

Travel Report
Daniel Nielsen
Leiden University (Campus The Hague)
The Hague
The Netherlands
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International Studies Europastudier

The Hague

The Hague is the political capital of The Netherlands, making the city appear rather high-class and most Dutch people I talked to, branded it as a city for liberals. My impression although was a cosmopolitan city similar to Rotterdam in architecture, the old trams and remaining canals in the old town provides the familiar feeling of real “dutchness”. Compared to Leiden, The Hague is not a student city with student bars and parties, although events was arranged weekly or every 14th day. International Studies is the only program taught in The Hague by Leiden University, and it is a program of 500-700 students roughly, giving plenty opportunity to socialize with fellow students. The Royal Conservatory in Den Hague is a great addition to the student life in The Hague as well, as the music students enrich the local bars and pubs with live music almost every day, everything from Jazz to alternative Rock.

Leiden University (Campus Den Haag)

The University of Leiden is buildings scattered over the most of Leiden, but with an information desk about 10minutes walk from Leiden Centraal Station, it is a beautiful city to visit during Orientation Week, however hard to get familiarized with when the whole semester is taught in The Hague. The Hague Campus has numerous locations, all with illogical abbreviations making it quite a task to find around. The semester is split in seminars and tutorials, and every student is assigned a tutorial group, however exchange students are assigned multiple, for social reasons. Almost all seminars were taught in Nieuwe Kerk (New Church) giving a rather special atmosphere, and most tutorials were given in the building above Den Haag Centraal Station. Compared to Lund University, with quarter term schedules, International Studies were five courses taught from start to end semester each with one seminar every week of two hours, while correlating tutorials were every second week. During my stay I had up to ten professors or doctors and ten tutors, all with personal opinion on which title was appropriate, some were easy-going and others rather strict.

Arrival

As international student it was compulsory to attend the Orientation Week which also included the registration day. A whole week of activities where you get the opportunity of getting to know other

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international students, through the daily events or evening parties. Great fun with very helpful and cheering guides that will show you most of what you need to know before semester start.

Courses

Grading: 1-10, whereas 5.5 is a pass. All courses have 2 exams, one midterm and one endterm. Your end grade will be calculated percentage of participation, presentations, endpaper and exams. So your exams counts as roughly 40-50% of the final grade.

Introduction to Area Studies:

Great course with very energetic professor. The course works around “othering” mechanism and gives multiple examples from Colonialism, West vs East, Ethnicity/Race and Gender. Very enriching course, to understand how complex power relations in society have been and still is.

Global History:

Very interesting subject and great attempt to compress the world history in one course. However, as the four professors declared on the first day, it is simply not possible to do, what they set to. So this caused some frustration for students, although personally I feel the course matched very well with Introduction to Area Studies.

Configuring the World:

“Two course, course” Configuring the World, was an interesting attempt to combine statistics and economic history, poverty, fragmentation and gender. The course was a two part course, one being the usual lectures + tutorials + exam, while the other part only consisted of a tutorial every 14th day with various exercises in excel to extract data and create graphs which later would be examined by an individual power point project where the student attempts to “Configure the World” with a specific case study.

Sociolinguistics:

The most descriptive course of them all, requiring a lot of learning-by-heart. The professor in this course were one of the best in being structured and concise. The course introduce you to Sociolinguistics which did not match very well with rest of the course in most cases, although, it did

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give some in depth knowledge of how power relations appear through language between classes, groups, gender and ethnicity. The examination could be criticized for not allowing the student to think “outside the box”, by for example applying the terms to own experience or other cases than the book.

Academic Reading & Writing:

One of the most useful courses considered it pretty much prepared me for my upcoming thesis writing when I returned back home. The course and the area in itself suffers greatly from being opinion-based rather than actually scientific, so prepare for rewriting multiple times.

Workload was overall double what I experience in Lund, as well as for lectures and tutorials at least being four times as much.

Housing

Housing through the University is highly limited and I would suggest betting your money on finding own accommodation, from what I was told by fellow students, the accommodation is not near worth the price either, I used Housinganywhere.com, which will provide a safe booking service which the company charge 50% of the first month’s rent for, I was greatly satisfied with my accommodation which was 450 euro a month so a little higher than average in Lund I believe.

Sparetime

Beertime as the Dutch beer is great and cheap, the nightlife is similar to Sweden where everything closes around 02.00-03.00. There’s a great beach 20min in tram from Centrum where the Chinese newyears is held with incredible fireworks. Rotterdam, Leiden, Delft, 15-20min by train from Hague, is all three very astonishing cities with an incredible history.

Costs

Roughly the same, although junk food and beer is easily 1/3 of the prices in Lund.