

Meredith Smith, 3/06:

If you are thinking about studying abroad, DO IT! The DIS program in Copenhagen is a great choice for biology majors. There are a few different choices of science programs here that can count towards your biology major. I am in the Marine Biology and Ecology program here at DIS, and the classes are actually taught at Roskilde University, a Danish school. However, only American DIS students are in the classes, and the professors are DIS faculty and they teach in English. It's a bit of a commute from central Copenhagen, but we get access to the Roskilde University library and other facilities. The classes I'm taking at Roskilde are Marine Biology of European Coastal Waters taught by Frank Leck Fotel and Ecology and Human Impact in the North and Baltic Seas taught by Kathe Rose Jensen. The marine biology class focuses on the flora and fauna in Danish waters, and there is a good bit of experiential learning during our four or five "study tours" where we go out and identify the specimens we find on Danish coasts. I feel well prepared for this class thanks to Dr. Kusher's zoology class! However, due to the short semester, with class only meeting twice a week, the time doesn't allow for an in-depth look at the biology; the lectures are more like an introductory level biology class. Ecology, however, is quite a new field for me. I haven't taken a class like this one before, but the professors are very knowledgeable in their fields and help us learn using connections between the two courses as well as observations from our study tours to the coasts. The classes also focus on scientific writing, and we will write a research paper for each class. Otherwise, the classes are similar in format to Wofford biology classes, with powerpoint lectures and quizzes on readings. However, during our long study tour, which is a week in Poland at the University of Gdansk marine research center, we will be working in groups with professors from the University of Gdansk on their research projects. I am actually in a group that will study the effects of size on the metabolism of marine organisms. It sounds more like graduate work than undergraduate! I think it will be a good experience, and it will help me decide if marine biology and ecology are the fields I might like to continue in. So although we don't have weekly labs here, we have plenty of hands on work! The focus on scientific writing is also a bit different than Wofford, although I feel well prepared for it thanks to Dr. Davis' physiology class and Dr. Hettes' neuroscience class.