

# Dickinson in Germany (Bremen)

## William G. and Elke Durden Dickinson Program in Bremen, est. 1985

### Core course

**Comparative Cultures: USA-Germany** uses the university and city of Bremen as laboratory, examining German-American cultural relations with a mixed group of Bremen and Dickinson students, adding excursions and film screenings. Students explore the experience of culture shock, the difference between American and German culture and everyday life, structural differences in American and German public institutions, historical ties between the two countries, historic concepts and symbols, auto and hetero stereotypes, differing relationships to national culture, the effect of Germany's past on contemporary consciousness.

### DAAD grants, SIRF grants, MPH grant, and independent research projects

Several of our Bremen students (at least 1-2 each cohort) receive prestigious grants from the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) which are tied to a project they propose before coming to Bremen. Unfortunately, we don't have many written records of those projects. One student from the cohort two years ago, a computer science major, took his project/internship very seriously and was an incredible help to a severely underfunded, non-profit project called DaSinD (on German women's literature) by modernizing and reprogramming their huge database.

Two students have received Dickinson's SIRF grants: An earth science major participated in an ecological research project on pollution led by a professor from the prestigious Alfred-Wegener-Institute for Polar and Ocean Research, Bremerhaven. He sampled and analyzed submarine groundwater discharge in the Wadden Sea, a World Heritage site at the German North Sea. Another student traveled to different German cultural sites on the trails of the Grimm Brothers' fairy tales. (<http://blogs.dickinson.edu/bremen/category/student-research-and-grants/>)

Another student has used the MPH grant to produce an impressive and exhaustive document listing all kinds of "Sustainable Organizations in the Bremen Area" which was actually used and helpful for the preparation of a Sustainability Summer Program in Bremen in 2012. As an environmental science major, speaking and visiting those institutions helped her in her future trajectory (she later did a master in Ecology in Germany).

Three students completed an independent study project: one on film studies, one on ageing societies, comparing the US, Germany, and Japan. Last year, a student completed an impressive independent study on a very current topic: the NATOS's 2% goal and German attitudes towards it (Germany has not been fulfilling this obligation for years). To that end, he interviewed politicians from five German parties in Berlin and elsewhere and produced an assessment and prediction of possible German political measures depending on the outcome of the September elections. All those independent study projects were supervised by a professor from the Uni Bremen and, thereby, strengthened our ties with the academic community of our host and partner institution.

### Internships

Students have engaged in a wide variety of internship experiences that often help them fulfill the internship notation requirement for their majors. Recently, students have interned at the Bremen Information Center for Human Rights and Development (BIZME), Center for Clinical Psychology and Rehabilitation (Uni Bremen, Psychotherapeutic Children's Clinic), Bremen City Theatre, Adult Education Center, Institute for Intercultural and International Studies (INIIS), International Heiner Müller Society (Berlin), School Center Walle (high school in Bremen).

Please find student reports on some of those internships at our blog: <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/bremen/category/internships-jobs-and-community-service/>

### Student jobs and community service

A few years ago, some students served on two weekends in winter at the humanitarian institution Soup Angels, serving soup and other food to homeless people in the city of Bremen.

Two years ago, some students received a one-time personal reimbursement from their health insurance and donated half of the sum to the private refugee project Flight Room (Fluchtraum) in Bremen.

Two years ago, a computer science major did a student job as an IT worker at the Informatik department at the University of Bremen, helping the university staff with technical issues, thereby getting to know the interior structure of our partner institution. He also supported our program in computer matters.

From the past group, one student participated in the mentoring project "Balu and You," mentoring a schoolchild from Bremen.

From the past group, another student served as a student assistant to the International and Erasmus Coordinator of the Department of Languages and Literary Sciences at Uni Bremen. In this position, the student helped organize the study abroad of international students at Uni Bremen and substituted for her superior during her vacation. The professor was very pleased with our student's work and has asked already if we could possibly recommend her someone again next year.

All those activities have been presented and supported by us as options to our students yet remained voluntary. Many students have shown remarkable personal and academic progress and found the time and energy to engage in the afore-mentioned activities. Those proved to be beneficial for both the students and the institutions they worked with. Our students received a much deeper insight into the German working culture, authentic everyday life situations and societal spheres outside of the university "bubble." The institutions could profit from our students' organizational and PR skills as well as from their English language competencies and dedication.