

# Globe Trotters



## Destination: Finland



Junior Political Science major, Elizabeth Ruf is currently studying abroad in Finland. Here is her experience thus far:

“What a whirlwind my study abroad experience has been so far. I’ve been in Finland for just about two months and it seems like I just got here yesterday! I cannot believe how quickly time has flown by. So far this has been the experience of a lifetime for me, and I am so glad that I decided to study abroad during my undergraduate years at UNCA. Since arriving, I

think the two biggest things that have shocked me have been the language barrier and the weather.

Finnish is a very hard language; I decided to take a course in it so that I could learn a little more about the language since I knew nothing coming into my travels. As difficult as it has been to learn the basics, I have enjoyed taking the course and am finding it easier to communicate since I’ve learned to form basic sentences. The climate is very different from the climate in Asheville. It is so incredibly cold here! I knew I was in for a bit of a shock, but I didn’t think it would be anything compared to this. I have felt temperatures as cold as -40F during my stay here, and now that it is starting to warm up, I think

that 19F is a warm temperature!

Other than the difficulties I have faced, I have loved every second of being in a different country. I have met so many wonderful and kind people from all over the world since arriving. I can honestly say that some of them will be friends long after I return to the states. I have had an opportunity to travel to Lapland and then to some other countries while studying in Finland. I have plans to travel to St. Petersburg, Stockholm, London, and hopefully a few other countries. It is hard to believe my time in Finland is almost halfway over, but if the rest of the trip is similar to what I have experienced so far, then I cannot wait for my journey to continue!”

## Abroad in Asia: City University of Hong Kong

Peter Hunt, a sophomore here at UNCA, is presently studying abroad in Hong Kong. The following is what he had to say about his host country: “Before I left I was told, ‘Hong Kong is like New York City, except the weather is better and it is a lot cleaner.’ This is true. I am presently at the City Univer-

sity of Hong Kong and loving every second of it. My classes are interesting and challenging. The food is mouthwatering and inexpensive. Most importantly, the people here are extremely friendly and willing to help out whenever needed. This trip is breaking old bounda-

ries and stereotypes in a way that only international travel can.

I hope that you will have the opportunity to have a similar international experience. I encourage you to not worry about the details too much...it will all turn out better than you thought possible.”

### Special points of interest:

- FINLAND
- EXPLORING FRANCE WITH ALEXANDRA PONTON
- FEATURED GLOBAL  
AMBASSADOR: MARCUS SOUTHERN
- DISCOVERING THE NETHERLANDS WITH MARY ELLEN DENDY

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## Photos from Abroad!

The students featured in this issue of Globe Trotters have submitted some phenomenal photos for the newsletter. Here are a few extra that didn't fit in near the articles!



Mary Ellen Dendy  
The Netherlands



Elizabeth Ruf  
Finland



Alexandra Ponton  
Angers, France



Peter Hunt  
Hong Kong

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*The UNC Asheville Study Abroad/Study Away department serves to broaden students' horizons and expand their educational opportunities through international and domestic travel. We work with UNC Asheville students who want to visit another country or state, as well as with students from other countries who wish to visit UNC Asheville as part of an exchange program. We offer traditional programs of study in which students attend foreign universities, as well as UNC Asheville faculty-led programs and international service learning opportunities. Students have the option of studying abroad or away for a semester, academic year, or summer. No matter what your particular interests, goals, or budget might be, you are sure to find a program that works for you through the UNC Asheville Study Abroad/Study Away department.*

**We're on the Web!**  
<http://www.unca.edu/studyabroad>

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## Chester, England: My Journey to the UK

UNCA junior Heidi Hendrix studied at Chester University in England this past Fall. The following is an account of her journey:

“I took classes in my major, Psychology, but also had the opportunity to branch out and take introductory photography, a criminology, and a European studies course. The university was a wonderful place to study, with challenging classes and great professors/staff.

I lived in a house with ten other girls and had one as my roommate. She was from the Republic of Georgia and the

rest of the girls in the house were from England. I thoroughly loved being immersed into a new culture, like witnessing the differences between American and British English, while also having the opportunity to learn about the Republic of Georgia - a country I had never been taught about. I learned something new about other cultures every day.

Living in a country where I could easily travel to mainland Europe was also a plus. In my four months living in Chester, England, I was able to travel to Wales,

Ireland, Germany, The Netherlands, Switzerland, and France. Transportation was amazing and gave me the ability to travel wherever my heart desired.

I wouldn't change my experience of studying abroad for anything. It was a fantastic escape and first hand learning like no other.”

