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Class takes Honors student to London for new experiences
by Sam Micallef

Over the long (or short – depending on who you are) five weeks of winter break, many Western students participated in a variety of activities: working, visiting family, relaxing, skiing, being brain-dead, or even learning during January term. As you may know, Western offers an assortment of classes for students to take over the winter break on campus. This year, however, thirteen of WKU's students traveled to London, England, to study works by and visit sites associated with William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, John Keats, Virginia Woolf, and others. One of WKU's Honors students, Kaitlen Osburn, was one of the lucky students who spent her winter break doing just that. The trip was sponsored by the Cooperative Center for Study Abroad (CCSA); therefore other schools also participated in traveling to London during this time, including NKU and EKU. Leading Western's class was none other than Honors professor, Dr. James Flynn. Osburn said that Dr. Flynn was an excellent professor to have as a study-abroad teacher and highly recommended him.

"He was really energetic about teaching us, and you could tell that he knew the material well," stated Osburn.

The trip lasted two weeks, from December 26 until January 8. There were three day trips to Canterbury, Bath, Stonehenge, and Stratford, the birthplace of William Shakespeare. Of course, London is where most of the time was spent. Sights included were the Canterbury Cathedral, the Dover Castle, the Roman Bath, the Globe Theatre, St. Paul's Cathedral, the British Library, and more.

Four theatrical productions were also provided, but majority of the rest of the time was spent doing what the students wanted to do. They were free to wonder London as they pleased. Kaitlen, as a performing arts major, enjoyed other theatrical shows, or visiting the local pubs.

Study abroad trips are obviously not just about seeing the sights of another country, but also about learning new things and studying. The group met as an actual sit down class only about three or four times. Selected reading included A Christmas Carol, Much Ado About Nothing, and other handouts.

Osburn commented about the course, "The work wasn't too overbearing and a good amount. For me, the way everything was arranged was the perfect mix." Class also continued out on the tours and excursions.

One of the most valuable aspects of studying abroad has to offer is seeing a different country or a new culture. Osburn personally loved what England had to offer. She said, "You wouldn't think that [England] would be that different since we speak the same language and wear the same clothes, but it was a completely different culture." She felt that England is more culturally diverse than the United States and that the locals were very friendly.

Good friends were also easy to find even if the students didn't know each other prior to leaving the airport. The main concern to studying abroad is the program cost. However, there are different scholarships available and sponsorships to make the cost more affordable. Most students agree that no matter how much money they spend, it is always well worth it. Literary London was Kaitlen Osburn's first study abroad experience, and she loved it, recommending studying abroad to everyone. She said that she would definitely like to study abroad again and, "If it was free, I would all the time."