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Global Education Office  
Reves Center for International Studies  
The College of William & Mary

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Photo courtesy of Rob Leventhal

# Potsdam Summer Handbook

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## William & Mary Potsdam 2019

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This handbook offers guidelines that we hope you will find useful in making your preparations and while studying in Potsdam. Please read the handbook carefully before your departure and bring it with you to Germany, either as a paper or email copy. The program policies are included, along with lists of important items to bring with you, tips for handling your money, and precautions for safeguarding your health and belongings. In an effort to serve you best, the material in this handbook is edited each year and contains the latest information available to assist you in preparing for your trip. While we do our best to provide you with the most accurate information, inevitably some changes may take place and we will need to make adjustments. Your program director and the Global Education Office Advisor at the Reves Center will keep you informed of any changes.

## Handy Information

### Summer holidays and Events in Germany

Date	Holiday	Description
May 18 – 21	Karneval der Kulturen	Berlin's own carnival is a festive, joyful celebration with a parade of floats, sound systems, hand-made costumes, dance performances, and international food and drink. The event is held in the Kreuzberg district and is an awesome street party!
May 18-May 21	Whit Weekend	Whit Monday or Pentecost Monday is the holiday celebrated the day after Pentecost, a moveable feast in the Christian calendar.
May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Corpus Christi holiday	Many Catholics and some Protestants in Germany attend a church service on Corpus Christi. This often results in a colorful celebration, especially in small villages.
June 24	Johannistag	Religious holiday
June 27	Siebenschläfer	Folklore: if it rains on this day, it will rain for the next seven weeks. A <i>Siebenschläfer</i> is a dormouse.
July 20	Gedenktag des Attentats auf Hitler 1944	Commemorative day of the assassination attempt on Hitler in 1944 to restore democracy in Germany

### Average Min/Max Temperatures in Berlin (°F)

January	February	March	April	May	June
26/35	27/39	33/47	37/54	45/65	53/70

July	August	September	October	November	December
56/73	55/73	50/66	42/56	35/45	30/38

### Time Zone Comparison: Potsdam is 6 hours ahead of Virginia during summer

Pacific (US)	Mountain (US)	Central (US)	Eastern (US)	Potsdam, GERMANY
5:00am	6:00am	7:00am	8:00am	2:00 pm (14:00)
1:00pm	2:00pm	3:00pm	4:00pm	10:00 pm (22:00)
9:00pm	10:00pm	11:00pm	Midnight	6:00 am (next day)

## Overview, Dates, and Money

### Program Overview

- Fees: \$7,050
- **Program Director:** Robert Leventhal, Program Director and Associate Professor of German Studies (rsleve@wm.edu)
- **Accommodations:** Students will live with host families near the University of Potsdam or with other German students in apartments in the local area. Breakfasts will be provided by the host family. Students are responsible for their own lunches and dinners. Lunch can be purchased at the student *Mensa* (cafeteria) directly on campus at reasonable student rates.
- **Transportation:** The price includes a transportation pass for use on the Berlin/Potsdam public transportation system for the duration of your stay. The price, however, does not include round-trip airfare to Germany.

### Program Dates

- Arrive Tuesday, May 21 – Depart Saturday, July 6, 2019  
Please see the “Traveling to Potsdam” section for additional information.

### Spring one credit Course

Students will be automatically enrolled in a one credit pre-course after the spring semester has begun. During the course, we will answer questions and help you understand what to expect, as well as how to prepare for your program. Dates and times are to be determined by the Program Director and the participants.

### **Money**

A note on currency: Regardless of the level of financial resources you may have available for your period of study abroad, all students share the same need to have quick access to their funds and, at the same time, to have their money protected against loss. The currency of Germany is the Euro, which exchanges to the US dollar at a rate of \$1 US = 0.85 *Euros (EUR)* or 1 EUR = \$1.17 USD (as of November 2017). You can check the current exchange rates on the web at <http://www.xe.com/ucc> or in the financial section of a large city newspaper.

