

Aix-en-Provence, France

Program Handbook

Spring 2011-12

The Academic Program in Aix-en-Provence (APA) is a consortium program offered through Indiana University, University of Michigan, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This program handbook supplements materials you received from your home study abroad office and provides you with the most up-to-date program information and advice available at the time of creation. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad. Your flexibility and willingness to adjust to these changes as they occur will help you in having the most rewarding study abroad experience possible.

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Contact Information

On-Site Program Information

Your primary contacts in Aix-en-Provence, France will be:

Professor Kelly Sax, PhD Program Faculty Director (2011-12)
Senior Lecturer/Director of French Language Instruction
Department of French and Italian, Indiana University
ksax@indiana.edu

Jeanine Féral, APA Assistant Director
apadirectriceadjointe@gmail.com

Patricia Reffay, APA Administrative Coordinator
apa.assistant@gmail.com

Program Address

Academic Program in Aix-en-Provence (APA)

30, avenue Victor Hugo

13100 Aix-en-Provence France

Tel: 011-33-4-42-38-11-51

Emergency Cellular Phone: 011-33-6-85-75-50-41

When calling from within France, replace 011-33 above with just 0.

The APA office is generally open Monday through Friday, 9:00-12:00 and 2:00-5:00. Please give this program address to your family and friends for sending mail to you throughout the length of the program. When sending a package, be sure to label it "SANS VALEUR COMMERCIALE"

Mail should be sent to:

Student Name
C/O Academic Program in Aix-en-Provence
30, avenue Victor Hugo
13100 Aix-en-Provence, France

Home University Contact Information

Indiana University

Office of Overseas Study
Franklin Hall 303
Bloomington, IN 47405
Tel: 812-855-9304, Fax: 812-855-6452
E-mail: overseas@indiana.edu
Web Site: www.indiana.edu/~overseas

For Academic Advising:

Casey Vargo
Study Abroad Advisor
E-mail: clvargo@indiana.edu
Tel: 812-855-5607

For Program Issues:

Melissa Thorne
Senior Student Services Coordinator
E-mail: mcthorne@indiana.edu
Tel: 812-855-1141

University of Michigan

Center for Global and Intercultural Study
930 North University, 1712 Chemistry Building
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1055
Tel: 734-764-4311, Fax: 734-764-3229
Web Site: www.lsa.umich.edu/oip

For Administrative Matters:

Elizabeth Mekaru
Tel: 734-764-4311
Fax: 734-764-3229
E-mail: emekaru@umich.edu

For Financial Matters:

CGIS Program Advisor
Tel: 734-764-4311
Fax: 734-764-3229
E-mail: oip-france@umich.edu

For French Concentration Advising:

Elizabeth Pariano
Undergraduate Advising Coordinator
Department of Romance Languages and
Literatures
4113 Modern Languages Building
Tel: 734-936-2520
Fax: 734-764-8163
E-mail: epariano@umich.edu

For General and Program Advising & Grades

CGIS Program Advisor
Tel: 734-764-4311
Fax: 734-764-3229
E-mail: oip-france@umich.edu

University of Wisconsin-Madison

International Academic Programs (IAP)
106 Red Gym, 716 Langdon Street
Madison, WI 53706
Tel: 608-265-6329, Fax: 608-262-6998
Web: www.studyabroad.wisc.edu

Anna Seidel-Quast

IAP Study Abroad Advisor
Tel: 608-890-3584
E-mail: seidelquast@studyabroad.wisc.edu

Emergency Contact Information

In case of an emergency, call the main IAP number **(608) 265-6329** between 7:45 am.- 4:30 pm. Monday-Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP staff on call at **(608) 516-9440**.

Embassy Registration

All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-line at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country's embassy or consulate.

U.S. Embassy in Paris, France
2, avenue Gabriel
75382 Paris Cedex 08
Tel: (33)1-43-12-22-22
Fax: (33)1-42-66-97-83
<http://www.amb-usa.fr>

U.S. Consulate General in Marseille
Place Varian Fry
13286 Marseille Cedex 6
Tel: (33)4-91-54-92-00
Fax: (33)4-91-55-56-95 (from the U.S.), 04-91-55-09-47 (in France)
<http://www.amb-usa.fr/marseille/>

Program Dates

You are required to remain in Aix until the conclusion of the academic year. Do not finalize any travel plan for your return to the U.S. before you have all the dates of your final exams (and make-up exams for Sciences Po). Unlike in the U.S., French professors do not usually change exam schedules in order to accommodate students. Failing to take exams will affect your grade.

Tentative Spring 2012 Academic Calendar

January 4	Students arrive in Aix
January 5	Guided tour of Aix, and general information meeting
January 6	Placement Exam and information meetings : administrative and housing
January 9-13	Intensive Course
Early- January	Advising conferences with FD regarding selection for second semester courses for <i>UP</i> and <i>Sciences Po</i> students.
January 9	2 nd semester starts at <i>Sciences Po</i>
January 16	2 nd semester starts at <i>UP</i>
Early February	Drop-add deadline for courses at <i>UP</i> and <i>Sciences Po</i> (to be announced)
February 26- March 4	One-week break at <i>Sciences Po</i> and <i>UP</i>
April 9	Holiday - Easter monday
April 16- April 21 & May 9 - 15	Final examinations at <i>Sciences Po</i>
April 22 - May 6	Spring break at <i>Sciences Po</i> and <i>UP</i>
May 1	Holiday – International Labor Day
May 7 -May 25	Final examinations at <i>UP</i>
May 8	Holiday – Armistice 1945
May 17	Holiday – Ascension Day
June 11 – June 23	Final Make up examinations only at <i>Sciences Po</i>
	End of semester: Plan on staying in Aix until the end of your exams or make-up exams as needed.

The vacation periods may vary from one institution to another, and you will need to check them carefully at the *UP* and at *Sciences Po* as well as with your professors. When a legal holiday falls on a Thursday or Tuesday, many people at public and private institutions and enterprises include Friday or Monday as part of the holiday in order to make a long weekend (called *faire le pont*).

You should check with your professors if their classes will meet on such days. If class meetings are canceled due to holidays, strikes or absence of the professor, there will usually be extra make-up sessions at the end of the semester.

Students need to consult with the professor and watch bulletin boards so as not to miss make-*UP* classes. Plan to stay until the end of the exam period so as not to jeopardize your academic work.

Preparations Before Leaving

Immigration Documents & Pre-Departure Items to Gather

Passport

A passport is needed to travel to France and to obtain your student visa. Apply immediately for a passport if you do not already have one. Passport information and application forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website (<http://travel.state.gov/passport>). If you already

have your passport, make sure it will be valid for at least six (6) months beyond the length of your stay abroad.

Visa

You will receive detailed instructions about applying for your visa from your study abroad advisor.

Registration with the Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII)

You are now required to register with the OFII during the first three months of your stay in France. The APA office will help you fill out the documents during the first administrative meeting. As part of your visa materials, you will complete the top portion of the residence form and the French Consulate will complete a section and return it to you. Upon arrival in France, you will need to complete the section labeled: **“RUBRIQUES A COMPLETER APRES LA DELIVRANCE DU VISA ET AVANT L’ENVOI A L’OFII”** with your address, telephone number and visa information. You will also need to gather the following documents to take to the OFII:

- Original passport
- Photocopy of photo ID page in Passport
- Original Visa stamp in Passport
- Photocopy of visa stamp
- Copy of the stamp from Customs from your arrival in France
- Completed Residence Form
- Confirmation of housing
- Student ID
- Copy of the student ID
- One photo

Photographs - Total of 8*

- **Three (3)** passport full-face photographs which you will supply to your U.S. study abroad office. These photographs are required for a variety of documents for the program which the APA office needs before you arrive.
- **Two (2)** passport full-face photographs for your visa application (see visa section on pages 4-6)
- **Additional photographs** (minimum of 3) will be needed and can be obtained in France at numerous photos booths or camera stores. Photos are less expensive in France than in the U.S. Note that photos for official documents need to conform to the same requirements as passport photos.

Proof of Health Insurance

We advise participants to take written proof of health insurance coverage to the visa appointment.

- **Indiana students** are automatically covered by a policy that is included in the Indiana University program fee.
- **Michigan students** are automatically covered by HTH Worldwide Insurance, which is included in the U-M program fee. A letter of proof of coverage can be generated to meet the visa application requirements. Ask your study abroad advisor for the letter.

- **Wisconsin students** are automatically covered by CISI health insurance, which is included in the UW-Madison program fee. The letter issued by IAP for visa application purpose states that students are covered by CISI.

Inoculations

We recommend that you consult with your health care professionals about any recommended inoculations, such as a tetanus shot, before departure. Ask your doctor if you need any shots to travel to countries outside of France (in North Africa, for example) as well. Be sure to bring with you all official records of your inoculations.

International Student ID Card (ISIC)

This card will be very useful to you in Europe, entitling you to a number of reduced student rates in fees and tickets including museums, concerts, movies, and rail and air travel. It also carries evacuation insurance as well as emergency legal, financial, and medical assistance. To apply for the ISIC, contact the STA Travel office nearest you. More information can be found online at www.isic.org.

