

A dark blue vertical bar on the left side of the page, with a blue arrow pointing right from its center, partially overlapping the name.

Cody Johnsen-Duquaine

Majors: Accounting and Finance

Minor: Spanish

Sites of Experience: Valladolid, Spain; Germany, Austria, France, Andorra, and Belgium

Dates of Experience: January 2015 – May 2015

Graduation Date: Spring 2017

Support from UW-Eau Claire:

Scott Vander Sanden in the amount of \$500.00

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Hello, my name is Cody Johnsen-Duquaine and I am currently a senior at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. I am a double major Accounting and Finance student with a minor in Spanish. During the spring semester of 2015, I was fortunate enough to have the experience of studying abroad in Valladolid, Spain for almost five months. While abroad I traveled throughout the southern part of Europe. I visited multiple cities in Spain, France, Germany, Andorra, Austria, and Belgium. It is definitely amazing to see the cultural difference in each country as well as different parts of a country. Growing up I knew that I wanted to travel and see Europe, but being from a disadvantaged background, I saw hopes of this dream dwindled. While this trip was not just about pleasure, schooling went very well. The professors at the University of Valladolid are very caring and teach not only the information in books, but also life lessons. While abroad, I took classes in art, history, grammar, geography, literature, culture, and oral expression. The classes were nice because it is not just about Spanish grammar like it is in the United States. The classes allowed students to experience the culture of the country in the classroom besides the experiences during travel. I feel that this experience was a once in a lifetime experience that I definitely would suggest to anyone thinking about studying abroad in another country. The friends and the memories that I have made over the past 5 months will be something that I can tell people about for the next 50 years.

While abroad, I had to change my habits that I was used to in order to truly fit in with the culture. In Valladolid, the people eat lunch at 2:30 and supper at 9:30. This is much later than what most Americans are used to. At first it was a little strange to me, not because of the times, but because the meals are sit down meals with the family. Growing up, I normally ate my food on my own as I was usually busy with sports and work until at least 10:00 p.m. I had never

really had a nice sit down meal where the family tells about their day. Walking everywhere also showed me a difference in the culture. The city had 300,000 people, but because of lack of parking throughout Europe, everyone walked around the city unless they really need to drive a car. I can see why the people in Europe are healthier than what most Americans are because of the better food they eat, as well as the daily exercise they participate in. A third thing that surprised me about the Spanish culture was the differences in the people throughout the nation. The people of Spain differ in how they view of the government and how they view themselves compared to the rest of the nation. It is very similar to how many people of Texas view themselves as an independent area compared to being part of the United States. I would have not known about the culture differences in Spain had I not visited and lived in the culture.

I feel like my understanding of global systems, institutions, and relationships of power have drastically increased because of the culture class I took while studying abroad. The class taught us about the structure of the school systems in Spain and what they studied. In that class we saw how the structure is more complex than most structures of schools in the United States. Also, the political system of Spain was explained in this class as well. Although most Americans wouldn't immediately say there is a good relationship with Spain, it does exist. The United States has had a pretty good relationship with Spain since the 1960s when we had military bases in the country to help us during the Vietnam War and Korean War. If the two countries did not see eye to eye on issues, chances are there would not be a study abroad program in that particular country.

The Spanish-American War is one example how a decision that the United States made that impacted Spain. The U.S. battleship, USS Maine, was sunk near Havana, Cuba in 1898. The

United States blamed Spain for this problem which resulted in the war. The United States quickly won because of the strong navy. The Treaty of Paris was signed after resulting in Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines becoming territories of the United States instead of Spain. Luckily the treaty has remained intact with the countries having had a good relationship since the 1950s and 60s.

With my interest in accounting and finance, learning the Spanish language gives me an even greater advantage than most of my competitors. I left the United States not feeling very confident in speaking. I knew I could write pretty well and listen fine, but I was intimidated to have a conversation because I was afraid that I would say something wrong or embarrassing. Throughout my time in Spain, I was able to feel more comfortable in my speaking which allowed me to travel on my own which was something I didn't think I was capable of since I had trouble speaking. On my own made me have to have the courage to speak and practice of my conversation skills. My dream is to open up my own accounting business in which I will be able to have Spanish and English speaking customers. This makes my customer market much larger because of knowing another language and being comfortable with using it on a daily basis.

When I first arrived in Spain, the group I was traveling with had a major problem. Our flights were delayed in Chicago so much that we missed our flight from Philadelphia to Madrid by eight minutes. The company would not hold the plane for roughly 20 of us even though the plane sat on the runway for over an hour. We were stuck in Philadelphia for over 24 hours and had to pay for a hotel on our own. Luckily we had myself and another guy who was 21 who could book hotel rooms. We then took a plane the next day from Philadelphia to Brussels and then Brussels to Madrid. We had to figure out how to take a bus from Madrid to Valladolid and

then how to make it home to our host families with nothing as our luggage disappeared. I was lucky enough to get in contact with my host mom so she could meet us at the bus station. She called everyone's host parents and made sure we were all safe before we all left. It was crazy trying to figure everything out because none of our Spanish was very good and everyone was timid of using it. In the United States we are all so used to only having to speak in English. Being in this situation, makes one realize that English isn't the only thing people know. We always expect people to speak in English, but really the rule should be whichever country you are in, you should speak that language. The people of the United States need to realize that the world isn't just us.



Picture of friends at Segovia, Spain in front of the historic aqueducts. Friends are important when traveling and makes the trip fun while seeing incredible sights.



Family: Someone who cares for you, even if you are not their own. This was my wonderful host family that made my trip one to remember. They always included us and wanted us to have fun while seeing the world. They gave suggestions where to visit and what to do on nights when not much was going on.