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# Visa Information and Budgeting

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## Travel Documents

### Passport

- You should apply as early as possible before departure to secure your passport through a Passport Agency (found in major cities), a local issuing office, a Federal or State Court House, or a Class I Post Office. Start the process early so that there will be plenty of time to resolve any problems that may arise. If you will be using your current passport, make sure that it is good **for six months after your return to the U.S.** If it is not, you will need to renew it.
- Guidelines on renewing your passport or applying for a new one can be found at:  
<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html>



### Visa

- A visa for summer study in Germany is not required for American citizens. Citizens of other countries should check with their home government's foreign ministry.

### Budget

- Your budget for incidental expenses will depend on your personal taste and the amount of independent travel you intend to do during, before or after the program. For basic expenditures in Potsdam, such as lunch and dinner, we recommend that you budget approximately \$200 per week, plus extra money for shopping and traveling. It is probably possible to live for considerably less than this, but there is a lot to do in Potsdam and Berlin, and you should allow yourself funds to take advantage of the city's offerings. Naturally, if you plan to do a significant amount of shopping and/or traveling, you should budget accordingly. Former students have reported spending \$750-\$1,700 during the program, with most students averaging around \$1,500.

## Study Abroad Program Worksheet for Potsdam

The following categories such as eating, living, and traveling are approximate price guidelines.

Expenses:	Amount:	When due:	Paid to W&M?	Paid out of pocket?
Program Fee	\$7050	Deposit March 1 <sup>st</sup> , Balance April 1 <sup>st</sup>	Yes	
Airfare	\$1800			Yes
Meals (Breakfasts are included in program fee)	\$1700			Yes
Study Abroad Application fee	\$75		Yes	
Visa, passport, photos	N/A	Prior to beginning of program		Yes
Books & supplies	\$250			Yes
Misc./Personal	\$800			Yes
Total	\$11,675			
Eating	Items		Average Price	
	Dining out		\$ 13.35	
	Soft drink (0.3 liter)		\$3.00	
	Still Water(1liter bottle)		\$0.25	
	Fresh milk ( 1 liter)		\$1.07	
	Coffee (normal black coffee), 1 cup		\$2.54	
Living	One Movie ticket (evening, weekend)		\$10.00	
	Mobile call per minute (prepaid, national)		\$0.12	
Traveling	Transportation Methods		Average Price	
	One-way Ticket (local transport)		\$3.07	
	Monthly Pass ( Regular Price)		\$81.54	
	Taxi Rates		1km: \$1.67	



How will your program be funded?

Sources:	Amount:	When Available:
Scholarship(s)		Varies by deadline, Reves scholarships will reduce your total balance due. You will find out if you've been awarded a Reves scholarship by the end of February.
Financial Aid (Loans, grants, through W&M)		First day of classes on campus or the first day of the summer program, whichever is LATER.
Savings		
Parental/Guardian support		
Other		
Total		

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# Packing

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## Packing Tips

### General

- Less is more! Many items you need can be purchased once you've arrived at your destination. For example, bring travel-sized toiletries to keep your bags light, and purchase full-sized items once you've arrived.
- Do not bring any items of sentimental value that you couldn't bear to lose.

### Luggage

- **Pack only what you can carry by yourself up 2-3 flights of stairs, or walk with for relatively long distances.** A wheeled duffle bag or suitcase plus a generous tote or backpack for weekend travel should suffice. Returning students recommend that your carry-on be a backpack rather than a handheld bag if you plan to do any extra traveling.
- Do not pack valuables in your checked luggage.
- Consider bringing a small 'pocket' duffle for shorter trips, also great for trips to the grocery store
- Put address labels and contact information inside and outside each piece of luggage.
- Pack medications in your carry-on luggage.
- Pack all sharp objects securely in your checked baggage.
- Pack all liquids in plastic bags to avoid leakage during travel.
- Place your camera in your carry-on. If you take film, carry it in a lead-lined travel pouch (available at camera stores).
- Put TSA-approved locks on all of your luggage so that it can be opened without the lock or bag being destroyed.