- **Indiana, Michigan & Wisconsin students** are not required by their study abroad office to have an ISIC card, but it is recommended..

Pre-Departure Academic Preparations

Required Pre-Departure Conferences with Your Advisor

- **Indiana students:** You must complete the advising process with Overseas Study as outlined in the email sent to you by your study abroad advisor. You are ultimately responsible for meeting your degree requirements.
- **Michigan students:** You must fill out an advisor approval form with a concentration and/or an LSA general academic advisor. You are responsible for reviewing your status and requirements before departure.
- **Wisconsin students:** You must confer with your major advisor regarding your major prior to your departure for Aix and fill out an IAP Advising Worksheet which needs your major advisor's signature. See your acceptance email for details. If you have not declared your major, discuss this with the Faculty Director in Aix as soon as possible, before you begin selecting courses at the French institutions.

Language

It is important for you to keep up with the French language prior to your departure for Aix. You should review your favorite reference grammar book, which you might find useful to bring to Aix with you. The Academic Program in Aix has several copies of different grammar books, such as L.-F. Hoffmann's *L'Essentiel de la Grammaire Française*. The Program also has French dictionaries as well as an excellent encyclopedia. However, you will probably want to buy the *Petit Robert* or the *Petit Larousse* for daily use after you have arrived in France. In addition, you should become familiar with a good bilingual dictionary and bring it with you as well. Most students find either of the following two dictionaries very useful: *The Collins Robert French Dictionary* and *Harrap's French-English-French Dictionary*.

Literature

We strongly advise that you read as much French literature as possible before going to France. You might, for instance, enjoy reading works associated with Aix-en-Provence in particular or Provence in general. For example, the novels Zola sets in "Plassans" (his name for Aix), or the novels of Jean Giono, poems by René Char, Germaine Nouveau, and Jean de La Ceppède, and the letters of Mme de Sévigné.

Civilization

Read issues of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *L'Express*, *Le Point*, etc. before you leave for France. In addition, read newspapers such as *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, and *Libération*. These newspapers are available on the web. They will help you familiarize yourself with current issues in France.

For a better grasp of French society and Provence, read some of the following books:

- Carroll, Raymonde. *Evidences Invisibles: Américains et Français au quotidien*. Paris: Seuil, 1987. (It deals with the cultural differences between the Americans and French. Chapters include studies of "L'amitié," "Le téléphone," "Se renseigner," "Le couple", and body language).
- Mayle, Peter. *A Year in Provence*
- De Larabetti, Michael. *Tales from Provence*
- Fisher, M.F.K. *Two Cities in Provence*
- Guide Michelin (vert), *Provence* (Get the French version to help you build vocabulary).

Handling Money Abroad

We recommend that you bring enough funds in travelers checks IN EUROS to cover the first two months. We recommend travelers checks because you will need to have a fair amount of cash at your disposal when you first arrive. It is not wise to carry around large amounts of cash with you. In addition, your bank at home will set limits of how much cash you can withdraw each day, so it may be challenging if not impossible for you to withdraw the total amount that you will need by the time you need it. The costs you will have to pay upon your arrival are described in this handbook. You should contact your bank prior to your departure to find out what your daily limit is.

Students have the opportunity to open a bank account when they arrive in France, and that these traveler's checks can be deposited into the bank at that time.

There are many fees (including housing) that students must pay upon arrival in Aix. Traveler's checks have the advantage of being replaced if they are lost or stolen.

Traveler's checks are rather outdated, so you will have difficulty using them at stores. Depositing them into your bank account, however, should not pose any problem.

Here is a list of estimates of funds you will need upon arrival:

Temporary Hotel (Adagio Aparthotel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately 250 euros for 7 days in the temporary hotel if permanent housing is not available.
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Taxi fare for arrival day in Aix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 to 70 Euros depending upon arrival train station or airport
Rented room and Board : one month rent immediately upon arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 650 Euros
Rented Room: one month rent immediately upon arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 450 euros
Apartments: two months rent (deposit + one month rent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will need to pay the equivalent of two months' rent when signing the lease for the apartment (deposit + one month's rent). Monthly rent for apartments varies depending on the size of the apartment. You should calculate approximately 450 euros per student per month.
Tenant Insurance which includes personal liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenant insurance is mandatory for all housing in Aix apartment; approximately 40 euros for the semester.
<i>Registration with OFII</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Euros for the bus and metro fare to go to Marseille

Estimates of funds for items that you may find useful upon arrival:

Cell phone	Between 30-90 euros
Cell phone prepaid card	Between 15-45 euros
International calling card	Approximately 8 euros

Currency Exchange

Although many past participants have commented that one way of getting access to cash is by using ATM machines, you should still bring minimum of 100 euros in cash with you to cover your expenses other than the amount for your lodging for the first few days. Check with your bank or credit union for more information. Some banks like Chase will order currency for you while you are still in the US, though the exchange rate you receive is not as good as withdrawing money directly from an ATM.

In Europe, as a general rule, avoid buying foreign currency (either with travelers checks or cash) at airports, railroad stations, and especially hotels and stores: they charge higher fees than at currency exchange places, which in turn charge slightly higher fees than the banks. Do not depend on the exchange rate published in newspapers; it is a bank-to-bank rate, and what you will get is often at least 5% less. A good website to check typical cash rates is www.oanda.com.

NOTE: Checks, bank drafts as well as bank-to-bank transfers are assessed heavy fees and sometimes take weeks to process.

Using Credit Cards and Debit Cards in ATMs

A generally reliable way to get money from the U.S. is to use a debit/ATM card with a VISA logo. It is possible too to withdraw money from your VISA or MasterCard credit card, however credit card companies often charge very high interest rates for “cash advances”. IT IS IN YOUR BEST INTEREST TO FIND OUT WHAT THE FEES ARE BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE STATES. Using a debit card that withdraws directly from your checking account in the U.S. will likely avoid these fees. Regardless if you use a credit card or debit card, you will likely be charged international transaction fees.

Machines that accept CIRRUS are more common than those that accept PLUS debit cards (see the back of your card for the CIRRUS logo). VISA is accepted in more places than AMERICAN EXPRESS or MASTER CARD.

Before you leave for France, notify your bank/credit card company the dates that you will be abroad. In trying to identify theft, banks will cancel debit/credit cards when they suspect any unusual card activity (i.e. a resident of the Midwest who suddenly makes a purchase in France).

If you charge purchases to your card, you will get a slightly better exchange rate than you will get at French banks. Groceries, personal items, clothes, train tickets, and many other items can be purchased with a card, though some stores may have a policy of accepting it only for purchases above a certain amount.

You should never type your PIN number when a third party can see it. It is better to lose your card, which can easily be cancelled, than to reveal your PIN number to a stranger.

Banking System

At your on-site orientation meeting in Aix, a bank employee will outline how French banks work and how you can open an account. It is highly recommended that you open an account for practical reasons.

Insurance

Sécurité Sociale (Health Insurance)

APA participants are required to be covered by the French system of *Sécurité Sociale* (health insurance). The fees for the *Sécurité sociale* will be paid for by the APA program, and the APA staff will assist in completing the required documents.

Travel Insurance

APA does not insure your luggage or your personal belongings while you are on the program or traveling. We recommend strongly that you take out travel insurance (especially with theft coverage), either from a local travel agent or from your own insurance agent.

Renter's/Liability Insurance

In addition to the required health insurance, you will also need to obtain “renter's insurance”, which is a type of insurance for your housing which includes personal liability insurance. Personal liability in the “renter's insurance” is needed to register at French universities and to do internships in the *lycées* or *collèges*. The Program works with an insurance company which can provide you this insurance for about 40 euros per person for the semester. (For more details on this mandatory insurance, see *Renter's Insurance* under *Living Abroad*.)

Packing

Past participants have recommended the following packing suggestions:

- A sleeping bag may be useful for extra warmth in your room or when staying in hostels or camping.
- Warm weather clothing (a warm coat, hat, gloves, a heavy sweater...) is needed for winter in Aix or when traveling in northern regions of France or Europe.
- Do your own research regarding local weather in Aix on websites such as <http://france.meteofrance.com> or www.aixenprovencetourism.com.
- Bed sheets are not furnished in most apartments, so be prepared to buy them upon your arrival.
- Prescription Drugs or special vitamins should be brought with you (a year's supply). Bring a letter from your physician certifying your medical need for the drugs and dosage and remember that is important to keep all medications in original bottles. If you do bring written prescriptions, make sure that they are written clearly and in generic terms.
- Contact lens solutions and products are twice as expensive in France, so it is recommended that you bring a semester's supply with you. Additionally, it is recommended that you bring glasses/contact lens prescriptions with you in case of loss or damage.
- The electricity current in France is 220 volts, whereas the U.S. is 110 volts. An adapter or converter may be necessary for certain electronic items. If you buy an adapter/converter, make sure it will work for the specific item for which you need it.
- Flip flops are very useful in showers when traveling.

