed. Most of the closest restaurants will be “students’ style”, which means fried food, melted cheese in everything etc. The restaurants that are similar to what we are used to in Tel Aviv are in the area of Liberty and Main streets (the more local's area). If you wish to eat healthy or vegetarian/vegan, you’ll find it harder than you think. Ann arbor doesn’t have the variety that NYC offers. In the groceries stores you’ll find almost everything you need, but the tastes are slightly different from what we are used to in Israel.
**My recommended places:** One Bowl (Asian), Hop cat (bar), Mani Osteria (Italian), Tomokun (Korean), Vinology (wine bar, great food), Arbor Brewing Company (pub, great food, reasonably priced), Good time Charlie’s (bar), Fred’s (healthy food), Slurping Turtle (ramen & sushi), Avalon (breakfast)

**Tips:**

- **Weather:** If you attend the Fall semester, bring both short and warm clothes. The secret for surviving the cold is just a very warm good quality coat. Unless you have something really great- buy it there.

- **Activities:** (1) go at least once to an NBA game (Detroit / Chicago / Toronto/ Cleveland are the closest cities. I watched a game in Indianapolis) (2) go at least once to a football game. It’s all about the atmosphere and the audience. The game itself is pretty boring (: (3) If you arrive on August, go kayaking in Argo Park Canoe & Kayak Livery. (4) Nichols Arboretum and Gallup park are really nice places to visit (5) check for music concerts in the cities around.

- **Traveling around:** rent a car and go on a road trip! We rented through Hertz and Enterprise. Ohio is a super cool state, we’ve been to Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland and had a lot of fun. There is Also a comfortable bus to Chicago.

  Try not to miss classes when traveling, and also make sure that the specific weekend is not planned to be too busy. Attendance is mandatory in many classes, and you don’t want to miss assignments (especially when it’s a group work).

- **Cellphone:** I have a very good package in Israel so I didn’t buy a local sim. My boyfriend bought one from AT&T for $40 a month ($50 when not on Autopay).

- **Finance:** I did a little research and eventually opened a bank account in PNC bank. To be honest, I could stay with my Israeli international credit card. It only helps if you need to make frequent money transfers inside the US (for housing, for example)

- **Studying:** the most important tip: always be prepared for the next class. Read all the articles that are mandatory. Most classes are at the form of discussion, and if the professor ask you for your opinion- you don’t want to be the one who doesn’t know the answer.

**General experience**- it was a great experience and I highly recommend you to go for it! Even if you’re not single, even if it means to leave your job (you can also ask for an unpaid vacation). It’s totally worth it. It’s a great opportunity to discover different cultures, meet new people and learn from the best. It’s also a good “time off” to get a perspective and to come back to Israel with new energies😊

*Go Blue!*