### Clothes

- Berliners tend to dress casually, a lot like Americans compared to other European countries. Like most big cities in Europe, people tend to wear dark colors.
- Bring easy care clothing items that are lightweight, drip dry, and wrinkle-proof, such as knits, permanent press, and cotton clothes.

Dark colors are more practical than light, as they do not show dirt as easily.

- Bring a comfortable pair of walking shoes, as the program will include extended tours on foot. Flip-flops are not permitted on walking tours and are not common in Germany for city walking!
- Pack clothes you can mix and match so as to give your wardrobe as much variety without having to pack as much.
- Only bring clothes you can imagine wearing often.
- Bring clothes that you can layer for various temperatures.
- Do not bring clothes that immediately mark you as ‘foreign’ – avoid items with obvious phrases in English, or other symbols that will immediately mark your outsider status.
- Roll clothes instead of folding them; you will fit more in the bag, and have fewer wrinkles upon arrival.
- Temperature will vary over the course of the program. Pack rain gear, a sweater, but also clothes for hot weather.
- Layering will allow you to pack lighter.

## **Gifts**

- Students often ask what small gifts they can take with them to give to their host families. Many students give a small gift to their host families. Try to think of things that are unlikely to be available in Germany: items made in your home region, calendars or books with photos of America’s outstanding features (wildlife, national parks, plantations, cities, and so on), William & Mary paraphernalia, and the like.

For more tips, please consult the Summer Study Abroad Manual, as well as the “Know Before You Go” section of this handbook.



### **An Important Note on Electricity in Potsdam**

Electricity in Germany is 230 or 240 volts, 50 cycle alternating current (AC). For comparison, in the United States it is 110 volts, 60 cycle AC current.

If you plan on using your own 110-volt appliances, you will need a voltage converter, unless your appliance is designed to also work with 220 volts electricity (dual voltage). For example, most laptop and camera chargers are designed to work both at 110 and 220 volts. **Plugging in an appliance that is not designed to run on 230/240 volts electricity without using voltage converter will most likely kill it and may cause fire!**

Regardless of voltage, if your appliance has flat American-style prongs, you will need a plug adapter: German sockets are designed to accept round prongs. Do get one before your leave!

German plugs can be of two different types, grounded and ungrounded. When you buy an adaptor, you will have more flexibility with a grounded one.

Regardless of prong size, **the outlets all produce 220 volts!**



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## Traveling to Potsdam

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**NOTE:** You are responsible for your own travel arrangements to and from Potsdam

### Airport Pick-Up

Potsdam University arranges your airport transfer to and from Potsdam. There are options for direct flights to Berlin from the US. Please schedule your flight to arrive in **Berlin's Tegel Airport (TXL)** in the late morning or early afternoon May 21. As flights to Europe from the US are overnight, this means scheduling your flight to leave the evening of Monday, **May 20**. Information about airport pickup will be provided by your Program Director.

It is advised that students travel in pairs, if not larger groups. Use the Blackboard site and share flight information, or plan travel arrangements during the one-credit course.

As soon as possible following your arrival, remember to call your family to let them know you have arrived safely. This will not only save them from worry, but also help the Reves Center and the University of Potsdam from receiving panicked phone calls regarding your whereabouts.

There will be an orientation in Potsdam upon your arrival.

Students to depart Potsdam program not be after this



should plan from on **July 6**; housing will available date.

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## Coursework

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A list of textbook requirements and syllabi will be distributed in advance of the program. For more information, contact the program director, Professor Robert Leventhal ([rsleve@wm.edu](mailto:rsleve@wm.edu)). At the University, students have computer access, internet and library privileges. Students should plan on using the internet on campus instead of at home.

