

There we go, it are my last hours in Canada after 8 great month in Edmonton. I'm sitting at the gate and waiting to board my plane.

I studied at Concordia University of Edmonton. I lived on my own close to Concordia. My first Landlord was bad, so I moved after 3 Months to a new place.

The University is amazing. It is a small one. for me, it was like a huge family. The buildings are attached to one main hall called „Tegler“. You can study Physics, Computer Science, Biology, Chemistry, Religion, Drama, Music, Sociology, and Psychology, just to name a few. I can share experiences from Computer Science, Physics and lots about the Drama classes. You need to know that Drama is equal to the German word "Theater".

My first day started with the „Thunderstorm“, which is the Orientation day. Even if it is only for undergraduates, but it is also for everyone who that is new. It is a lot of fun and the first and best chance to make friends all over the place. Those fellow students I met on the first day became my friends for the whole time. Besides this, you see the University. Most of the exchange students are not assigned to a specific major. They were put into the Open Studies Program. This is a program to take to get credits from a University or to figure out what you like to study. It offers you the possibility to explore most of the courses. It's fun. I got the chance of experiencing both the Open Studies program and the MISSIM Program, which is the Information Technology Masters program.

What course you should choose is a good question. You can use the online course selector and see what is available. A good rule to follow is: First come, first serve. You can also assign courses from Germany. Some Courses have prerequisites. Because your online system is not matched with the online system at Concordia, it is up to your University or International Office to allow the access to courses. Administration assumes you are eligible to get into this course and skip the requirements every semester for exchange students.

I would like to share an experience with you. One of those unforgettable classes: Drama 149, which is the introduction to active playing. So why this is interesting for you? Easy, If you are kind of an communicative and crazy person then you will have fun. This is a active lesson in the Theatre, the class time spent taking notes is below 1%. You are working with your class mates all the time and getting to know them. You are basically forced to speak a lot of English. The Dean of Drama (Caroline) agreed that this a good opportunity for exchanges and welcomes them. My Class was directed by a professional director. Glenda is an easy going and in a lovely way, a crazy teacher who enjoys this course a lot. She is demanding, but if you show commitment to her lessons, she will support you wherever she can; but if not, she won't help you. Besides fundamental techniques, you are building your own character which you will present on stage in a solo and afterwards the same character in a group.

Most of my free time I spent in the Theatre of Concordia. As a hobby I was the Sound and light operator, so I joined the team and supported the up coming shows during my time there.

I've never experienced dorm life. But what I heard, it was party fun and call it the "dorms life". Boys and Girls are in separate dorms on campus, but during the day and evening there are no strict gender areas. But if you overdo it, you might get in some trouble. Once I've seen a crowd out of Lions, Witches, Pumpkins and Penguins sitting in the International Office in front of the Administrator's Office at 7 pm. The administrator looked serious and the crowd was not really happy, even it was Halloween.

If you live in the dorms a mandatory meal plan comes with it, which is kind of really expensive. The meal you get at the cafeteria is a not changing expensive offer by an external fast food chain like McDonalds. You have to pay 12 dollars to feel kind of full. The Cafe is not very supportive of Vegan / Vegetarian / allergy / gluten/ lactose intolerant diets. Those students might have a chance of a reduced meal plan. It is possible to cook in dorms. The boys dorms are above the Cafeteria, connected to the building. The girl's dorms are across the way.

Besides the Gym, the whole buildings of university are connected to each other. In the middle of all buildings is Tegler Hall. The place where everybody is meeting and spending most of their free time. Of course you can also go into the library or the basement, but the events are taken place in Tegler. In the afternoons and evenings, you can play table tennis there. So if you like Table tennis, you can take the racket that are there, or it may be better to bring your own. In the afternoon, you will meet some of students living in the dorm in Tegler. There is also a fitness room, which is available to every student. Check it out. You can find private study space in library, there are lots of possibilities. For those who would like to have a warm meal without buying food, you can use the microwaves, which are spread all over the campus. The complex is protected by friendly and helpful security guards. They are also there to open two locked rooms. This is the Green Room and the Computer lab „235“. Security will open them for you if you are a student who has access to it.

