

My time in France was greatly formative to both my French and my curiosity for international relations. The experience shaped me in that it grew my desires to further my education in international affairs, and to study abroad in College. The scenery was breathtaking and the slow moments of the trips such as the hikes, painting in the garden, were enjoyable, but by far the academic courses offered made this trip deeply special to me. I was able to learn from amazing professors such as Dr. Angela Kachuyevski who helped to expand my knowledge on international relations and conflict resolutions. I was able to improve my French, learn more about French culture, and gain a better understanding of world affairs.

During my time in Talloire I was able to improve my French immensely. As a little girl I would always speak French as it is a very prominent language in my home country of Haiti. Gaining the opportunity to re-learn all of the French I had forgotten brought back wonderful memories from my childhood. I was in the beginner class where we were taught basic verbs, useful phrases, and eventually we were able to combine all that we had learned to converse with one another. Our French learning was not exclusive to the classroom, but rather us students were given an immersive experience from walking tours to living with the host family. The guided walking tours were given in French and discussed the rich history of Haute- Savoie. They were incredibly conducive to my French learning as I was able to match up the words Professor Bernard was saying to the visuals he presented us with, such as the stunning lake, or the inspired architecture. Spending time with my host family gave me the opportunity to listen to how the French communicate with one another outside of a formal setting. We would try to converse in French at the dinner table which pushed me out of my comfort zone in the best possible way. The

experience grounded me in the French language and I plan on continuing my efforts to become more proficient in the language

Living with a host family greatly increased my appreciation for French culture. What I found to be the most beautiful aspect was their appreciation for quality family time. We would have family dinners every night that would last for two to three hours. These moments left a deep impression on me because I had never experienced such a thing back in America. I felt the sense of love and appreciation that each family member had for one another, which was beautiful. I was also able to see how much the French focus on the environment and conservation. This was a big shift from the U.S. because while we do small things that focus on the environment in France there is a large emphasis on making deliberate environmentally conscious choices. These choices include taking shorter showers, taking public transportation, growing food in a sustainable way, all of which contribute to the beauty of the country.

By far the aspect of the program that touched me the most was international relations. The class was taught by Dr. Angela Kachuyevski, an international relations scholar who specializes in conflict resolutions. The course was mainly focused on 4 theories (realism, liberalism, constructivism, neoconservatism) through which we dissected various international conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine. While I had some familiarity with these theories, the course greatly expanded my understanding which I am most grateful for. I realized how important it is to have a grasp on theory when discussing international relations because now when I am listening to the news or political pundits I can better understand their worldview. Formal instruction was not the only aspect of the course, during our time in class we were able to partake in two simulations. The first was a Model United Nations simulation with the topic being whether or not climate change had become a security issue. All students were required to

write a position paper and as the security council we were tasked with coming up with an answer to this question through debate and a final resolution draft. This debate put me right at ease, because of my experience with Model U.N. I was able to articulate my points, hear from my peers, and in the end we were able to draft a resolution. The second simulation focused on U.S. foreign policy, specifically whether NATO should expand. We traveled back in time to 1994 when this decision was being decided, with each student playing various roles in the President's cabinet. This part of the program was incredibly engaging as I had never participated in such a simulation before. I played the role of Secretary of defense and argued that NATO should not be expanded. In the end the President did decide to expand, but it remained an opportunity for me to practice critical thinking and view an issue from different perspectives.

The course culminated in a discussion about the War in Ukraine. This was unlike any other discussion I had on this topic as Dr. Kachuyeski is Russian and spent time there right before the collapse of the Soviet Union, and her husband is Ukrainian. Because of these factors, she was able to give me a more perceptive outlook on the War in Ukraine and why the events of the war unfolded the way they did. We were able to apply the theories we had learned throughout the course to argue why we believed Putin had invaded Russia.

The international relations course also had us visiting the United Nations center in Geneva. I was incredibly moved by this trip as I have aspirations to work for the United Nations someday. Sitting where diplomats made world- altering decisions, walking the same halls as heads of state only solidified my goal. During my time in the course I challenged myself to think outside the box, and I was given a more concrete way to view the geo-political landscape through the usage of theories.

In conclusion, the Tufts Summit Program was a dream come true for me. Having an education with the backdrop of the most beautiful place gave me the opportunity to see how large the world really is. There is so much out there to explore and so much knowledge to be gained from different cultures and places that I have decided to pursue study abroad in college. I am deeply appreciative of this experience for how it shaped my view of the world and for giving me the confidence I need that I am making the right decisions about my future.