

Biography

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English Language Teaching Assistantship Program in Austria

“What will you do after college?” I admit there was a time when I was intimidated by that question. The prospect of life after college has loomed over me ever since I first came to Colby as a freshman. While the answer, “I don’t know” may come from many of my peers, I count myself lucky that I can tell people I study German and Philosophy, and I know what I am going to do with it. I want to be a teacher.

I found German language and culture fascinating from the very beginning, when on my first day of high school, I sat down in Frau Soldan’s class. I was assigned what would become the first of many Übungen (Excercises). For many years, German was my favorite subject, and I knew that, at least on some level, I wanted to continue to pursue it in college. My life after college was a question which caused me to hesitate when it came time to declare a major at the end of my freshman year. I was paralyzed by the fear that come graduation day, I would be thrown out on the street, diploma in hand, with nowhere to go. Despite that worry, I eventually declared myself a German Language and Literature major with a Philosophy minor, keeping in mind that, perhaps next year, I would find a more commonly taken course of study.

Everything changed during my sophomore year at Colby. Early in the year, I spoke with my advisor, who recommended that I study abroad in Germany, not just for one semester as is typical, but for twelve whole months. She encouraged me to take my interest in German language and literature to a new level; to immerse myself in the culture I had been studying for the last four years. This was the opportunity I had been waiting for. I no longer felt like I was floating aimlessly through my education. I had a goal, and something I was passionate about. My career at Colby and beyond crystallized into an astonishingly clear path.

I was accepted into the Lewis and Clark in Munich program later that year and from early September, 2007 to late July 2008, I lived in Munich and took classes at the Ludwig-Maximillians-Universität. This was a year that was, without question, the best yet of my entire life. I took every opportunity to travel and meet Germans, as well as my fellow international students. Our program also included a week long excursion to Austria. As much as I enjoyed living in Munich, my stay in Vienna completely changed my assumptions about what life in a European city could be like. Coming from a relatively homogenous neighborhood, I was immediately blown away by the diversity and richness of Viennese culture. After my trip to Austria, I returned to Munich with an invigorated excitement for life in a German-speaking country. I delighted in conversation and greedily devoured every bit of information passed on to me. Each day provided me with a new experience and I was equally happy discussing U.S. Politics and current affairs with German friends, as I was when sharing a meal with a Professor at our weekly Stammtisch. I felt at home almost immediately, a feeling which I must admit, surprised me. I found myself constantly playing the role of both teacher and student, acting as a proud ambassador one minute, and being humbled by fascinating new points of view the next. When my year was up, I could hardly believe it was already time to go home.

Now that I have come back, I no longer worry about life after college. I know that if I continue to pursue my course of study with the same passion that led me to Munich, I will find a career that suits me as comfortably and naturally as those first months abroad. Acting

as an American student, teacher and ambassador overseas was the best thing I have done in my entire life, and I am anxious to return.