During your stay in Potsdam, you will study at the:

### **Universität Potsdam**

Am Neuen Palais 10

14469 Potsdam

Tel.: 0331/977-0

Fax: 0331/972163

<http://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/university-of-potsdam.html>

In a unique scientific environment, the University of Potsdam was founded in 1991 by the amalgamation of the *Karl Liebknecht College of Education* and the *Brandenburg State College*. As the university in large part emerged from the College of Education, emphasis today is still placed on teacher training. The university consists of 20 research institutions of the metropolitan area of Potsdam. It is the largest university in the state of Brandenburg and also one of the youngest and the most beautifully situated of all academic institutions in Germany. Fact: Students do not pay tuition to attend universities in the state of Brandenburg!



At the beginning of the winter semester of the 2008/2009 academic year, 19,894 young people were studying at the University of Potsdam. The largest number of students were enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy, 5,934 (30%), with 5,324 (27%) at the Faculty of Mathematics and Science. 58% of the students are female, and more than 2,000 are external students. 26% of the freshers come from East Germany, 14% from the West and the remaining 14%

from Berlin, evaluated by the place where they obtained their entry requirements. After a comprehensive evaluation of its research performance in 2007, the University of Potsdam nominated eight areas of distinction ("Profilbereiche") and one area of excellence in the field of Cognitive Sciences ("Exzellenzbereich") to award their international recognition and research productivity. With an interdisciplinary research agenda, the area of excellence links the departments of Psychology, Linguistics, and Sports and Health Science.



## Classes at the University of Potsdam

Students earn up to 11 credits through classes in German language and culture with an independent study/research option for more proficient students. Students will be assigned to the appropriate courses based on their language level. Courses for Summer 2019 include:

Courses	
GRMN 201: (4 credits)	Intermediate German I
GRMN 202: (4 credits)	Intermediate German II (fulfills language requirement)
GRMN 210: (3 credits)	Advanced Grammar Review
GRMN 310 (3 credits)	Advanced Grammar and Stylistics
GRMN 290/ 390: (3 credits)	Topics in German Studies: The Making of the Modern City: Berlin 1871-1933
GRMN 391: (1-4 credits)	Independent Study
GRMN 410: (3 credits)	Special Topics



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## Excursions & Activities

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### Official and Personal Travel Options

There will mostly likely be two separate weekend excursions, one to the city of Dresden and one to the cities of Hamburg and Lübeck. Most fees, transportation, lodging and two meals a day while on the excursion are included in the program cost. (Students may have to pay some museum fees). There will be other day trip excursions in the Potsdam area.

### Guidebooks

Consider purchasing a travel guidebook prior to leaving the United States to help you make personal travel plans. These can be purchased at bookstores like Barnes & Noble, or online (buying the e-book version will save weight!). Some guidebook publishers include:

- **Fodor's** (<http://www.fodors.com>)
- **Let's Go** (<http://www.letsgo.com>)
- **Lonely Planet** (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>)
- **Rick Steves Books**  
([http://www.ricksteves.com/books/update/update\\_menu.htm](http://www.ricksteves.com/books/update/update_menu.htm))



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## Housing and Meals

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### **Housing**

Students will stay with host families who will provide breakfast each morning. Host families are members of the Potsdam community who are sincerely interested in welcoming American students into their homes. You should strive to fit in to the family as much as possible. Note that Europeans are extremely economical when it comes to using electricity and water, both of which cost much more than in the US. Keep showers as short as possible. There are specific guidelines in Germany regarding recycling that your host family will communicate to you. These are mandatory, not optional, in Germany. Under no circumstances should you go around the house in bare feet – this is not the custom in Germany. Either the family will provide a pair of Hausschuhe for you, or you can purchase an inexpensive pair. Please clarify the expectations of your individual family regarding visitors and late evenings. In keeping with the policy of the W&M Office of Residence Life, the Reves Center does not offer housing for the family of any students participating in W&M-sponsored study abroad programs. Also, family members or friends may not participate in any program activities or excursions. If you have family or friends who want to visit you while abroad it is recommended they do so after the completion of the program.

### **Meals**

Aside from breakfast with your host family and the overnight excursion, all meals are your responsibility. You can purchase lunch at the university cafeteria at subsidized student rates (around €2.50). Dinner will be on your own or with fellow classmates. Less expensive options include picnics or snack bars. Note that in restaurants, taxes and tips are usually included in the price. There is no need to tip over and above this, though most guests will round up the tab (1-2 €). Guests sitting outside may be asked to pay immediately.

