Hannah Shackelford
“Pre-Law and Criminal Justice in the UK” Summer 2015

Study Abroad: The Most Important Thing You’ll do in College

My Study Abroad experience was incredible. I learned more in the month I spent in Great Britain than I do in an entire year of classes. Seeing places I’ve read about in English classes and studied in History classes in real life made everything I’ve ever dreamed about England and Scotland seem so much more authentic. Visiting museums with priceless art and artifacts I’ve only ever read about or seen on a screen was more valuable than any paper I could ever write or any lecture I could ever attend. Watching the sheep-covered British countryside slide by from a train window was more magical than just about anything I’ve done in North Carolina.

I would study abroad again in a heartbeat. I wish I had started sooner, perhaps even the summer of my freshman year, so that I could go and do a semester or two abroad as well. Every single American college student should study abroad. If I could tell one thing to other students struggling to decide whether or not to go, I would tell them to do it, no questions asked. Don’t worry about the money, the time, or your fears. Just go and see the world. I felt safer walking around London, one of the biggest cities in the world, than I do walking down any street in America. Being independent and in charge of yourself in such a big new place is empowering, invigorating, and exciting.

My only regret about my Study Abroad experience is that I couldn’t go for longer. Study Abroad is an overwhelming adventure that everyone should experience while they’re in college. I changed and grew and learned so much while I was living in London. I can never replace that experience and I would never want to. Study Abroad changed my life.