

Kinney

The exchange program with Erfurt University exceeded all of my expectations. I came to the university to take part in a graduate workshop and to present my research for comments and suggestions. The workshop was an intense exchange of ideas, and as a PhD student, I found it intellectually engaging to both receive comments as well as propose suggestions for the research of others. Personally, I felt that my research benefited from different perspectives, and the scholars and students who participated provided me with specific, useful, and above all thoughtful feedback which helped to open up avenues in my research and methodology that I had not thought of before. I also had the opportunity to speak and work one on one with scholars both from the university as well as visiting fellows from around the world. In addition to the workshop, I attended classes at the university in body history, totalitarianism, the history of knowledge, and imperialism. As an American, I found the chance to discuss North American history with non-Americans very insightful, but I also felt that, as an outside student, I could add value and my own perspective to the class.

The quiet city of Erfurt is vibrant and gorgeous rich in history, and staying there was a pleasure. Students from the university were incredibly friendly, and they helped me to get settled and acclimated to the city very quickly. I quickly felt a sense of community with those I met, and we frequently went out to eat or grab a drink to end the day. There is plenty to do, whether it's visiting historical sites and churches or eating lunch by the Gera River or in the *Domplatz* in the shadow of the Cathedral. The university also helped to organize three separate tours, all within the city itself: a tour of the major historical sites, a tour of the *Topf und Söhne* memorial museum, and a tour of its former *Stasi* prison. The city is also in a great location within walking distance of a train station on several major lines in the heart of the country. Several major cities

are accessible for a weekend or even a day trip. While in Erfurt, I made a one-day trip to Berlin and another to Frankfurt. Leipzig, Dresden, and Prague are also within traveling distance, and Weimar is so close, it is accessible by bicycle. The two weeks I spent in Erfurt were a great experience, and it is an invaluable opportunity for both academic advancement and personal enrichment.