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# Communication

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## Online

Our students have computer access at the University of Potsdam. Whether you take a laptop is entirely up to you, but do keep in mind the issues of security and baggage restrictions. And remember you will have to carry it yourself. Not all host families will have internet service, and they will probably not appreciate you monopolizing the home computer and connection. Students should plan to use the internet mainly on campus. Some businesses in Potsdam and the rest of Germany offer paid Wi-Fi internet access through one of the several national internet service providers, but few of them offer free access.

## Landline Phones

In order to use a public phone in Potsdam, you need a prepaid phone card, available at various stores. There are several types of international phone cards which allow you to call the U.S. inexpensively. Many German families also have unlimited calling on their land line phones to other land lines in Germany. Ask your host family before using the house phone!

## Cell Phones

Cell phones are called “Handys” in German. The Reves Center provides all participants with a prepaid cell phone. There will be no charge for the cell phone itself and a limited number of minutes. Students will be responsible for minutes over the basic number of minutes supplied. Please note that it is the students’ responsibility to keep their phones active till the end of the program, should the director need to contact them at short notice. This is a requirement for security purposes. You may also decide to bring your phone from the US. Please note that many US phones are incompatible with the systems used in Germany. Note, too, that if you bring a phone from the US, you will still be required to carry the program-issued German phone.

### Placing International Phone Calls

See the “Handy Information” section for a time zone conversion chart before you call!

#### **Calling Potsdam from the United States:**

Dial 011 + 49 + Area Code (without initial zero) + Local Number

#### **Calling the United States from Potsdam:**

Dial 001+ phone number.

## Emergency Numbers

General Emergency / Police: 112

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## Health & Safety

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### **Immunization**

Although it is no longer necessary to have smallpox immunization to re-enter the USA after international travel and no special health precautions are necessary for travel to Central Europe, students are encouraged to consider updating standard immunizations against meningitis and tetanus. For current information concerning recommended protection against communicable diseases for those planning to travel abroad, you may check the Center for Disease Control's website at:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/germany.htm>

If you prefer to talk to someone in person about the currently recommended immunizations, students are encouraged to visit Student Health, or consult with a physician in your area who has some expertise concerning immunizations for international travel.

### **Staying well/Getting sick**

All program participants will be covered by CISI insurance during the program. For the duration of the program, the University of Potsdam support staff is always available to assist students in obtaining medical care. Useful information on preparing for medical emergencies before you go abroad is provided at <https://step.state.gov/step/>

If you become ill, please alert your host family, and contact the Program Director for assistance in finding you medical care. Please remember you must pay for any medical care at the time it is received, and that you should keep your receipts to submit to your insurance company for reimbursement upon your return.

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## Travel & Country Information

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We encourage all students to research their study abroad destination. The State Department has important information available online. Be sure to read up on German history, culture, and current events before your arrival. Knowing as much as possible about where you are going will not only make you more comfortable during your time in the country, but will also allow you to talk more knowledgeably with your teachers and new friends.

We strongly recommend that you register your travel plans with the U.S. State Department at this website:

<https://step.state.gov/step/>

This will help the State Department contact you if there is a family emergency in the U.S., or if there is a crisis where you are traveling. On this website you can find information ranging from geographic and political descriptions of the country, to special health and safety announcements.

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# Potsdam

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Photo Credit: Derick Arbaugh ('10): Belvedere auf dem Pfingstberg

**POTSDAM** is the capital of federal state of *Brandenburg*. It has a population of around 158,000 inhabitants and is part of the greater Metropolitan area of Berlin/Brandenburg. It is situated on the *River Havel*, 24 km (15 miles) southwest of the Berlin city center.

