



Connecting in Prague

Written by Stephanie Valdivia, CET Film Production at FAMU | Spring 2017

Prague, a city that originally appeared as a figment of my imagination became a reality this semester. It is city that has gone on to be a major part of my life and now holds a special place in my heart. My original intentions for the trip was to experience FAMU and see it as a potential grad school after college, but that was the last thing I got.

I was an American girl in a foreign land and the language barrier was highly conflicting, but it wasn't until I arrived to my first Czech class that I felt an adrenaline to learn the language by which I was surrounded by. My identity as a Hispanic girl in a diversely limited country, emphasized my need to adapt to the country. It is therefore, that the most enlightening experiences I have had on this trip were with the Czechs I encountered in my time in Prague. It was the people that we often ignore and the people we are often scared to speak to due to language barriers, that brought me the most joy.

My relationship to the kebab man down the street, my elderly neighbor, barista, and even local graffiti artists in Tesnov, all brought me out of shell and exposed me to the true life of Prague. I was lucky enough to experience things through CET's emphasis in emerging ourselves in the culture. It was the program's emphasis on open-mindedness and adventure that allowed me to see things I never thought I would see. One thing in particular was the Cottage Trip organized by Jana, which gave me the incredible experience of being in a Czech Cottage for a weekend and learn the culture of the region.

This is why I advise future CET students to just learn from every experience and every person you encounter, because each experience is an experience you didn't have before. You never know the things you will see and eventually grow to be a part of you. I know Prague has made huge impact on me and I am forever grateful for CET in providing me this experience of a lifetime.