

## **Michael Horn: Univerzita Karlova (Charles University, Prague)**

### **UQ Program: Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Arts, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year**

As I flew out of a bright Brisbane summer into an icy European winter, I was already pretty sure I was going to have the time of my life. Prague did not disappoint.

The city was the most beautiful I have ever seen—gorgeous buildings from every architectural period I could imagine (even my communist-built dorm had a certain charm), great parks everywhere for relaxing in once the snow melted, and the Vltava river winding through the middle of it all, sparkling in the light from the theatres and bars. The Philosophy and Arts Faculty of Charles University was in the very centre of all this, with lecture halls commanding views of the castle that were stunning to the point of being seriously distracting. The courses I took did prove engaging enough to hold my attention though—Charles University allowed me to take masters seminars in literature as an undergraduate, and these were some of the most rewarding courses I have ever studied.

More than the city or the university though, it was the people I met, and the experiences we shared, that made my semester on exchange such a wonderful one. Charles University has a great international community, and I met friendly, interesting people from all over the world, as well as the Czech Republic. (Lots of people told me Czechs were not very friendly, but while this may sometimes be true of staff in restaurants and shops, it extends no further than that—I can't imagine anyone friendlier over a beer than many of the Czechs I met.) Together, we explored the many parks, cafés, clubs, beer gardens, theatres, museums, galleries, and especially pubs of Prague. We adventured further too, into the rest of the Czech Republic, and the beautiful surrounding countries.

The challenges of moving to a country where I knew no one and spoke almost none of the language, giving way to the delights of living like a local, allowed me to learn a great deal about myself, and kindled in me a thirst for further adventure. Undoubtedly though, the friendships forged on exchange are the most valuable product of what is in every respect an unforgettable experience.

#### 5 Top Tips:

- Drink coffee at The Globe, eat goulash at Kavárna Slavia, drink beer at U Sudu, and party at Cross Club
- expats.cz is great for getting a flat, or anything else you need for living in Prague
- Go on the international club trips—brilliant times!
- Many subjects listed on the online system as being taught in Czech were actually taught in English—you might have more choices than you think
- Go as soon as you can, for as long as you can!