Potsdam has several claims to national and international fame. In Germany, it had the status Windsor has in England. It was the residence of the Prussian kings until 1918. Around the city there are a series of interconnected lakes and unique cultural landmarks, in particular the *parks and palaces of Sanssouci*, the largest World Heritage Site in Germany. The Potsdam Conference, the major post-World War II conference between the victorious Allies, was held at another palace in the area, the *Cecilienhof*.

*Babelsberg*, in the south-eastern part of Potsdam, was a major movie production studio before the war and has enjoyed increased success as a major center of European film production since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The *Filmstudio Babelsberg* is historically significant as the oldest large-scale film studio in the world.

Potsdam developed into a center of science in Germany from the 19th century. Today, there are three public colleges and more than 30 research institutes in the city.

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## For Fun: Light Reading and Movies

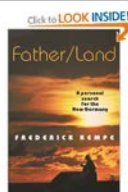
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*Following are a few books about Germany. Check them out, or consider looking for other books to put you in a Germany mood prior to – or during – your time abroad. Don't worry; you won't be tested on them!*

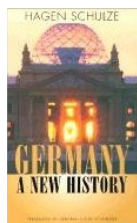
### Books



The German  
Empire: A Short  
History  
By Michael  
Sturmer

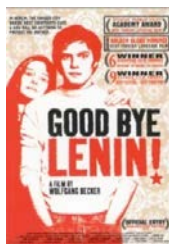


Father/Land: A  
Personal Search  
for the New  
Germany  
By Frederick  
Kempe



Germany:  
A New History  
By Hagen Schulze

### Movies







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## Frequently Asked Questions

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### **Will I need a visa?**

A visa for summer study in Germany is **not** required for American citizens. Citizens of other countries should check with their home government's foreign ministry.

### **What airport will I fly into? Do all W&M students travel together on the same flights?**

Berlin Tegel (TXL) is the airport you should fly into. Please refer to the section in this handbook on "Traveling to Potsdam" for specific information. W&M students do not necessarily take the same flight. However if you wish to travel with other students you can arrange communicate through Blackboard or Facebook.

### **Can I arrive earlier or stay longer than the program dates?**

Yes, you may but you will be responsible for making your own accommodation arrangements. You will **NOT** be able to stay in the housing provided during the program.

### **If my family or friends visit, may they stay with me?**

No, they will need to make their own arrangements for accommodations. Please advise your program director if you expect family or friends to visit you during the program.

### **Am I required to participate in all excursions provided by the program?**

Yes, unless your program director says otherwise. The excursions supplement the coursework and expand cultural learning.

### **Will I need to seek post approval for the courses I take?**

No, all of the courses offered in the W&M faculty-led summer programs have already been approved.

**Will my grades be posted on my transcript?**

Yes, the grades you receive will be posted on your W&M transcript and will be calculated into your GPA.

**Can I take class pass/fail?**

No, this is not an option.

**Do I need to take my own sheets and towels?**

You will be staying in a homestay in Potsdam, so you do not need to bring sheets and towels. However, if you plan to travel on your own and stay in hostels, it is suggested to bring your own thin towel and sheet.

**Will my study-abroad facility have a fitness center/gym for student use?**

Based on current information at the Reves Center, no known fitness center is available to students on the Neuen Palais campus. Note that you will almost certainly walk more than you do in the US.

**How much spending money will I need?**

This varies based on your normal spending habits, especially with regard to eating meals out and how much shopping you like to do. Students reported spending between \$500-1,600 during the program. Most students reported spending \$1,000 or more, but again this depends on your personal spending habits. Former students DO NOT recommend traveler's checks. They recommend carrying some cash and your credit or debit card.

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# Know Before You Go

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## ADDITIONAL TIPS FROM PAST STUDENTS

### PLACES TO SEE IN AND NEAR POTSDAM

- Filmstudio Babelsberg
- Sanssouci Park and Palace
- Neuer Garten and Cecilienhof
- Orangerieschloss and Park
- Charlottenhof Palace
- Belvedere auf dem Pfingstberg
- Nikolaikirche, Berlin
- Dutch Quarter (Holländisches Viertel)
- Brandenburgerstraße
- “Try out a Studentkneipe (student pub). It’s a great way to meet the locals!”



