

# **Short Report about my Exchange Semester in Amman, Jordan 2010/11**

## **1. Preparation**

First you should contact the International Office on what application papers you will need to apply for a semester at the German Jordanian University Amman. About two 2-3 months before the semester started I received my official Acceptance Letter with an extensive Incoming Guide which was very helpful.

### **1.1. Visa**

A Visa can easily be obtained at the airport. The university will then help you in extending your visa. But no preparation is needed.

### **1.2. Money**

I had a DKB Visa Card, but any Visa Card will do just take a careful look at the fees for withdrawing money from an ATM. Opening a local bank account is theoretically possible once you have your rent contract but no exchange student did this while I was there. There are numerous ATM's in Amman so finding an ATM is no problem. In general I spent about the same amount of money I would spend in Germany but you could spend a lot less if you really wanted to.

### **1.3. Health**

You should probably visit your doctor to check if any vaccinations are needed. Important is of course a health insurance which covers your stay in Jordan. In general Amman has good quality health services available, but luckily I did not need to use them while I was there.

## **2. Housing**

I lived in a shared-apartment with two other exchange students, this was organized by the university for us and was very near to the university. A big living room, two bathrooms, a kitchen and everyone had their own room as well. It took about 10-30 minutes (per Taxi) to get to most areas in Amman which I frequently visited. The university is supposed to be moving to a new campus in 2011 which is located near Amman in a town called Madaba so the housing situation might be different then.

### **3. Student Life at the GJU and in Amman**

The university system was different from my university back in Germany. In general the university felt more like being at school than visiting an university. Your attendance was checked regularly and you could only miss each class a maximum of five times a semester. There was even homework in some of the classes which was graded. Furthermore you had to do a group project in almost every class which was sometimes very time consuming. The group work was sometimes interesting and you could get to know other people better. Another aspect I disliked was that at the GJU we had midterm exams, in Germany I only had exams at the end of the semester. All in all the system seemed more similar to the American university system than the German university system. I personally prefer the German system but it was an interesting experience nonetheless.

Making friends is not too hard at the GJU since there are very few exchange students and the Jordanian students are very curious on getting to know the German students. You should quickly notice though that the concept of being on time is not the same as in Germany. In general almost all Jordanians are very friendly which is different compared to Germany where people are not always friendly.

Outside of university there are many places in Amman where you can go and meet up with your new friends and other exchange students. Most Jordanian students like meeting up at cafes somewhere in town to just meet up or learn. Visiting students/new friends and home does not happen often since most students still live with their parents and visiting them at their house is more of a special occasion. Most Jordanian students do not have much to do with nightlife since they have to be home usually before midnight. Although there is some nightlife which I personally did not like at all though. So yes as a German you will probably miss some nightlife even if you do not go out that much in Germany, but you do get used to it and you can still meet people just not after midnight. I should also note that as a female it is more of a challenge studying in Amman. For example most of the shisha cafes are practically male only. There are of course enough where females are welcome as well but those near the university are usually only for males. Those female exchange students that were there still really enjoyed their experience but it was more difficult for them.

### **4. Classes at University**

I visited 7 classes, and wrote exams in 5 classes. I took Supply Chain Management and Purchasing and Procurement but did not take the exams in these classes since I was not sure if these would be accepted

in Germany. I took Exams in Intercultural Communications, Transportation Management, Management Information Systems and Business Ethics. I also took Arabic as a foreign Language which was only available for exchange students but was very helpful in learning at least some Arabic, sadly the other subjects did not allow me to learn more arabic outside of university. My most interesting subject was actually Intercultural Communications because I learned a lot about what the students at the GJU think of their and other cultures. Since professors and curriculum's change I can not really recommend subjects directly, it really depends on the professor and if you are interested in the subject, but you can just start taking more classes at the beginning and resign from some later on.

## **5. Amman**

Amman does not offer too many sites for tourists but there are some places you should not miss. For one there is the citadel which ins on top of a hill from where you have a great view of the city center an area called "Downtown". This area "Downtown" is also worth a visit, you can find a lot of small shops selling all kinds of things and some nice restaurants. In "Downtown" there is also a rather big roman amphitheater which can be visited. The city itself has a lot of different districts with numerous shopping and eating opportunities. The most "western" district is just above "Downtown" opposite of the citadel hill, it is named Jabal Amman and Rainbow Street is the main street here. On Rainbow Street you can find a lot of cafes, bars and restaurants.

## **6. Jordan**

Most people only have heard of Petra, on of the world wonders, but there are more things to visit in Jordan than Petra. For one there are some roman ruins in the north, Um Qais and Jerash, especially Jerash is very impressive. There is also the Dead Sea which many people do not connect with Jordan, but all the east coast of the Dead Sea is located in Jordan. My favorite attraction was the desert Wadi Rum where Lawrence of Arabia was partially filmed, especially at night the desert is a wonderful place to be. Furthermore there are some desert castles which I never had the times to visit. There are of course more attractions like some nature parks and the Red Sea (scuba diving). Even if you decide to go somewhere else than Jordan for your exchange semester, I can only recommend you to at least visit Jordan some day.

## **7. Neighboring Countries**

Jordan has a lot of neighbors, and you should always check carefully on the political situation of the countries you plan on visiting. Iraq and Saudi Arabia were while I was there off limits, but Syria and Palestine/Israel were with some complications visitable. Also Lebanon and Egypt are rather near, although they do not border Egypt. While I was in Jordan I visited Syria and Lebanon, especially Syria has a lot to offer. Like big towns such as Damascus with its beautiful old town or the roman ruins of Palmyra. If you decide on going to Beirut as well, you will see a very bustling and westernized city which has a lot to offer. I personally preferred Damascus over Beirut, Damascus just has an incredible amount of culture to offer.

## **8. Recommendation**

Anyone reading this who might be interested in going to Amman, Jordan for some time, I can only say go for it! If you happen to have some question please email me at: [gso\\_jordan2010@arcor.de](mailto:gso_jordan2010@arcor.de).

Some pictures:



Amman



Dead Sea



Petra