Shipping

Packages sent from U.S. to France:

- Custom duties may be high (check your local post office for exact prices)
- Send packages to the program office:
Name of student
Academic Program in Aix-en-Provence (APA)
30, avenue Victor Hugo
13100 Aix-en-Provence France
- Write: "SANS VALEUR COMMERCIALE" on the front of the package.
- Do not send prescriptions or over-the-counter drugs.

Mail sent from France to the U.S.:

- Students should visit the local post office in Aix for information on shipping packages.
- Stamps are readily available at any "Tabac."
- Mailboxes for letters and postcards are located throughout the city.

Using Overnight Transporters:

- Customs duties can be very expensive, especially when packages from the US are sent via overnight transporter. The overnight transporter will pay customs and send you the bill for the customs fees even after having released your parcel.

Travel and Arrival Information

All participants are expected to make their own travel arrangements and must arrive in Aix on the first scheduled day of the program. Participants who choose to arrive earlier are responsible for making their own housing arrangements. APA program staff is not available to assist with early housing arrangements and luggage cannot be left at the program office.

Arrival by air: The closest airport to Aix-en-Provence is the Marseille-Provence airport (which is located near a city called Marignane, so it is also called sometimes the Marignane Airport).

Arrival by train: There are two different train stations (“gare”) associated with Aix: 1) the **gare SNCF Aix Centre-Ville** is located right in downtown Aix about 1 block from the APA program office; 2) the **Gare TGV** is the high speed train station and is located about 15 minutes by bus outside of Aix. Depending on where you are arriving from, you may arrive by train either by first going to downtown Marseille (Marseille-St. Charles) and from there taking a local train or bus to the downtown Aix train or bus station OR take the TGV (express train) directly to the “Aix TGV” train station (The TGV train will stop for only 3 minutes at the Aix TGV station, so be prepared to disembark very quickly!). If you arrive at the gare TGV there are regular shuttle buses (“navettes”) you can take to arrive in downtown Aix. For more information, consult: <http://www.aixenprovencetourism.com/aix-acces.htm#train>

Whether you arrive by plane or by train, we strongly recommend that you take a taxi to get to the temporary hotel when you first arrive in Aix, because moving around with a lot of luggage can be difficult and very tiring.

Arrival Day

Students will either be lodged directly in their permanent housing, or the Program will also have reserved rooms to be shared with other students for the first week at Aparthotel Adagio, 3 rue des Chartreux. Students lodged here will be responsible for payment of the rooms. The estimated cost of this hotel is indicated on page 7 of this handbook.

You are responsible for getting to the temporary hotel or to your French family’s apartment on the first day of the program (January 4, 2012).

If you decide not to take a taxi...

1. From the Marseille-Provence Airport

You can take one of the blue shuttle buses, which go directly to Aix. Look for the sign “*Navette Aix-en-Provence – Aéroport*”. These buses will take you to the bus station (*gare routière*) in Aix. Fare: 7.20 Euros.

2. From Aix TGV

You can get from the TGV station to Aix with a shuttle bus, which will drop you off at the bus station in downtown Aix. These shuttles run every 30 minutes and cost approximately 3.70 euros.

3. From Marseille (St. Charles) – the train station in Marseille

You can take the train or the bus (both located in the St Charles train station) to the center of Aix. Both run every 10-20 minutes.

Once in Aix, here are Google Map directions to the hotel Adagio:

From the downtown trainstation: <http://g.co/maps/m98rw>

From the Aix bus station: <http://g.co/maps/g5fb7>

Taxi

Taxi in Aix: **04 42 27 71 11**

Approximate fares to get to downtown Aix (Hotel Adagio) by taxi:

- From Marseille-Provence airport: 50 euros daytime and 60 euros after 7 p.m.
- From Marseille railway station: 60 euros daytime and 72 euros after 7 p.m.
- From Aix TGV railway station: 30 euros daytime and 40 euros after 7 p.m.
- From downtown Aix railway/bus station to hotel: 10 ~15 euros
- Price per suitcase: 1 euro.

SHARING A TAXI WITH OTHERS IS A GOOD WAY TO SAVE \$!

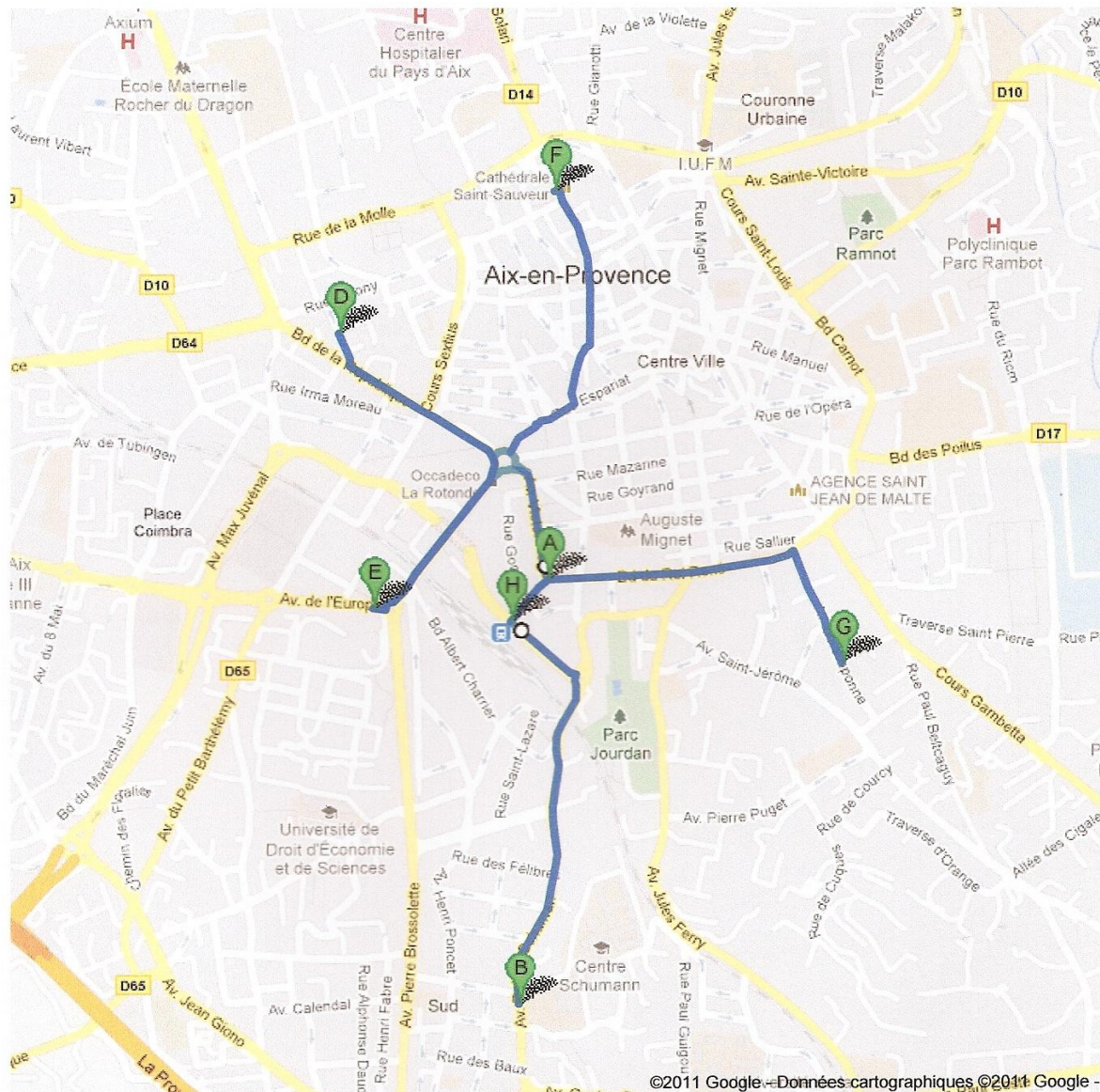
Here is a map and key showing the locations of places you'll want to know about when arriving in Aix:

- A. APA Program office: 30, Ave. Victor Hugo
- B. Centre Schumann (la fac-- where most students will attend classes)
- C. (Nothing for this letter. Don't worry)
- D. Aparthotel Adagio: 3 rue des Chartreux (those of you looking for a private apartment will stay here for the first few days)
- E. Bus station (Gare routière): Ave. De l'Europe (where you will be dropped off if you take the airport shuttle or the bus from Marseille)
- F. Sciences Po (where students studying poly sci or international relations will study)
- G. The Faculty Director's apartment: 10, Ave de Craponne
- H. Aix downtown train station (Gare SNCF Aix Centre-Ville)

The bus or train station (Gare Routière or Gare SNCF Aix Centre-Ville) to the Hotel Adagio is about ½ mile. Walking unencumbered would take you about 15 minutes. Walking with one or more suitcases might be trying, especially on top of jetlag, which is why we suggest a taxi. But up to you!