To learn more about UNCA direct exchanges, visit:  
[www.unca.edu/studyabroad](http://www.unca.edu/studyabroad)

## Discovering The Netherlands

Senior Mary Ellen Dendy recently studied abroad in The Netherlands. Here is her story: “When I left my home in North Carolina for a semester abroad at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, I could not have known what the semester had in store for me. As a first-semester senior at UNC-Asheville, I had spent three years forming friendships and finding my niche, only to find myself at a new university in a new city in a new country. From the first day I arrived in Holland, and my suitcase did not, I knew I was embarking on an experience that would test me in ways I had never imagined. In the Dutch educational system, students are expected to ask for help when they need it, but to otherwise be self-sufficient. As I arrived at the short-term housing rental company, I was handed my keys and a set of directions-to the outer suburbs where I would live in a town called

Diemen-and was then told to ‘have a nice term’ and sent on my way. I could not help but think back to move-in day at UNC Asheville when a squadron of smiling university faculty was ready to help me move my belongings, and were waiting to help me find my way around campus, and feel at ease in my new setting. The University of Amsterdam is situated in buildings throughout the city with no central campus, thus from day one I was expected to figure out the public transit system, find my class buildings, procure my own food and find my own friends.

At first I was incredibly overwhelmed. UNC Asheville's close-knit, all inclusive campus and abundance of activities make it easy to integrate yourself into the college lifestyle quickly, yet in Holland I was expected to create my own campus. As my semester con-

tinued I began to understand just how much my Dutch experience had taught me about myself. Facing new challenges academically and socially and find that I could overcome them gave me a new understanding of my personal strength. I found friends, was academically successful, and was able to experience the beauty of Amsterdam by bicycle every morning on my commute to class. My semester abroad is something I will treasure forever, not simply because of the great souvenirs and photographs I brought home, but for the newfound understanding of my own abilities. As I face the end of my time at UNCA and my inevitable leap into the “real world,” I take that leap with a sense that I am capable of handling whatever life has in store. For that I must say “dank u wel” to the University of Amsterdam and my time in Holland.”



Mary Ellen Dendy in marshes of the north coast in Pieterburen, The Netherlands

## Global Ambassadors Program

The 2010—2011 academic year marks the second year of the UNCA Study Abroad/ Study Away and the Center for Diversity Education's Global Ambassador (GA) program. This program is a free service that connects UNCA students with members of the community and area schools. GAs are typically UNCA students who have lived in another country for three months or longer or current international students attending UNCA. GAs typically give presentations to students who range from kindergarten age through 12th grade. These presentations are

designed to complement the K-12 students' standard lesson plans. Occasionally, however, GAs are called on to share their international experiences with groups of adults.

Global Ambassador Marcus Southern, studied abroad in Germany for ten months. He has a great interest in education and has done volunteer work with kids since he was sixteen. Marcus finds the Global Ambassador program's in class experience to be not only "fun, but also valuable." He states, "My year abroad was incredible

and eye-opening. I got to travel to 13 countries in Europe, spent New Year's Eve in Prague, my spring break in Rome and watched Germany beat Ghana to clinch its bid in the World Cup...It was this richness of the experience that I want to convey to the children and adults I present to."

For more information on the Global Ambassador program, visit

[www.unca.edu/studyabroad](http://www.unca.edu/studyabroad)



Global Ambassador  
Marcus Southern  
Germany

## Exploring France with Alexandra Ponton

Right now, senior Alexandra Ponton is studying abroad in Angers, France. Here is her account:

"Studying abroad is an interesting thing...you think you know what you're getting yourself into, but really you have no idea. Study abroad is characterized by a series of ups and downs, while I'd like to just share the ups, I think it would be key about telling you about what surviving the downs has been for me.

Welcome to Angers. And in particular la Chouaniere. The neighborhood where I live is really nice. I live right by the lac de Maine Nautique, which is a wide lake where people go sailing, kayaking, fishing, camping, etc. It's fun to explore this area because it's so beautiful. I saw horses there the other day and you have a great view of the lake.

Yesterday, my best friend and I took bus #6 into town to meet up with some friends. I got there at 9:30am just as planned, and they got there at 10:10am just as not planned. While this was a little annoying since I had gotten up early, it did allow for me to do a little exploring on my own.

Exploring turned out to be me finding myself in the middle of my first French manifestation (protest)! Unfortunately, I didn't quite understand what the people were protesting but it was definitely a party.

There were revolutionary songs played over speakers, banners, people dressed in Superman outfits, and a blimp.

Luckily for me the market was right next to the manifestation, so I got to walk through the aisles and explore all the different sights and

scents of fruits, vegetables, cheeses, and fish. All the while listening to the protestors play Britney Spears and Lady Gaga.

I really enjoyed the market and felt my hunger steadily increase as I made my way through the aisles. I made it a goal for next weekend to come back and buy something there.

For the rest of the day, I hung out with my friends all around town and got to meet their host parents. At 7:50pm I went to meet up with dear old bus number 6 and headed back home."

For more information on studying abroad in France, visit:

[www.unca.edu/studyabroad](http://www.unca.edu/studyabroad)



Photo taken by  
Alexandra Ponton  
France