

Peyton Incoming Podcast Transcript

Chris Bonham (CB): Hello folks, and welcome to this latest edition of our Study Abroad podcast. I'm Chris Bonham from the study abroad office team, and I'm joined today by a student from one of our partners in the United States of America, who has been on our study abroad program for the past couple of months. So over to said student to introduce yourself. Tell us a bit about yourself.

Peyton (P): Hi. My name is Peyton. I'm from Kentucky, specifically the Louisville area of Kentucky. I'm a current senior in American lingo. I guess technically, that would be a third year across the pond. I study English and creative writing, and, yeah, I'm happy to be here. Chris.

CB: It's lovely to have you with us, Peyton. So which university are you studying at? In the States?

P: That's right. I'm based at Centre College. It's located in Danville, Kentucky. So center name is a bit self-explanatory. It's said to be in the center of Kentucky. To be honest, as the state lines have been revamped over the last couple hundred years. It's a bit further down from center, but it kind of gets the point across if you're able to picture the state, that's where we kind of are center of it. No grounds.

CB: So you've been with us since September. You've been taking sort of various, um, English literature creative writing related modules here with us, which I think we'll talk about a little bit more later on. But first of all, what I'd like to ask is why Reading? Why? Come and join us at the University of Reading.

P: So that's an interesting question. Um, it's kind of funny. I've been asked that by a lot of Reading students as well. Um, they tend to go by Reading, like, with the more kind of confused sound to it. I've been interested in going to the United Kingdom ever since I was really young. And when looking at Centres sort of choices, I kind of wanted the experience of attending a university in the United Kingdom as opposed to being on a sort of, I guess you could say, a touristy, exchange program, going with a couple professors, a large group of students, and like going from one point of interest to another and spending a day there just was not particularly my thing. I was a lot more interested in the sort of freedom that was offered there. And the University of Reading not only offered that for me, because I would say that Reading is a good central hub, that you could easily get to places such as Oxford and other areas of the United Kingdom to travel in. But it's also just a town that has a bit of history to. It has enough of stuff to do in it that it's enough fun to be had. And I think also when I was selecting places, I did a lot of research into the sort of courses that were offered at the University of Reading, and I found that the stuff that is being taught

here is not really taught at Centre to the extent that I would enjoy it. I was really interested in courses such as American Graphic Novels, which isn't had. It's not something that I could take over in center. So the course selection and the amount of stuff to do in writing were like the two biggest things. And also the freedom of being able to attend a university were really interesting to me.

CB: Grand. I know some of our listeners, perhaps in the US, would be very familiar with that faculty led programme where you come over for a shorter period and you then very much stick within your home university group, going around exploring, learning. But, as you say, perhaps not having the freedom to go out and do things yourself, maybe take a longer time to learn about and appreciate the country as you have done over this semester that you've been with us and also meeting other people. Because I think you've met people from all over the place, haven't you, when you've been here?

P: Yeah. So, like, a couple of my closest friends are from Australia. Like the closest friends that I've made here. They're from Australia. And I've also met some people from Italy. And, uh, funnily enough, tonight I'm getting together with a couple of the Italian students, and they're teaching me how to make carbonara properly. It turns out I've been making it wrong for a long time. I've been using the wrong cheese, and so I'm very excited to have that tonight and learn how to properly make it.

CB: Food is a fantastic bonding experience, absolutely, but I will refer back to a favorite phrase in our office, though, that we use to describe a lot of things. It's about comparing Reading to your home university. It's not right. It's not wrong. It's just different. And perhaps we can come to that conclusion with your and your Italian friends' carbonara recipes. Yeah. Not right, not wrong, just different. Right?

P: Yes, totally.

CB: So we said about the American Graphic Literature that you've been taking as a module while you've been with us. Has that been your favorite module then?

P: Ooh, ooh, that's like that's like asking to pick a favorite child. I don't know. I guess, like, I love all the modules that I'm taking currently. I'm taking that I'm doing a creative writing masterclass in poetry, and I'm also taking British government and politics. And admittedly, the British government and politics is my blind spot. But I'm finding that I'm enjoying all three of those courses almost equally. I think I spend a lot more time, though, talking a lot about the American graphic novels class, mainly because in my career goals, I want to be a comic book editor, comic book writer, working with companies such as Marvel and DC and so kind of taking a course that's like an English literature course based within that sort of genre is making me learn a lot more about the theory behind the, the stuff that I'm reading all the time. So I think that that one's my favorite. I guess in terms of ranking, it would have

to be that one, followed by the creative writing one and the British Government one. But truth be told, they switch day by day. I tell you what though, every morning that I wake up for a class, I am excited for that day just because the faculty here, the professors that I've had, have been wonderful and always willing to help. Just been a really great time here.