If you would like to **print a more detailed map** of downtown Aix to familiarize yourself with your future stomping grounds, one can be found at:

<http://en.aixenprovencetourism.com/aix-plans.htm>



If You Arrive Early

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, students are expected to arrive on the first day of the program. Prior to that day, program staff will not be available to assist you. If you arrive earlier, you must make your own housing arrangements. Here are some suggested places to stay:

- Check availability at Adagio Aparthotel (3, rue des Chartreux – Tel : 04 42 37 98 98).
- Hôtel de France – 63 Rue Espariat - tel : 04 42 27 90 15
- Website : <http://www.hoteldefrance-aix.com/>
- Hôtel Le Concorde, 68 Boulevard du Roi René – tel : 04 42 26 03 95
- Website : <http://hotel-aixenprovence-concorde.com/>

If you decide to make a reservation in another hotel, make sure that the hotel is in the center of the city.

After You Have Arrived

Orientation

Orientation is run by the staff of the office soon after your arrival and is held at the *Université de Provence*, 29 avenue Robert Schuman, where the intensive course takes place. Students will stay at the hotel temporarily for the first days until their housing is ready for the spring. Upon arrival, you will be given a card with all the emergency phone numbers and a *map of the city of Aix-en-Provence with instructions on how to get to the program office and to the site of orientation activities. *Students wishing to familiarize themselves with the layout of Aix before arriving can find a map of the city online at:

Orientation includes:

- A tour of central Aix-en-Provence
- Several mandatory academic and administrative meetings
- Information on the French University system
- Visits to the institutions where you will be attending classes
- Housing information including tips on searching for an apartment or a room for those who chose this type of lodging.
- Special meeting about safety precautions with a police officer.

The Academic Program

General Information

Role of the Faculty Director (FD)

During the 2011-12 academic year, the FD will be Dr. Kelly Sax from Indiana University. During the program, the FD serves as your academic advisor and will schedule an individual appointment with you during the first few weeks in Aix to discuss your course selections. The FD will work closely with faculty and academic advisors at your home school to help you develop a course of study that meets Program guidelines and keeps you on course for graduation. The FD is also responsible for obtaining your grades from the French professors and transmitting the record of course titles, credits, and grades to your home university.

ALL THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MAY CHANGE FOR JANUARY 2012

On January 1, 2012, the three Universities of Aix-Marseille (Université de Provence, Université de la Méditerranée and Université Paul Cézanne) will merge to become one single university entity : Aix-Marseille Université.

This new university will represent approximately 70 000 students, 6000 professors, researchers, technicians and administration staff, and will cover all the disciplinary fields.

This fusion is not likely to cause any changes to your academic study in Aix. Please refer to information provided by the onsite staff and your study abroad advisors for the most up-to-date information.

The French Institutions

Participants will take courses at one of the following two academic institutions in Aix-en-Provence:

1. *Université de Provence - Aix-Marseille I* (UP)
2. *Sciences Po-Aix* (part of the *Université Paul Cézanne*) - Aix-Marseille III

Université de Provence – (UP)

http://www.univ-provence.fr/public_html/univ-provence/index.php?pages=article&id=5

The *Université de Provence* is currently the largest University of the Aix-Marseille academic district (*Académie*) (but see above about university mergers in January 2012). The University of Provence is known for its Letters and Social Sciences offerings, especially French literature, Psychology, Sociology, Education, History, Geography, and foreign languages.

The *Université de Provence* also offers courses in science but most departments (Chemistry, Physics, Biotechnology, Cellular Biochemistry, Life and Earth Sciences, Mechanics and Acoustics, Environmental Studies, etc) are located at the Marseille campus of the *Université de Provence*. It takes one hour each way to reach the science campus.

Because most APA participants take classes related to the Humanities, they attend classes in Aix at *Université de Provence*. If students are thinking of taking science courses, which are taught in Marseille, please inform the Faculty Director as soon as possible, preferably before your arrival.

Université Paul Cézanne: Sciences Po-Aix (formerly known as IEP)

<http://www.iep-aix.fr/>

Université Paul Cézanne currently includes the following institutions: the College of Political Science (*Sciences Po, Aix*), the School of Law, the College of Applied Economics (*Faculté d'Economie Appliquée* - FEA), and the College of Sciences, however, it is set to merge with the University of Provence in January 2012. The APA program has agreements with *Sciences Po Aix* so that a certain number of program participants may register at this institution each year.

Since enrollment is limited, *Sciences Po* will review the transcripts of APA students who wish to take classes at *Sciences Po*. APA students who wish to attend *Sciences Po*, either for the Certificate Program or the Political Studies Program, are expected to declare a major, or at least a minor, in one of the disciplines offered at *Sciences Po* (Political Science, International Studies, Social Science) prior to arriving in Aix and to have taken at least two university-level courses relating to political science, political theory, political philosophy, social-science theory, European history, or similar topics. The *Sciences Po* Director will judge each candidate's background in these fields and his/her level of French before making the final acceptance decision.

Contrary to what its name might suggest, *Sciences Po* should not be perceived as a Department of Political Sciences in the American sense. Courses that one would normally find in an American Political Science Department are available; however, *Sciences Po* offers an interdisciplinary education which aims to provide students with a general knowledge with which to choose a field of specialization that is of particular interest to them.

Linked to the Departments of Law, Economy and the Sciences at the University of Aix-Marseille, *Sciences Po* offers classes taught by professors and researchers at the Law School and with professionals working in the fields of International Relations, Finance, International Commerce and Communication.

Strikes in France

Student and faculty strikes often take place in France due to political, economic, and social conditions common in France. Such strikes often result in classes not being held for a few days or even weeks until the strike has been resolved. In the event that prolonged strikes result in multiple weeks of missed classes, APA and IAP will arrange for special make-up courses so that students receive the full academic content of classes affected by strikes.

Course Information

Intensive Course: *Cours intensif*

This course is required for all *UP* students at the beginning of the program in Aix. The various sections of the *Cours intensif* are taught under the auspices of the *Service Commun d'Enseignement du Français aux Etudiants Etrangers (SCEFEE)* of the *Université de Provence*.

Cours intensif –UP Students

All *UP* students will have a one-week intensive language course. One credit will be awarded for this pre-session coursework.

****Note:** Because of the Sciences Po-Aix academic calendar, it is not possible for students enrolling at Sciences Po to participate in the Cours Intensif.

Program Courses: *Cours du Programme*

The *cours du Programme* or Program courses are taught specially for students participating in the Aix program. These semester-long courses carry 2 credits and most of them are 30 hours long.

All students must take the course that focuses on methodology applied to the university in France and can choose among the other *cours du Programme*:

- ***Méthodologie universitaire* – 2 credits**

UP students:

UP students must take the course offered at the SCEFEE and called “*Introduction à la méthodologie universitaire*”. This class will help students understand the methodology of the dissertation and the *commentaire composé*. The course will also help students overcome difficulties in grammar and writing.

SCIENCES PO students

Sciences Po students must take the *Conférence de méthode* called “*Français langue étrangère*” offered at *Sciences Po*. The course is aimed at improving students’ written French and helping them understand the methodological demands of *Sciences Po*. The course will also help students overcome difficulties in grammar and writing.

- **“*La Phonétique française*”** - Instructor : Kelly Sax’s course (30 hours) -

Students will learn about general linguistic topics and terminology as they apply to French. Teaching style is data-driven, that is students will learn to « think » like a linguist by analyzing phonological behavior of spoken French and drawing conclusions about its phonological system based on observation. Skills gained at the end will include : familiarity with the phonetic alphabet (APA), particularly in reference to French (rendering standard spelling into IPA, and interpreting IPA back into standard spelling) ; theoretical knowledge of French phonetics ; ability to distinguish between French phonemes in hearing and production ; improvement in personal French pronunciation at all levels, from phonemic to prosodic ; familiarity with French regional accents. Class work will include lecture and practice.

- **“Expression orale / Prise de parole en français”** - Instructor : Monsieur Claude Pelopidas (30 hours) –
The objective of this course is to improve the students’ oral language skills in using the techniques of the theatre. Attention is paid to the rhetorical conventions of academic discourse, pronunciation, intonation and rhythm as well as communication strategies.
- **“La France dans son Histoire”** - Instructor : Monsieur Claude Pelopidas (30 hours) –
This course covers the history of France. It emphasizes the key historical periods and highlights the major figures of the French Political, Economic and Social environment.

Courses at the *Université de Provence (UP)*

All classes at the *UP* are semester-long courses. Some classes include a discussion section, called *travaux dirigés*, in addition to the main lecture. If a course includes a lecture and a discussion section, students must take both. Students receive 1 to 6 credits depending upon the total number of contact hours.

A COURSE OR A TD MEETING FOR 1-1.5 HOURS PER WEEK = 1 CREDIT IF MEETING FOR 13 WEEKS.

