

Full name: Lori Tsesvan

Email: lori.tsesvan@gmail.com

Degree Program at TAU: MSc in Organizational Behavior

Host University: New York University (NYU)

Exchange term: Fall 2020 (4 months online)

Exchange Experience

About the country and city

Studying at Stern in general is a unique experience from all perspectives, but studying at Stern during Covid-19 remotely is a once in a life-time experience, to say the least.

Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to experience NYU, Stern or NYC properly as I had wished due to the unique and unusual circumstances of the Corona Epidemic. However, this exchange program has been one of the best things I have ever done.

Though I did not have the full living experience, the face to face networking, the late nights downtown with friends or the coffee breaks in Washington Square park (which is with no doubt one of my favorite spots in the city), I still recommend it with all my heart and soul.

The experience for me was mind-opening, enriching, challenging and fun.

About the Host University

As previously mentioned, I did not experience the campus physically but from my previous visits, I can still say that NYU has its own magic, such that no other university can offer, in my opinion.

Social Activity: During this fall semester which I participated remotely, time difference was not in my favor and I did not find the time or energy to participate in social activities as I wished (wine workshop or yoga class at 3 am is not that easy, after all). With that being said, I can say there were many options, even with all restrictions that made frontal meetings not relevant.

There is a wide variety of clubs at NYU and everyone can find one that suits them. Moreover, there is a variety of activities, lectures, virtual meetings, etc. specifically

designed for exchange students. You can check the calendar, NYU Stern Campus Groups portal and the Clubs page to keep yourself updated.

Career Center: As an exchange student you have full access to the career center network and website that offers a wide variety of job offerings.

Courses and professors

The academic level is high, exactly as it should be, but this is challenging and not frightening. The academic experience (even with Zoom) has turned out to exceed all my expectations. The lecturers bring to class their own professional experience, they use real-life examples, up to date cases and news, and that has made all the difference. Classes are highly dynamic and the professors do all they can to engage the students. Furthermore, they encourage networking and student participation in class.

Managerial Decision Making (Prof. Zur Shapira, 1.5 credits)

This course is more like a workshop than a classic theoretical course. It includes a wide variety of topics and aspects and encourages you to embrace new perspectives towards decision making in both your personal and professional life. It is spread over 3 full Sundays (7 hours each) with a break in the middle. The course combines theoretical lectures, guest lectures, team sessions (discussions and exercises of all kinds) etc. It is a very experiential and practical course. Prof. Zur is an experienced and knowledgeable lecturer. He is very pleasant and cordial. You should take into consideration that the course includes a heavy load of assignments and readings during a short period of time plus a final exam. However, most of the assignments are really interesting and positively challenging.

Game Theory (Prof. Robert Seamans, 3 credits)

Prof. Robert Seamans is a wonderful professor. He makes sure all students feel comfortable in class and encourages students to share their opinions. Each class revolves around a different, yet related topic of game theory and includes important terms, different types of “games” and different perspectives of this world. The course also emphasizes game theory in real life examples and issues such as politics, love, news etc. The course assignments are all in teams (same team throughout the whole course) and they are fun, mind-opening and not too complex. I highly recommend taking this course.

Strategic Design (Prof. Kabaliswaran, 3 credits)

Prof. Kabi is one of a kind – he is a real character as you say – always comes with positive energy to class. Each class focuses on a completely different topic from performance evaluation, work-life balance to ERP systems. This course really emphasized that difference (and gap) between strategy in organization to its optimal implementation in the field. It is a very ‘hands on’, diverse and light course and it involves 2 main projects to be handed and presented in teams. Each class requires pre-class readings (most are pretty light) and in-class exercises in teams. Great course!

Foundations of Entrepreneurship (Prof. Glen Okun, 3 credits)

Prof. Okun is a great professor that brings rich life and work experience to class. He is sharp and cynical and makes class fun. Each class covers a couple of case studies which you discuss in class with the professor, alongside a group discussion including all kinds of exercises using tools and methods learned in class. This class is relevant for anyone who is interested in launching a venture or being on the other side of VCs and other investment funds. Moreover, this course can also serve as a general basic knowledge platform for people who do not have this background. Though if that is the case you need to take into consideration that some of the issues will not be that easy for you (reading financial reports etc. but that is mostly the means and not the purpose). Apart from required readings before each class (which vary in terms of length and complexity), there are three assignments: an individual midterm, a group assignment and a final team paper, so the course load is ok.

Living expenses

Most expenses were not relevant since I did my exchange semester remotely. However, depending on the course and the required materials, most lecturers demand to purchase reading materials. Costs vary, but from my personal experience, the average cost per course was about 60\$.

Tips

Just do it! Despite quarantine, lockdown or any other restrictions– participate (or postpone if you can, but definitely not miss the opportunity).

Participate in class, and try doing it from the beginning – your self-confidence, your English and your experience will get much better with time.

Try to take advantage of all the “extras” – this is a real bonus, especially if you are in NY live of course (clubs, trips, hangouts etc.)

If possible, I recommend finishing all of your mandatory courses at TAU, so you won't have any constraints. In addition, try to take courses that are less in your “comfort zone” and ones that don't exist at TAU.