### MEETING PEOPLE

- “Be courageous and energetic – you can meet locals anywhere.”
- When addressing someone in German, the *Sie* form should always be used until a personal relationship is formed. Stick with the formal form until you are told you should say *du*. If you are with a group of young people, it is safe to assume that you can use *du* since you will be on a first-name basis with other university student-aged people. However, in stores, bakeries, restaurants, etc., you will use *Sie*, even if the person working is your age. Your host family will likely ask you to use *du* with them, though you should use *Sie* until they invite you do otherwise.
- Make an effort to talk to your fellow students. German students tend to be slightly older than American students – they normally spend 13 years in school, and often start their first grade at age 7, rather than at age 6. Further, men are required to serve in the *Bundeswehr* or perform a year of *Zivildienst* before starting university.
- Germans tend to be more reserved and might seem less friendly than Americans, so you will need to make a special effort to get to know them.

### TRAVEL

- If you are interested in seeing another city in Brandenburg, you could consider a Brandenburg-Berlin-Ticket. The tickets are 29 Euros, and up to five people can use them. They are also valid for public transportation at your destination. They can only be used on regional trains, but are a great way to experience another town in Germany for a day.
- Wait until you have the program itinerary to plan any travel. Excursions are generally mandatory.

### COMMUNICATION

- “The computers at the University of Potsdam leave something to be desired. There aren’t that many and they usually don’t even have basic software, like Microsoft

Office, that we consider standard on our university computers. It also takes an act of congress to be able to print anywhere other than the Akademische Auslandsamt, so don't assume that IT services (even the basic ones like printing) will be easy. Be prepared for some bureaucracy."

- The Starbucks in Potsdam has a free wireless connection that students can use for up to two hours with the purchase of a drink or pastry.

## LIVING

- German waiters will not bring you the check for your dining expenses until asked to do so. Don't sit around and wait on the check – ask! Germans beckon wait staff when they wish to order, or request the check. A loud clearing of the throat or raising your hand and waving it are two commonly used gestures. Simply raising your pointer finger in the air while making eye contact with the wait staff will work.
- Germans are deeply committed to recycling. You will see recycling in your daily life – ask your host family how to properly separate your trash. It varies from region to region, but you can expect to separate your *Biomüll* (biodegradable trash), non-biodegradable trash, and recycling. Recycling is often separated further into paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum. Further, Germans also have a recycling system for water, soda, and beer bottles called *Dosenpfand*. When you buy a bottle of soda at the grocery store, for example, you will be asked to pay a deposit – usually 10-15 cents above the stated cost. You can then return your bottle to a machine at the back of the grocery store, which will return your deposit!
- It usually costs money to use German bathrooms. If you use a bathroom at a gas station (during an excursion), however, you may receive a little ticket for your 0,50 charge. You can sometimes use this money toward the purchase of a snack.

## MONEY

- In general, the easiest way to change money or transfer money from the US to Germany is to use a **debit card** (not a credit card!) linked to a US bank account to withdraw money from an ATM machine, which can be found all over. Discuss this with your US bank, for rates vary. It may be worth your while to open a new account in a different bank, if it offers free withdrawals from an international ATM.
- Be sure to call your bank and put a travel notice on your debit AND credit cards. Otherwise, purchases and withdrawals may be declined due to suspected fraud.
- Discuss with your bank the fees associated with international transactions and withdrawals. The bank may be able to inform you of a partner bank that you can use to withdraw cash and avoid fees.
- You will use cash more often than you think. Many places, including restaurants, do not accept debit or credit cards, and constant cash withdrawals can be expensive. Be prepared.
- When dining in a restaurant, be prepared to pay in cash. At the end of the meal, the waiter will ask you if you would like to pay together or separate ("Zusammen oder getrennt?"). If you opt to pay separately, you will be asked to say what you ordered, and then the waiter will give you a total. It's polite to round up by **1-2 Euros** as a tip. No need for 15-20% as is the custom in the US.
- If you plan to travel before or after the program, study guidebooks carefully to get a sense of the cost of intercity transportation, hotels or hostels, and

restaurants in the cities you plan to visit.