Courses at *Sciences Po Aix*

Courses offered at *Sciences Po* are either formal lecture-type courses or discussion classes called *conférences de méthode*. The lecture courses meet either 22 hours (2 credits) or 44 hours (4 credits) during the semester.

Students enrolled in courses at *Sciences Po* cannot take first year courses, nor the course *Culture Générale*. Students should be aware that most final exams are oral, not written.

Non-Certificate Program – *Programme d’Etudes Politique Semestriel (PEPS)*

- Students must select from a variety of elective courses (maximum of 7 courses) and *conférences de méthode* for a maximum of 18 credits. The student’s choice must include one or two *conférences de méthode* classes and one of the two conferences de méthode must be « *Français langue étrangère* ».

Individual Tutorial Assistance

Students who need assistance in improving their French language and style of their papers will be able to consult with a Program-designated individual tutor on a limited basis. A general meeting

will be organized with the tutor(s) at the beginning of the academic year; and the tutor(s) will be available a few hours per week for pre-scheduled appointments with individual students.

Registration & Enrollment at French Institutions

Both the academic structures and the process of selecting and enrolling in courses are different from anything you have been used to at your home university. During the first weeks in Aix, there will be several useful orientation meetings during which the FD will explain in detail important matters such as:

- academic calendar;
- the policy regarding attendance;
- the layout of *plaquettes* (course descriptions);
- the codes used to designate various disciplines and levels;
- the procedure for selecting and registering for courses;
- program policy regarding course contact hours and your home university credit;
- preparation of year-end transcripts.

During the semester in Aix you must carry a **minimum** of 14 credits and a **maximum** of 18 (including the one credit of *Cours intensif*).

Exceptions to these limits require advance written permission from your study abroad office. (Michigan students should note that they will be assessed additional tuition for anything over 18 credits per semester.)

Once the French academic calendar begins, your overall program must be one of the following:

I - STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO GO TO SCIENCES PO:

Programme d'Etudes Politiques Semestriel (PEPS) including the *conférence de méthode "Français langue étrangère"* + eventually the program course « *Expression orale* » and/or the FD course.

II - UP STUDENTS

UP students are students who have not applied for Sciences Po or students who have not been selected to take classes at Sciences Po. They will take the following combination of classes:

Cours intensif + cours sur la méthodologie universitaire + no more than 4 UP courses totaling a minimum of 11 credits

OR

Cours intensif + cours sur la méthodologie universitaire + no more than 4 UP courses + no more than 2 Program courses (UP courses and APA courses totaling a minimum of 11 credits)

No other combination of classes is allowed on this program.

In the context of any given course, you are expected to complete all work that degree-seeking students at the *UP* and *Sciences Po* are expected to complete. However, you should be aware that the structure of the French institutions in which courses are taken is not the same as undergraduate programs in the United States. Degree-seeking students (i.e., students following a fixed set of courses) specialize from the beginning of their university studies.

Courses at the *UP* and *Sciences Po* are often embedded in larger and more comprehensive modules (groups of courses) meant to be taken together and provide in-depth training in a particular area. APA students rarely take all the courses in a particular module. Rather, you will choose parts of the module (the equivalent of courses in the U.S.) that interest you and fulfill your needs.

Some of the large courses have parallel *travaux dirigés*, for discussions, questions and answers, and supplementary work. If you enroll in such a large course, you must also enroll in a parallel *travaux dirigés* section. Similarly, you may not enroll in a parallel *travaux dirigés* section without also enrolling in the related large course.

French Institutions

French educational institutions are often less “user-friendly” than American ones. The period between the distribution of the *plaquettes* (see *Academic Structure and Courses* below) and the first few weeks of class often strike APA students as disorganized. Once you are in Aix, the APA will give you all the information necessary to register as a student.

No matter where you are enrolled, the general rule is that you will do the same oral and written work as that required of French students. You will take the final examinations at the same time they are given to French students, unless the professor of the course, in agreement with the Faculty Director, wants to evaluate your work in a different manner. This may depend on the level of the course. If you are enrolled in one of the certificate programs, you will be required to meet the academic obligations and final exam requirements as specified for that program.

Course Structure

The traditional structure of courses (*cours magistraux*) is that the professor lectures and students take notes, read required texts, and prepare for an all-or-nothing final exam. An increasing number of courses have *contrôle continu*, (i.e., oral reports or *exposés*), short papers (*devoirs* or *mini-mémoires*), exams (*partiels*), all designed to give students some indication of their progress in the course. Nevertheless, some courses might still have only a final exam.

Government funding has not kept pace with the recent dramatic increase in university enrollments in France, and few resources are available for repair and upkeep of heavily used classroom buildings. As a result, you may find the sprawling UP building shabby, crowded, and noisy. There is no break between classes, so students surging out of one class must jostle past those trying to enter for another. Try to arrive early and sit near the front of the classroom so that you have the best position for hearing and understanding the professor and are less distracted by student chatter during the lecture.

It may be tempting to let your work go when your classes meet only once a week, but you will see that it takes far more effort to catch up with a delayed assignment or a missed class precisely

because it is not like missing a class that meets three times a week. Your professors may seem somewhat undemanding, but this is an illusion. They may not be demanding about specific assignments, but they expect you to read beyond the class assignments. Professors assume that you are a mature and responsible scholar who will take the initiative in reading widely from the bibliography without having to be told which specific pages to cover. Any students doing only the “minimum” will find themselves in serious trouble toward the end of the year.

The *Plaquettes* (Course Descriptions)

The *UP* and *Sciences Po* offer a wide array of courses. Like all French universities, they do not usually publish catalogues and comprehensive timetables, in part because their budget is determined late in regard to course offerings. However, each department of a division publishes a description of its degree programs and a list of courses for the year, called a *plaquette*. *Plaquettes* are generally available on the web, but the information needs to be read with care and is not always up to date many months ahead.

For many courses and sections the meeting time and day is given (most meet only once a week), sometimes along with a list of reading and reference materials, and even an indication of the way the course is graded. Some *plaquettes* are difficult to decipher. For this reason, you are required to attend the meetings held during the time period of the *Cours Intensif* to familiarize yourself with both the academic structures and course offerings.

Many departments hold informational sessions the week prior to the beginning of classes. Many departments require that students pre-register; this pre-registration is done online and will be explained to students during the Academic meeting.

The number of credits indicated in the *plaquettes* are for regular French and European degree-seeking students. Those numbers of credits do not correspond to the credits which will transfer to the U.S. universities for students participating on APA through Indiana University, University of Michigan or the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Selection of Courses

The *plaquettes* are available in the office and on the internet (this is especially the case with *UP plaquettes*). Do not be surprised to discover that each UP department has a different format for its *plaquettes*. You will need to go over them carefully to make a preliminary selection of courses. Then you should schedule an advising session with the FD to finalize as much as possible your course selection. A card file of professor and course evaluations by past program students will be made available for consultation in the APA office. You will be asked to contribute to them toward the end of the year.

The FD will announce the dates of the beginning of classes as soon as they become available. Please note that these dates are different for each institution, and some classes may not begin on the first day the institution is in session. It is your responsibility to check the bulletin boards and to begin attending classes when they start, even if your appointment with the FD has not yet been scheduled. Attend as many classes as you might want to register for, and make sure to write your name on any list the instructor may compile. This ensures your spot in the class, but does not bind you to it: you may drop it later.

Classes which are not available, or available with a caveat:

1. General introductory classes on French literature and civilization or culture are not offered at French universities because these topics have been covered in secondary schools.
2. Foreign language classes (other than French): Taking a foreign language other than French may be not allowed or discouraged depending on the student's home university and/or major. Thus, APA participants need to be aware of their home institution's policies regarding studying languages other than French while on the APA program:
 - **UW-Madison students** cannot take for credit foreign language courses taught at UW in languages other than French unless they have received approval from the appropriate department at UW prior to their departure.
 - **Indiana students** are not allowed to take foreign language classes unless they have declared a major or a minor in the language.
 - **Michigan students** are strongly discouraged from taking another foreign language; exceptions require approval from both the FD and from their study abroad advisor,
3. Courses taught in English may not be allowed or discouraged depending on the student's home university and/or major:
 - **UW-Madison students** are strongly discouraged from taking courses in English – with the exception of courses offered by visiting scholars at *Sciences Po*, conditional on pre-approval by the FD.
 - **Indiana University students** are not permitted to take classes taught in English without the permission of their Study Abroad Advisor in Overseas Study and the FD. Exceptions will only be considered if the course taught in English is fulfilling a requirement in the student's major.
 - **Michigan students** should not take courses in English.
4. If the *UP* offers any art classes as part of their regular course offerings, students may register for them. However, they must be aware that the number of credits they will receive may be different than for other classes. Students must obtain approval from their home institution prior to registering for these classes.
5. Ceramics, drawing, sculpture, and practical workshops in the arts, are offered at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*. Students in the APA Program cannot take these courses and receive credit for them since APA does not have an agreement with this institution.
6. Studio art courses are not allowed as part of the normal curriculum for students in the APA. Students are allowed to take studio art courses on their own and at their own expense. They cannot assume that they will receive credit for studio art courses they take independently of the regular program.
7. The *UP* has a Music Department and APA students may take such courses; however, unlike in American universities, instrument practice is NOT part of the courses offered. The courses are strictly theoretical in nature.
8. Music / practice of an instrument: such courses are offered at the *Conservatoire de Musique*. Classes at the *Conservatoire* are not part of the APA program. Students may take classes there (provided they are accepted) at their own expense. Students cannot assume that they will receive credit for music courses they take independently of the regular program.
9. The *UP* has a cinema department (*Arts du Spectacle*), but APA students can only take the theoretical courses.

