

College of the Atlantic Immersion Program in French Language and Culture: Vichy, France

This will be a 10 week spring program, starting March 14th, 2010. It will be for students who have had at least one prior course in French. (In some cases a serious student doing independent study may satisfy this requirement.) The program will be offered in Vichy, France, in collaboration with CAVILAM University, a premier, internationally recognized center for teaching and for pedagogical research on learning French as a second language.

For the first eight weeks, students will take classes in French at their appropriate level. These will include 26 sessions of 45 minutes each per week. They will also be able to pursue self-study at the University Multimedia Resource Center and learn to use the very effective online learning programs developed by CAVILAM.

For the last two weeks of the program, each student will undertake a project in the local community working with a bakery, a farm, an NGO, a government agency, a business or some other organization that fits with their interests and provides them with an opportunity for practical learning of French language and culture in an immersion context. Throughout the ten week term, each student will live with a family in a homestay to provide an enriching immersion experience.

They will also take part in a variety of cultural activities including films, sporting events, food tastings and 5 half day and 3 full day excursions. At the end of the program, students will present, in French, a report offering reflections on what they learned about the institution where they worked in their final project as well as what they have learned about French culture and about their own learning styles and talents.



Students will receive three COA credits for participation in the program. Two credits will be for course work in French. These will be evaluated based on the assessments of Cavilam faculty. The third credit will be for a course in “Doing Human Ecology in Cross-cultural Contexts: France”. This will provide credit for the learning from homestay, the other cultural experiences that are a part of the program and for the final two week project. Evaluation for that course will be based on the student’s ability to demonstrate skills in cross-cultural collaboration and learning.

The program will be directed by Gray Cox who will offer the orientation in the winter term, accompany students for the beginning weeks and the end of the program, and do weekly checkin’s throughout the term via Skype and email. Along with Gray, Nancy Andrews will also be accompanying students in the first two weeks of the program and will lead discussions on film and culture as part of the enrichment program.

Students may in some cases wish to extend their experience by negotiating to have their two week project – or some analogous activity – become a followup ten week formal internship experience.

How will the cost to the student will be different from the cost of attending COA in the spring and living on campus with TAB board? The tuition will be the

same: \$11,020. Also essentially the same will be a room, board and miscellaneous fee of \$3,390. (Note that this is equivalent to the usual on campus room and board, \$2,830, plus books, \$200, plus miscellaneous expenses, \$360 = \$3,390.) Beyond that, the student will pay their travel costs, estimated to be around \$840. Students may want to have some extra spending money for special activities but there are no major costs associated with living in Vichy – laundry will be done by the family, internet access will be provided at school, and the city is small enough to make bus fares unnecessary. On the other hand, students will normally fly in to Vichy through Paris and the opportunity to visit there for a couple of days at the end of the term would be worth considering and including in personal budgets. Also, students considering remaining in France at the end of the program for a formal internship experience should plan their finances accordingly.

Course Proposal for Spring, 2010: “Doing Human Ecology in Cross-cultural Contexts: France” – Gray Cox

This will be one of three credits offered as part of the spring term program in French Language and Culture in Vichy, France. It will provide credit for learning in the winter orientation process preparatory for the program, the homestay in Vichy, the other cultural experiences that are a part of the program, the weekly reflective activities (including, for part of the term, conversations via Skype with the instructor) and the final two week project. This final project will be in the local community working with a bakery, a farm, an NGO, a government agency, a business or some other organization that fits with their interests and provides them with an opportunity for practical learning of French language and culture in an immersion context. The course is designed to employ group exercises and individual reflections on experiences to develop the student’s insight into French culture specifically and, just as importantly, into the process of learning a second language and entering into cross-cultural exchange and collaboration. Skills and insights from anthropology, history and conflict resolution will be cultivated. Evaluation will be based on the student’s ability to demonstrate skills and insights into cross-cultural collaboration and learning through short papers based on journal writing, the final project report, and the successful completion of homestay, community collaboration and other immersion activities. At least one prior course in French language is required. Permission of instructor is required. Levels from Beginning French II to Advanced French II (depending on prior language level). HS.