National Taiwan University
Spring 2016

Group picture with exchange friends at the Dutch built Fort Zeelandia, Tainan city

Date: Spring semester, February to June 2016
Year: 3
Major: Biomedical Physiology & Kinesiology
Going on exchange has been one of the most rewarding and exciting experiences in my undergraduate career so far. I made many friends from all over the world, learned so much more than I imagined and brought back home with me countless memories and stories.

Academically I was able to take classes with very disciplined and talented students and learn with some of the most accomplished professors in Asia. It was very interesting to see the different teaching methodologies the Taiwanese professors used. I found that classes tend to be smaller at NTU compared to my home university. I really liked the way NTU organized their general courses for their students, common courses such as English, general chemistry and calculus were organized into very small classes by majors. As a result, students within the same major have much more overlapped classes and grew a sense of community and pride for their major as a result. Universities at Taiwan often have performances organized by students of a particular major every year. These performances are called “a night with (insert name of major here)” Their posters can be seen around campus closer the date of performance. I went to night with public health and finance and they were both quite well made.

For those with a Mandarin background or would like to learn Mandarin, NTU is a great school to attend. It offers a specialized semester long Mandarin program for exchange students.

While on exchange, make sure to take advantage of Taiwan’s cheap travel costs. Traveling with friends has been very memorable. I will mention more on traveling later on.

**Getting To Taipei**
The flights from Vancouver to Taipei are quite frequent and easy to find, I found a direct flight that took me to Taoyuan international airport in about 13 hours. Just like how YVR is not actually in Vancouver, Taipei’s international airport isn’t in Taipei either but is about 45 mins away by car. If you arrive on move in day, NTU will provide shuttle service straight from the airport to the dorm. There are also shuttle services from Taoyuan airport to Taipei city.

**Getting around the city**

Taipei’s subway system (the MRT) is very developed and very convenient. You can buy a one way ticket or an easycard; which is a loadable fare card that you scan on your way in and out of the station.

Note that the student ID NTU gives you in week 1 is also an easycard. You will need to take it to an MRT station and load it. There is a $100 NTD (New Taiwanese Dollar) deposit when you load your easycard, however it allows you to run into the negatives.

You’ll also notice that there are orange bikes on racks outside certain MRT stations. Those bikes can be rented using your easycard, but you’ll need to link your easycard to a local cellphone number.

![Ubikes](image_url)

**Accommodation/move in procedure**

When?
On the NTU student calendar, it should say that move in day is the Wednesday before first week of school. For a while I was convinced that we can only move in after that day. Later on I found out that students are allowed to move in before that day. I moved in about a week before NTU’s move in day and had a few days to explore the city and campus. I would highly recommend doing so.

Proximity to campus and price

The dorm I lived in for the duration of the stay is called the Shui Yuan Prince Dorm, it is situated about less that 100 m from campus. I chose the twin en suite option which meant I shared a bedroom and washroom with a roommate. Rent was 4900ntd a month. Many of my exchange friends chose the private bedroom and bathroom suite instead at 9800 ntd/month

Procedure

You should receive an email from NTU in regards to your dormitory assignment within a month of receiving your acceptance letter. The dormitory will ask you to wire a confirmation fee worth 1 month’s rent. When you arrive at the dormitory to check in, they will ask you to fill out some paperwork before you can move in.

NOTE: There's someone at the desk 24/7 so you can move into the dorm at anytime of the day.

Electricity of your dorm is paid using a loadable chip card that can be purchased from the front desk. It works the same way as a hotel key card.

Finance/Budget

For living expenses in Taipei, I spent around 20,000 ntd a month; roughly 820 Canadian Dollars. This includes dormitory fees, school supplies, food, trips, and transportation and more; everything except tuition/student fees at SFU and the flight to Taipei and back.

In terms food, I spent about 450NTD a day.
A weekend trip to somewhere in Taiwan is roughly 3500-6000NTD depending on where you go and what you do. For accommodation, I chose the double suite (bedroom and bathroom shared with a roommate), which was 4900NTD/month.

**Academics**

As the Stanford/MIT of Taiwan, students take academics very seriously at NTU. It is a very academically supportive and motivating environment to learn. I found that the discipline of my classmates and peers rubbed off on me.

Note: on the student calendar, it states that there’s a midterm and finals week. However exams don’t have to and often will not fall on those dates.

A regular degree student at NTU will take about 20 ~ 30 NTU credit, whereas exchange students take around 15.

There are courses offered in both English and Mandarin. If you’re preparing to take courses taught in mandarin, make sure you are comfortable writing coherent paragraphs for an assignment or exam.

Note: courses in the department of medicine, pharmacy and public health are held at another campus about 15 mins away. There is a free school-run shuttle from main campus that takes you there. You can also get there by taking the MRT (Taipei’s light rail).

**Dining**

Taipei is truly a foodie’s heaven, one thing I’m definitely going to miss about going to NTU. Also on campus one can buy lunch for less than 100ntd (around 4 dollars Canadian)

Some of my favorite places to eat outside of campus:

阿妹麵店 (Traditional Taiwanese noodle stand)
100, Taipei City, Zhongzheng District, Section 2, Nanchang Rd, 105
02 2364 4732
I usually spend roughly 140ntd for lunch for a full lunch

京御 Teppanyaki
231, New Taipei City, Xindian District, Minquan Rd, 10
02 8665 0199
This place is a bit pricier at 250ntd+

築地鮮魚 (Japanese/Sushi/Sashimi)
100, Taipei City, Zhongzheng District, Section 1, Chongqing S Rd, 47號
02 2382 5788
One of my favorite Japanese places in the city. I usually get their sashimi don for about 250ntd

(Second Floor Café)
No. 7, Alley 9, Lane 316, Section 3, Roosevelt Rd, Zhongzheng District, Taipei City, 100
02 2364 1666
A really nice and cozy café about 2 mins from campus and literally across the street if you live in the ShuiYuan Prince Dorms
They serve really good breakfast all day long.

Phone/Communication

As some phones are compatible with Taiwan’s mobile networks and some do not, make sure to bring your backup phones if you have one.
You’ll find that minutes and data costs much less Vancouver. I bought a prepaid (and also loadable) sim card from ChungHwa Telecom. Calling minutes was about 3 ntd/minute. For mobile data they have various plans, the one I’ve been using is 3.2G of data for 200 ntd.

Location of the one I went to (ChungHwa Telecom):

No. 76, Section 4, Roosevelt Rd, Zhongzheng District, Taipei City, 100
Right outside #1 Exit of Gongguan MRT station

Traveling

There are plenty to see and do in Taipei city. If Taipei city isn’t enough to satisfy your wanderlust, there are many other places in Taiwan that will.
If you love beaches and watersports like I do, make sure you visit the Penghu Archipelago off the west coast of Taiwan. Penghu is known for its beautiful beaches
and coral reefs. It is accessible by plane or by boat. Another option is the town of Kenting to the south of Taiwan; also known for beaches and watersports.

Another city I really enjoyed visiting is Tainan; which literally translates to "south of Taiwan". The history of Tainan can be traced back to the 16th century. Within its history are forts left behind by the Dutch East India Company.

Fort Zeelandia, Tainan City
Jibei Island, Penghu

Beach day with NTU Judo club
Student organized performance: Night With Public Health