Differences in academic background which affect your course selection

Students need to know that Licence 3 (3rd year classes), may be too difficult and specialized for APA students who might not have the required background knowledge for this level of classes. If a student wishes to take licence 3 level classes, he/she must speak with the Faculty Director prior to enrolling in such classes.

You may not take courses which duplicate work for which you have already received college credit. Such courses cannot count toward your degree and will not be approved by the FD.

Note for Michigan students: Michigan does not use equivalencies, so duplication of credit will not be an issue for you. However, students should avoid retaking courses which they have already received credit for in the past.

When selecting courses, keep in mind your degree requirements and the recommendations of your home campus advisors. UW-Madison and Indiana students should also keep in mind the possible equivalents in your home campus catalogs.

Since you will have met with an academic advisor before going to France, you should have a clear idea of the course requirements you must satisfy, as well as personal preferences. Make a list of course requirements and give a copy to the FD. In your search for courses and discussions with the FD, you need a balance between your needs and wants and what Aix has to offer. During the first few weeks, you will have to attend more courses than you will eventually end up taking for credit, and you should be as helpful as you can to your fellow program students by giving or exchanging information you may have about courses.

Check your university's academic information concerning course equivalents.

- **Indiana University:** Courses will be equated and evaluated after the program.
- **University of Michigan:** Michigan does not use course equivalencies. Students should work with their concentration/LSA advisors to determine whether or not a course will count towards their degree requirements.
- **UW-Madison:** Equivalents and Course Equivalent Request Form (CERF)
Each course you take abroad must be assigned a UW-Madison "equivalent" and the grade you receive in the course also transfers back to be recorded on your UW-Madison transcript. In order to establish UW-Madison course equivalents for your study abroad courses, you will submit a Course Equivalent Request Form (CERF) through your My Study Abroad account. The deadline to submit the CERF is by the end of the fourth week of classes (not including pre-session terms). Detailed information on the UW course equivalent process that you will use through your My Study Abroad account is available in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook and in your My Study Abroad account under the academics tab.

Course Selection Checklist:

- a. Read last year's *plaquettes* (course details) on the internet or in the Program office.
- b. Attend Program information meetings about courses.
- c. Begin to put your program together.
- d. Read this year's *plaquettes* when they come onto the internet or into the Program's office.
- e. Revise your program according to the courses available.

- f. Meet with the Faculty Director about your preliminary selection of courses.
- g. Find when your courses are starting, by reading the bulletin boards at the relevant university buildings.
- h. Attend the first class of your chosen course, and make sure to write your name on any list that is circulated by the professor.
- i. Meet with the FD to finalize your course selection.
- j. Adjust your selection by adding or dropping courses.

Credits

Students will receive credit conversion information from the APA staff.

Drop/Add and Course Enrollment Verification

Students must drop courses within the first three weeks of classes. Students who need to drop after the third week, but by the end of the half-way point in the course, must speak with the FD. The FD will grant or deny permission to drop courses.

The FD will give you a Course Enrollment Verification worksheet, which you should review carefully to make certain that it accurately reflects the courses in which you are enrolled. Course equivalents, where applicable, will be determined by your home institution after the program ends.

Pass/Fail

The Pass/Fail option must be requested early in the semester and approved by the FD. The FD will set the Pass/Fail deadline, and a reminder will be posted on the Program Office bulletin board. No exceptions will be made to the posted deadline. See also your university's academic policies for certain restrictions; however, no course applying toward the concentration program (major) may be taken on a Pass/Fail basis. The Pass/Fail option may not be changed after filing the Pass/Fail request. Review your college bulletin for other rules concerning the counting of Pass/Fail work toward your degree.

The following information gives more details regarding Pass/Fail for students from the three consortium institutions.

- **Indiana University:**

All students electing the Pass/Fail option must fill out an IU Pass/Fail Form (available at the program office) by the deadline set at the program site. The Pass/Fail option is not permitted for the *Cours intensif*, APA courses, or classes that are required by the program. There is also a limit to **two** Pass/Fail courses across the year. IU students can only take **one** Pass/Fail each semester. Courses taken pass/fail may not be used to satisfy any requirements other than overall hours towards graduation. Courses can only be taken pass/fail in a student's major if they have already completed all of their major requirements. Students that fail a course taken as Pass/Fail will have the grade of "F" factored into their cumulative GPA.

- **University of Michigan:**

All students who wish to enroll in a course on a pass/fail basis should fill out a Pass/Fail Declaration Form (found on the CGIS website Download Center or available at the Aix study abroad site). This form should be returned to the Faculty Director of the Aix program or emailed to your CGIS study abroad advisor. General LS&A guidelines pertain: the request must be made within the first three weeks of classes. Since the beginning of classes abroad often does not coincide with the start of classes on the Ann Arbor campus, the first day of classes in Aix will be used. Classes taken on a Pass/Fail basis may not be included in a concentration – or minor – plan, although they can be used to satisfy distribution requirements. If you have any questions about the Pass/Fail option, you should contact CGIS.

- **University of Wisconsin-Madison:**

UW-Madison students must refer to their IAP Study Abroad Handbook (www.studyabroad.wisc.edu/handbooks). An IAP declaration form for Pass/Fail must be completed and submitted by the deadline date.

Incompletes

APA participants may NOT take an “incomplete,” regardless of home institution policy. Courses not completed will be recorded as Fs/Es on the home institution transcript.

Attendance Policy

Attendance in *Cours intensif* and *Cours du Programme*, as well as in the *Conférences de méthode* at *Sciences Po* is required of all participants. No unexcused absences are allowed. Excused absences will only be allowed for illness (written statement from student will suffice for one absence; several or extended absence require a doctor’s letter). For every unexcused absence, the instructor will lower the final grade one (1) point (on the French grading scale of 0 to 20).

Final Exams

The exact date of final exams is variable. Depending on the institution, the list and dates are usually available in March or April for second semester. You must make sure that your name appears in the lists of *examinés*. Incompletes are NOT permitted, and it is your responsibility to observe all the deadlines scrupulously for a successful completion of your academic semester in Aix.

When you agreed to participate in the program, you signed the acceptance form indicating that you would fulfill all program requirements. This includes completing all of your final exams. You must remain in Aix until you have taken all your exams.

Honors Program

The FD is not responsible for granting Honors credits. Please see your university’s academic information.

Grades and Grade Conversions

Students in France are graded on a scale from 0 (sometimes -2) to 20. They say “*la note de 20 est pour le bon Dieu, 19 est pour le professeur, et 18 est pour le meilleur élève.*” Twelve is a perfectly respectable grade (B+/AB). In order to take into account the differences between French and U.S. grading practices, the APA has developed grade conversion scales for the *Université de Provence*,

Sciences Po, the *Cours intensif* and the program courses. Any grade with .5 or above will be rounded up to the next whole number. For example:

10.5 = 11
 11.60 = 12
 8.63 = 9
 11.30 = 11

The official French grade will be recorded by the FD as originally reported. Its equivalent will also be recorded, along with the French grade. The equivalent will be used in transferring the number grade to a U.S. letter grade.

Grade Scales

French Grades	Indiana University	U. of Michigan	UW-Madison
18	A	A+	A
17	A	A+	A
16	A	A+	A
15	A	A	A
14	A	A	A
13	A-	A-	AB
12	B+	B+	AB
11	B+	B+	AB
10	B	B	B
9	B-	B-	BC
8	B-	B-	BC
7	C+	C+	BC
6	C	C	C
5	D	D	D
4	D	D	D
3	F	E	F
2	F	E	F
1	F	E	F

Final Grades and Credits

At the end of the academic semester, the Faculty Director will give the students the opportunity to meet individually in order to verify the courses they have taken during the semester. Students will have the opportunity to discuss their overall impression of their studies and of the program. This session is not a time to negotiate or change grades earned during the program. When all grades are received, the Faculty Director will finalize the grade transcripts and forward them to home institutions to have grades posted to your official transcript.

Living Abroad

FRANCE

France's most salient characteristic is its exceptional diversity. The largest country in Western Europe, France is about 80% the size of Texas and extends from the coastal plains in the north to the beaches of the south; from the wild coastline of Brittany to the top of the Alps, with cliff-lined canyons, dense forest and vineyards in between. The highest point in Western Europe, *Mont Blanc*, is situated in the Alps on the border between France and Italy. Metropolitan France also has extensive river systems such as the Loire, the Garonne, the Seine and the Rhône, which divides the Massif Central from the Alps and flows into the Mediterranean Sea at the *Camargue*, the lowest point in France. Corsica lies off the Mediterranean coast.