CB: Fantastic. Yeah, it's lovely to hear that you wake up excited for classes, because as this is a Study Abroad Programme, obviously there are other opportunities, maybe to travel and explore and learn how to make a different carbonara recipe. You are here to study you and get some grades to take back home with you. So no, that's really lovely to hear. Putting aside perhaps this evening's carbonara making exploits, what would perhaps been your be your highlight so far? Of your time on the Study Abroad Programme with us at reading?

P: Ooh, this has got to be such a weird anecdote. But when I went to Edinburgh on a little short holiday for just a couple of days, um, me and a couple of my friends went up to Edinburgh, Scotland, and, you know, we got to see stuff. I've been studying a lot about travel in general, and I guess you would quantify this as like guidebook travel. So, you know, you have a little guidebook top ten things to do in Edinburgh, Scotland. And, you know, we're going through the list. We're doing stuff like, you got to go to this, to the castle, or you got to go and try to try and climb, Arthur's... Arthur's head? I might be totally missing that.

CB: Seat.

P: Yeah. Arthur's Seat. Yes. A couple other things like that, but when it was nearing the end of the night, and, I'm not typically like, a pub going kind of person, but we went to this one pub that had live music and, hearing songs from the sort of Scottish land. Song in the Scottish tongue with instruments and everybody kind of strumming along. It was this sort of moment to me that I will look back on for years to come and say that that's probably one of my favorite moments, was just hearing a live music being performed in a place that is not of my own home, of my own origin. And I know that's just such a weird thing to say, but it's it always sticks out to me every time I talk to people back home. But that's the one story I keep telling. So, yeah, I'm happy to share that story here.

CB: It's your travels that have taken you beyond reading and exploring the wider UK. As we sometimes joke in our office, Reading is a good place to get out of and go and explore. Good base, as you mentioned a bit earlier. So I think my final question for you, Peyton, is, what hints and tips do you have for future Study Abroad Programme students?

P: So I'm coming. I'm coming from an American background. So if any Americans are listening, get a fan night one. It'll be very warm in your room, and there's no air conditioning of sorts to kind of, turn on and fix up the heat in your room. So be sure to get

a fan is probably number one. And number two is: don't buy adapters from Amazon. Get your sort of plugs and stuff here because there's are there are certain plugs that are like approved, that when you buy on Amazon are not the right plugs in reality. So those are my two biggest tips, I guess are very, very comfort based. And then, you know, try the American fast food that is there. You know, here at Reading, there's, you know, McDonald's, Burger King, Subway, your typical stuff. There's even a Wendy's, and, you know, try those. But there are so many other food options here that you could eat at. Like, I feel like you could eat at one different restaurant every night for the next for the however many months that you're here, and you'll find something new and you'll find something that you enjoy. Today I went to one place and I tried fried calamari for the first time, and I'm not the biggest fish person. I'm not the biggest, like anything that comes from the sea. But it was amazing. It was really good. So, yeah, I'm a foodie. If y'all can't tell. So, yeah.

CB: No, grand and I will say your tips are very practical for those first few days. There there are lots of places within Reading where you can get US to UK plug adapters. You might want to pick up one at the airport when you arrive in country. There'll be plenty of shops selling them. Once you get into the airport, though, you might pay that sort of airport premium, like you pay on a lot of things for at airports. But, yeah, we've got all sorts of food in Reading, all sorts of drink options. You can, as Peyton said, really explore lots of different foods here. I think the one thing I will say though, to that is based on what a few other folks from the states have said over the years is that you can't really get good Mexican food in the UK, I think that's the one gap that we perhaps have. We do have a Taco Bell, I think there is a Chipotle in London. But it's not of the same caliber as what you might be useful used to, if you like your burritos and other Mexican delicacies. So Peyton, thank you so much for sharing your experiences and insights of the study abroad program from the past few months. If any folks listening have any questions about joining us at Reading, please feel free to send myself and colleagues and email to studyabroad@reading.ac.uk. You access our website: just search study abroad at Reading. You can find an option to book an appointment, with myself or one of my colleagues for some online advising at any point on your study abroad journey to us at Reading. So thanks again, Peyton. Thank you, folks, for listening. Take care and I will see you at the next one.

P: Bye.