If you are interested in Drama, you might want to say hello to the students in the „Greenroom“. There is an improv group and the Green Thespian Club. The improv Group is meets once a week at noon and the GCT is the club for all the students who are active in drama. Those guys there are the most amazing ones. For both you need engagement, but no previous knowledge.

All year, the CSA (Concordia Student Association) puts up events. So you want to checkout the weekly Newsletter with all the events.

Your Concordia E-Mail address is hosted by Google, but is the login for every service. Most of the internal services support the username without the ending @student.concordia.ab.ca. The user names are first letter of first name and than at maximum 7 letters from the last name. The Password stays the same.

The year at Concordia is a bit compressed in the time between September and December is the Fall term and January till April the winter term. They are followed up 2 Months of a compressed summer term, which isn't mandatory.

Public transport

Edmonton is 16 by 16 kilometers. Downtown is located in the west center of the town. Concordia is in the East side of the city. Edmonton is divided by the North Saskatchewan River in North and South. Crossing the river by foot is half a hour walk until you are in town again. Concordia is at the Bus line number 2 which is the bus that connects the East and West side right into downtown or to the LRT. The LRT is like a Underground / Tram, which is a quick way from North to South. Anyways, it might be half an hour from the nearest LRT station to Concordia. The next closest bus number is then the 8. You should consider that information when you are looking for a flat on your own. During the day and the inner city you have good bus connections. The schedule is relying on google maps. Bus service is low till non existing after 1 AM in the morning. An inner town cab is something like 20 to 30 dollars.

If you need of anything from bikes to furniture, you want to checkout kijiji.ca. It is owned by eBay. Every province in Canada has it's own forum to buy and sell. Kijiji is this for this area.

Places to go if you have arrived:

Value Village, a second hand store for everything. Dollar store for Kitchen stuff and bread boxes and writing stuff. No Frills is the cheapest grocery store and they even give you nice boxes to carry your groceries home in the bus. If you need something else, Walmart is probably the best choice. The closest mall to Concordia is the Kingsway mall. It is one of the smaller ones.

Cellphone /Mobiles:

If you need a mobile, check the company of your mobile if they work with local providers. Telus and Bell are the two big ones. They charge a lot for a contract, so you want to make sure you take your time in choosing the right option. A Prepaid plan per month plus data might be up to 40 dollars or more. Contracts have a minimum runtime of a year. Mobiles you get from a provider have sim locks. For the best selection of small and huge providers, you might want to checkout West Edmonton Mall, which was one time the largest one. Besides that, you should see it.

AM / PM

AM is from midnight till noon, P.M. is from noon till midnight. 12:00 PM is noon.

The day is starting with 12:00 AM ... 12:59 1:00 ... 11:59 AM 12:00 PM 11:59 AM...

You should also have a look at inches feet and miles. They do not count to ten...

Dorms vs. living on your own

Because I have chosen the off campus life, I can't tell you much about the on campus life. I decide to go off campus, because I was looking for a challenge. I found my challenge, my first land lord was a not nice, only interested in my money and turned down the heating, bolted the windows and

showed up every three days to control if we were keeping the place clean. Ehm, no thanks, I moved out as fast as possible. Before you go look for a place to rent, checkout Landlordandtendency.org. It is a user-friendly page you should read before you go out in the world. Not every Canadian wants your best. You also can stay in a hotel to make sure that you see the flat before you rent it.

As long as Edmonton is suffering low oil prices, flats are cheap and the inhabitants try to rent them desperately.

I really enjoyed my time there, and keeping good memories at this place and Canada in general. If you have the time and can afford it you should check out Jasper National Park and enjoy the area (think about an international driver license ;).