Over the centuries, France has received more immigrants than any other country in Europe. From the ancient Celtic Gauls and Romans to the more recent arrivals from France's former colonies in Indochina and Africa, these peoples have introduced new elements of culture, cuisine, and art, all of which have contributed to France's unique and diverse civilization.

On the western edge of Europe, France is situated between England and Italy, Belgium and Spain, North Africa and Scandinavia. This is, of course, how the French have always regarded their country—at the very center of things.

Official France websites:

www.fr.franceguide.com
www.france.com

www.justfrance.org/
www.francetourism.com

Aix-en-Provence

Situated in southeastern France, Aix has a cosmopolitan yet intimate environment with a population of 150,000. As the former capital of the Kingdom of Provence and a former Roman spa town, the city features remain from Roman and medieval times. For centuries, Aix has been famous for its art, its many music festivals, its fountains, and its pleasant climate. Since the middle of the 20th century, Aix has experienced an unprecedented demographic and economic expansion. It continues to develop its university and culture with enthusiasm. The renovation works of the historical centre, the rebirth of its lyrical arts festival, the *Cité du Livre* and the *Pavillon noir*, the National Choreographic Center, constitute testimony of its cultural vocation open to the world.

You will encounter a variety of open-air markets and can enjoy wandering down the tree-lined *Cours Mirabeau* with its many cafés and shops. The beautiful Provence countryside around the city has been immortalized in many of Cézanne's paintings. You will be able to visit Marseille and the Côte d'Azur, and location allows you to explore major cities and cultural centers in Europe.

Aix enjoys a mild climate; it is protected from the winds of the North, but is slightly affected by the Mistral (a famous wind in southeastern France). The average daily temperatures vary between 5-6° Celsius (January) and 21.9° (July). In winter, the sun is almost permanent. The dry summer is pleasant owing to a light perpetual breeze. Autumn can be rainy and winter may be cold.

Official Aix-en-Provence website:
For information about climate:

www.Aixenprovencetourism.com
www.Meteofrance.com

APA Program Office & Facilities

In the APA program office, you will find a room equipped with three computers, two printers (you will have to provide your own paper) and access to wi fi (available only for academic use). The Program has also a certain number of books available for the students, some reference materials, including an excellent encyclopedia and many dictionaries. You are welcome to use these facilities during regular office hours.

Libraries

French university libraries, as well as public libraries, close early in the evening. Therefore, libraries are not really available as places where you can study for long hours. The UP library catalog is available on the internet. You may want to use the public library (*Cité du Livre*) where you can check out books, tapes and videos for a minimal annual fee (10 euros).

The *Cité du Livre* has a very rich collection of books and large reading rooms where a lot of French students prepare their exams. The catalog of the *Cité du Livre* is also available on the internet (<http://www.citedulivre-aix.com>)

HOUSING AND HOUSING-RELATED MATTERS

Housing

Upon arrival in Aix, students who choose to be in apartments, or for whom permanent lodging is still being sought, will share rooms reserved by APA in a hotel for a week, or until all have housing.

The cost at the hotel is approximately 350 euros for seven (7) days. This price is not refundable.

For those wanting this option, the program will try locate Rented Rooms with and without board, and these will be available directly upon your arrival. For those wishing to be in an independent apartment, the program will help students find apartments upon arrival. Since French students have found their apartments starting in September, it is rather difficult to find French roommates.

HOUSING SELECTION

You will be provided a housing preference form by your home institution. You will rank your housing preferences on this Form. APA staff asks that students clearly express their housing needs or requests when they fill out this form. The more information the student provides to staff, the better.

The APA staff will then work on placing you in a rented room, a rented room with board or apartment. If a rented room cannot be found, students will necessarily need to rent an apartment. APA staff will help with this process.

Housing is a very important part of your study-abroad experience, so we would like you to be as satisfied as possible with your housing. Each housing option has its own benefits—your choice will depend on your personal preferences and priorities.

So, please read the descriptions below carefully before making your housing decision.

While the program attempts to fulfill individual preferences, not all requests can be met. Please be prepared to be flexible.

Students with any dietary restrictions should be prepared to live in apartments, as it is difficult if not impossible to find rented room & board situations where restrictions can be accommodated.

HOUSING INFORMATION

Aix-en-Provence and Aix-en-Provence intra-muros

The city center of Aix, dating from the Middle Ages is ringed by a circle of boulevards and squares and is called Aix intra-muros (i.e., Aix inside the walls). It's a small-enough area to explore by foot and it includes most of the stores, businesses and entertainment spots.

This part of the city is certainly very lively but since it is the oldest part of Aix, all the housing there (apartment or rooms) are located in very old buildings.

A more recent development around the city center offers more modern apartments but is farther away from the city attractions, requiring longer walks or bus rides. Students should be aware that most buses do not run after 9:00 pm or on Sundays.

HOMESTAYS AND RENTED ROOM IN A FRENCH HOUSEHOLD (USUALLY AN APARTMENT)

OPTIONS

Living with French hosts can be one of the most rewarding aspects of a year abroad. It allows direct connection to the local way of living and provides students with the opportunity to experience the daily life of the new culture they want to discover.

The level of integration students experience with their hosts will vary—some families will really integrate the students as part of their family; others may have a more independent approach. Living in a French environment will already require you to adjust to French habits and constraints you may not be used to, and it can be a challenge to adapt to these new attitudes or customs. For example, electricity in France (and Europe) is expensive and people are careful to use much less of it than is the case in U.S. households. People usually turn off the lights when they leave a room. In addition, most French houses do not have an unlimited supply of hot water (which is expensive to heat with gas or electricity). Taking a long shower is thus inappropriate; in addition to its high cost, it means that nobody else in the family will get a shower until the water heater has had a chance to heat more water. So you will have to pay particular attention to issues your hosts mention to you.

You may also not like some aspects of your hosts' habits or lifestyle; rather than rejecting them, you should keep an open mind and see this as a cultural and learning experience as well as the invaluable opportunity that is offered to you to practice your French on a regular basis.

Your hosts will typically be retired people, single parents with children, parents or single parents whose children have left to study elsewhere. There are very few traditional families (parents and children) living in the center of Aix.

HOUSING OPTION 1: Rented Room

Facilities

Renting a room in someone else's apartment allows the student to be in an environment where he/she is in contact with French-speaking persons. The student has access to the owners' kitchen, toilet and bathroom, but is not provided with meals. Sometimes the linens are not supplied and you may want to bring them with you or you will have to buy them in Aix.

Rent

Rented rooms will cost approximately 380~450 euros per person per month. It is to be paid in euros directly to the host.

Security Deposit

This fee is to be paid in euros directly to the host. Students must agree to pay one month immediately upon arrival (January) and two months a few weeks after arrival (February and a security deposit) and sign a housing agreement. The security deposit will be reimbursed at the end of the stay if no damage is found.

Utilities

Usually you do not have to pay utilities when you rent a room. But if the landlord informs you that you will be responsible for utility costs (gas and electricity), you must consider it may cost you about 45 Euros per month.

Internet

Internet is much less common in France than it is in America. Your lodging will most likely not have access to the internet, but you will have the possibility to order internet for approximately 35 euros/month.

First date of occupancy/rental period

Typically students move directly in to their room upon arrival, and rent the room until the end of May or the end of June (for those at Sciences Po)..

Commitment to the Rented Room

If the student has chosen to live in a rented room she/he cannot leave the family and move somewhere else unless under very exceptional circumstances and only with the agreement of the Program staff. If permission is granted, students wishing to leave the host must give one month's notice and pay in full the following month. (ex.: if notice is given Feb 15, full March rent will nonetheless be due).

HOUSING OPTION 2: Rented Room and Board

This option offers an independent room to the students as well as board (typically 7 French breakfasts and 5 dinners) during the week. It is during dinner that students will practice their French and learn about their new environment.

The fee will range from 600 Euros to 650 Euros per month depending upon the location of the family. For instance, those students assigned to a rented room outside the city center will be assessed a fee lower in the range to compensate for their extra transportation costs; whereas students assigned to a rented room inside the city center will be assessed a fee higher in the range.

This fee is to be paid in euros directly to the host. Students must agree to pay one month immediately upon arrival (January) and two months a few weeks after arrival (February and a security deposit) and sign a housing agreement. The security deposit will be reimbursed at the end of the stay if no damage is found.

First date of occupancy/rental period

Typically students move directly in to their room upon arrival, and rent the room until the end of May or the end of June (for those at Sciences Po).

Internet

Internet is much less common in France than it is in America. Your lodging will most likely not have access to the internet, but you will have the possibility to order internet for approximately 35 euros/month.

Commitment to the Rented Room

If the student has chosen to live in a rented room she/he cannot leave the family and move somewhere else unless under very exceptional circumstances and only with the agreement of the Program staff. If permission is granted, students wishing to leave the host must give one month's notice and pay in full the following month. (ex.: if notice is given Feb 15, full March rent will nonetheless be due).