## **PACKING SMART**

- The weather is much cooler than the summer on the East Coast. One student reported bringing too many shorts and says he wished he had brought more pants. It is a good idea to take along a sweater or a hoodie. However, the weather is variable, and might be both cold and hot: you need to pack for both.
- Bring a small backpack or duffel for weekend trips.
- A good way to keep a passport “with you” at all times is to scan your passport and email it to yourself. Access to your passport, therefore, will be possible at any computer with internet access.
- Place identification labels (including a contact number at your destination) on the inside and outside of each of your bags.
- Be sure to pack one set of clothes and any prescriptions you will need in your carry-on, just in case checked luggage is lost or delayed.
- Don’t forget your medication! Carry it in the original container, and bring a copy of your prescription with you, to be safe, in case customs agents or police request it.

## **COURSEWORK**

- “Plan on using the internet on campus.”

## **PREPARE YOURSELF**

- “Pre-departure meetings were useful in helping us know what to expect.”
- Breakfast is different from what you would expect at home. Germans often lay out a spread of cheeses, meats (such as salami or ham), butter, and jams, along with various types of bread. A type of granola called Müsli served with yogurt, hard-boiled eggs, and coffee or tea is also common.

## **GERMAN CULTURE**

- Germans pride themselves on punctuality. NEVER be late!
- Germans tend to eat with their fork in their left hand, and their knife in their right hand. They keep both utensils in their hands while eating.
- Germans are extremely sensitive about issues involving violent conflict and war. Only two or three generations separate German society from the horrible tragedies of the Second World War. For some, there are still issues of guilt and responsibility that remain unresolved. Other people, including German university students, are simply tired of talking about the past. Any references to WWII, the Third Reich, or the Nazis should be done with care.
- Cars are much more expensive in Germany, as are driver’s licenses! New German friends may be shocked at just how little you paid to earn your license.
- Classical music is an important part of the national culture; Germans greatly enjoy attending concerts, the theater, and the opera. Both Potsdam and Berlin have ample opportunities to enjoy a cultural event. The Berliner Ensemble, in Berlin, deserves special mention: it was founded by Bertolt Brecht, and showcases plays by famous German playwrights, including Brecht himself and Heinrich von Kleist.
- Germans LOVE soccer. SV Babelsberg is the local team. Try to attend a game!

- Talk to the locals. Use your German. They will be a valuable resource as you try to see things through a German lens.

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## Contact Information

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### Reves Center Contacts

You may call the Reves Center and its advisors at the numbers below between 8am and 5pm (Virginia time), Monday through Friday. In case of an emergency that falls outside of these times, please call William & Mary Campus Police at (757) 221-4596. Campus police will then forward your call to the correct person or office.

**GEO Center Advisor:** Laura McDonald ([lbmcdonald@wm.edu](mailto:lbmcdonald@wm.edu)) +001 (757) 221-2003

Reves Center for International Studies

College of William and Mary

P. O. Box 8795

Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795

Fax – (757) 221-3597

\*To call the U.S. from abroad: 001+ (Area Code) + phone number

### In Germany:

Program Director: Professor Robert Leventhal ([rsleve@wm.edu](mailto:rsleve@wm.edu))

### Host Institution (Uni Potsdam)

Frau Maria Schulze

Universität Potsdam, Leiterin, Akademisches Auslandsamt

Am Neuen Palais 10

D-14469 Potsdam

Haus 9, Raum 018

Tel: 0049 0 331 977 1724

Fax: 0049 0 331 977 4283

Email: [maria.schulze.ii@uni-potsdam.de](mailto:maria.schulze.ii@uni-potsdam.de)

Embassy of the United States – Berlin

Consular Section

Routine calls: 030/832-9233

Emergencies only: 030/8305-0 8:30 am until 12:00 noon Monday-Friday