

STEPS Students Report

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Courses

I had studied at Graduate School of Management in St. Petersburg State University as an exchange student. I took four courses there. They are "Regulatory Impact Assessment", "Sustainable Territory Development", "Supply Chain and Operation Management" and "International Oil and Gas Market". First two courses are offered by Department of Public Management. Those courses seem to be closely related to my major in Japan, Civil Engineering. Through these two lectures, I learnt some important concepts and practical methodology to evaluate the effect of policies.

The other two lectures focus on more business-related topics. Before studying in GSOM I did not regard supply chain as a critical factor to make company competitive. In Japan it seems to me that company mainly concentrate on product itself. In fact, supply chain is another source of competitiveness as well as product. Russia is one of the largest gas and oil producer in the world while Japan is almost completely dependent on foreign countries. I understood the basic characteristics and recent trend in natural resource market. It is quite useful to understand the complicated geopolitics from resources' perspective of view.

Lecture styles

At the beginning, it was a bit hard for me to keep pace with the lectures since I had no background knowledge on management and business activities. In addition, lecture style is more interactive than that in Japan. It took some time to get accustomed to European lecture style. Eventually I got able to contribute to group discussion. I learnt it is important to make use of my strength for contribution to team. In my case, I am relatively good at calculation and quantitative evaluation thanks to scientific education offered by the University of Tokyo. European students participate in discussion aggressively. They are generally good at expressing their opinions in logical way. In Japan, students' response to professors' questions are short and sometimes just one or two words. In contrast, European students' response are long and sentences. Their remarks sound persuasive. I assumed they are trained to do so. I would like to emulate such good points.

Group Assignments

As a part of group work, students are supposed to submit group assignments occasionally. I felt east Asian students usually try to do their best every time. On the other hand, students from central Asia are not keen to work together as a team member. Through different kind of the group assignments over the semester, I could learn way of thinking on assignment or collaboration varies significantly.

Art

In St. Petersburg, most of the residents are familiar with art, thanks to the Hermitage Museum which is one of the best museums on earth. Students can enter free of charge that I visit there 10 times in total. In comparison to museums in Japan, both quality and quantity of the works are extraordinary. I asked some Russian and international students studying there if they go to the museum occasionally. Most of them answered "Yes". They fully make use of the special opportunity of impressed by masterpieces of art.



Conclusion

Through my four and half months stay in St. Petersburg, I experienced what I could not do in Japan. It was so lucky that I came across this great opportunity to study in Russia. I really appreciate professors and staffs responsible for this program.