HOUSING OPTION 3: Apartment

Facilities

Most apartments available for students in Aix are one-room apartments (studios) or two-room apartments (a bedroom and a living room). It is very hard to find large, furnished apartments, so do not plan on living with a large group of people. It is a challenge to find places for 3 people. Studios accommodate one person, or can be furnished to accommodate two people. Two-room apartments have a living room and a bedroom for two people. Three-room apartments have a living room and two bedrooms.

All apartments have a bathroom and a kitchen. The kitchen usually includes a small refrigerator, a small electric hot plate, (or sometimes a stove) and kitchen wares. You may bring your own linens

or buy them in Aix, and you are advised to bring a sleeping bag which will be useful in your apartment or for travel. Some apartments may also furnish comforters. Students choosing to live in an apartment should be aware that, in France, landlords take little responsibility for daily maintenance. Please keep in mind that apartments in downtown Aix are older and will not have the same amenities that you are accustomed to in the United States.

Choosing an apartment is a big decision: talk it over with the proprietor, friends, family, and the program staff before committing yourself!

Before signing any agreement, make sure you have all the information from your landlord as to what is included in your rent (utilities, taxes, etc.). If taxes are not included in the rent, you might end up having to pay them in the United States.

For info on apartments in Aix:

<http://www.aixenprovencetourism.com/aix-meubles.htm>

Rent

The average rent for a studio is approximately €500-600/month. Therefore, if the studio accommodates two people, the rent will be approximately €250-300 per person. Do ask the landlord if the rent includes all the taxes due by a tenant; sometimes landlords do not include these taxes and the cost seems cheaper. Make sure you receive the correct information from your landlord as to what taxes are included in the rent, or you might end up having to pay them in the United States.

The average rent for a two-room apartment is approximately 800-900 euros/month; i.e. 400-450 euros per person.

It is highly unlikely that you will find large furnished apartments in the center of Aix.

Rent is paid directly to your landlord at the beginning of each month. Payment can be made in cash or by local bank transfer in euros. If your rent does not include the housing tax, you will be required to pay it to the appropriate *Centre du Trésor Public*, the following year.

Security Deposit

You will have to pay a maximum of two-months' security deposit. Many landlords, however, will accept a one-month security deposit. Those who request the two-month security deposit may ask that the first-month security deposit be paid upon arrival and the second-month security deposit with the second-month rent. The security deposit is reimbursed at the end of the rental period if no damages are found.

Utilities

You will be responsible for utility costs (gas and electricity), which run about 45 Euros per month per person. There is an initial cost of approximately 45 Euros to put the account in your name. It is also advised to ask your landlord if you will have other utilities or other costs related to your lodging.

First date of occupancy/rental period

You and your landlord will have to agree upon occupancy dates.

Changing/vacating apartments

You and your landlord must agree on the policy for vacating the apartment. If you decide to break your lease, you will have to find other tenants to replace you.

Commitment Apartments

The commitment for an apartment is for the length of the lease signed. Students who prefer a more independent lifestyle should choose to be in an apartment.

Renter's insurance

Regardless of which housing option you choose, all participants must purchase "renter's insurance" as required by landlords in France. The Program has worked with an insurance company which can provide you with insurance for about 40 Euros per person per semester. The insurance companies provide renter's insurance which includes personal liability required for registration in the universities.

Student Life**Extracurricular Activities**

You can join sport centers (for a fee) where you will have access to many types of sport opportunities (karate, aerobics, weights, etc). The university sports center allows registering only for one activity, once a week. You can also join teams, which is a great way of meeting French students, and past participants strongly recommend this.

You should make sure to read the bulletin boards at the university as well as in town to find out about interesting lectures, internship possibilities, study sessions, and other events that may be of interest to you.

Shopping

Stores in Aix-en-Provence are open from Monday afternoon to Saturday evening from, 9:00 am until 12:00 noon and from 2:30 pm until 7:00 pm. Larger stores and supermarkets do not close during lunch.

Excursions

The Program pays for the bus and guide as well as entrance to any museums for program-sponsored excursions. Meals are not usually covered. Students who choose not to participate are not given any refund. If space allows, visiting family members (but not friends) are allowed to accompany the group, but they must pay their own entrance fees and any meal costs. The Program may also arrange visits to theaters.

Transportation

Since Aix-en-Provence is a small city, most of the students prefer to walk. You can also use the city buses, but note that most of the buses stop running at 8:00 pm. Students who wish to have a bicycle can buy a used one in a second hand store in Aix.

You will have ample opportunities to travel during your stay in Aix. We advise you, however, not to let travel plans interfere with your study. For all trips lasting overnight or longer, you must leave a note with the secretary of the Program Office, indicating the approximate itinerary, dates, and addresses.

Safety

You are strongly discouraged from traveling to areas both in the country and in the surrounding areas that the U.S. State Department has designated as hazardous or has advised against travel. Make sure to check the U.S. State Department website for Travel Advisories and Consular Information Sheets for any country you are considering traveling to or through (<http://travel.state.gov/index.html>) before you make any travel plans. If you do not have access to the Web, check with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest you.

In addition, make sure to leave your travel itinerary with the APA secretary as well as with a family or friend in the U.S. in case someone needs to get hold of you in a hurry, as well as for your own protection.

Communication

Telephones

Time zone information: www.timeanddate.com/worldclock

Country and city codes: www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html

Calling from France to the U.S.:

(access code for France) + (1) + (area code) + (local number)

Calling from the U.S. to France:

(011) + (33) + (city code) + (local number)

[*omit the first zero in the ten digit French phone number **only** when calling from the U.S.]

- A *télécarte* can be purchased for using the public phones at any post office or at certain *bureaux de tabac* stores.
- It is much more expensive to make a call from France to the U.S. than vice versa.
- Many students have found it helpful also to have an American telephone company card such as ATT or MCI. These companies have "direct dial" access to U.S. operators from Europe and the bill is sent in U.S. dollars to an U.S. address.

Cellular Telephone

- You can buy a cellular phone in one of the many telephone shops in Aix.
- Prepaid cards that you can find in any *bureaux de tabac* are available to use with cellular phones for ease of communication.
- The lowest rate for an average cellular phone is approximately 40 euros. A prepaid card will cost between 15 and 45 euros and can be bought in any telephone shop or *bureau de tabac* in France. Unlike the US, in France there is no charge to receive calls on a cell phone.

Mail

Only airmail is possible from France, at the increment of 20 grams (equivalent of a little less than 2 sheets of 20-weight typing paper). It takes from one week to ten days to reach the States. UPS and Federal Express services are available, but expect to pay nearly twice as much as in the U.S. and to pay, if necessary, very high customs charges.

Have your mail sent to the Program address, rather than your personal address. You will have a mailbox in the Program office and it will be easy for you to retrieve your mail. By using the Program address, your mail will not be lost if you are traveling and out of town.

Student Testimonials

The testimonials below are from past participants; they reflect various students' experiences and are included to provide different perspectives. IAP does not endorse any specific view expressed in this section.

Preparations Before Leaving

Pre-departure orientations in Madison helped a lot when thinking about what to bring, securing a visa, and buying a plane ticket. I also did some research about Aix in guidebooks and online which helped me visualize where I would be spending the next 10 months.

In terms of packing, the less the better. Practically everything we can buy in the US you can find here. In France, it is very appropriate to wear the same outfit multiple times a week—on a whole, French people don't have as many clothes as Americans—they prefer to buy fewer items that are of better quality. Nonetheless, the French women dress impeccably and it is easy to feel that you lack their level of sophistication, class...But don't let that get to you.

Mentally, the only thing you can do to prepare is just go with an open mind. No mind-prepping could have possibly prepared me for what was coming up in the next 10 months.

Travel and Arrival Information

If possible, fly into the Marseille airport and take a taxi to Aix. It will cost a little more, but it eliminates a lot of the hassle of dragging your bags around.

Make sure you buy the Carte 12-25 at a train station soon after you arrive in the city. It gives you great deals on all train travel in France, which is great if you're planning on doing a lot of traveling.

Academic Program

Academics in France are much different from the United States. Be prepared to sit in long lectures and do a lot of reading on your own. It may seem scary the first few weeks, but if you put in a little effort you'll be surprised at how well you adapt.

Don't be afraid to talk to your professors if you're having problems. They're usually pretty accommodating to foreign students.

Living Abroad

I would by far consider it the best thing I have done in my life thus far. Although sad and nostalgic for friends and family back home at times, I met a great base of friends that definitely filled the missing gaps. Every day I was faced with something I would not have experienced at home and there is no price in the world for that.

The cost of living in Aix is significantly higher than the cost of living in Madison.

Studying abroad was by far the best thing I've done with my college experience. At first I had a hard time integrating into French culture, but at the end of my time in Aix I felt like I was a part of the community. Seize every opportunity you can to travel, meet people from other countries, and of course speak French!