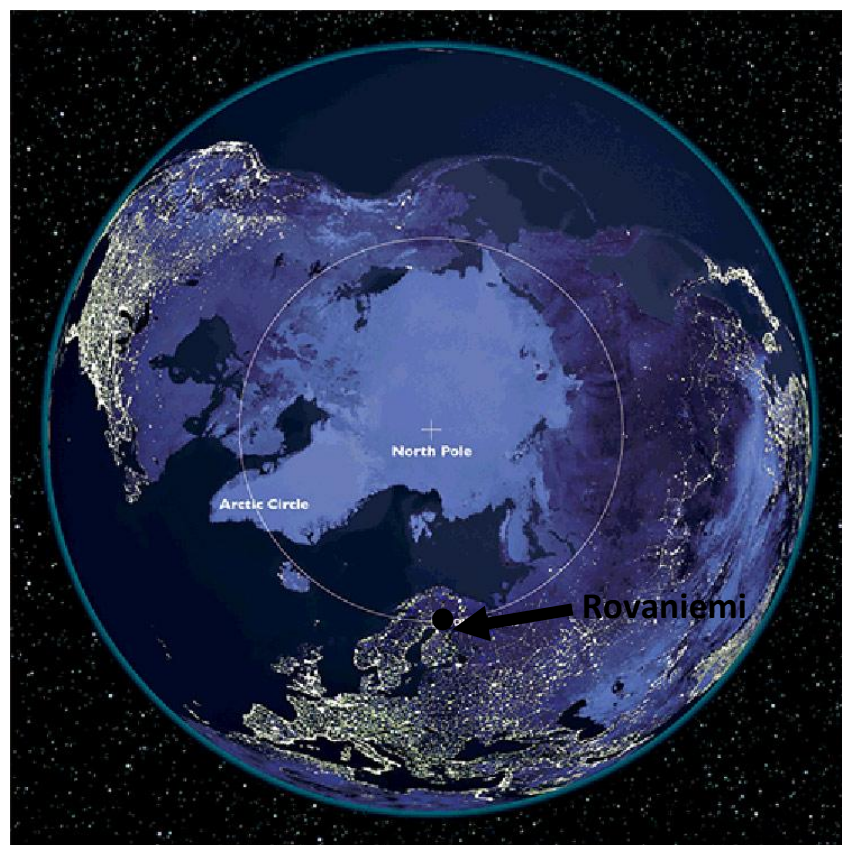


Student: Ignacio de Loyola Fernandez Gaztea

Erasmus destination: Univeristy of Lapland (Rovaniemi-Finland). Spring Semester 2012

My experience as exchange student of the University of Lapland on the Spring semester 2012 was incredibly enjoyable and constructive. The University is located at the Finnish city of Rovaniemi, capital of the province of Lapland. The University of Lapland holds the title of being the most northern University from the European Union and offers specific studies focused on the Arctic species, environment, history, etc.

One of the most attractive perks of the city is that it lies just 20 km below the Arctic circle ($66^{\circ} 33' 44''$), having built symbolic infrastructures and amusement parks where the Arctic circle imaginary line passes (like the airport or the "Santa Claus" village amusement park).



Rovaniemi is not only famous for being the official town of Santa Claus but for offering incredible northern lights during the winter (see picture below).



Besides its latitude, Rovaniemi still offers a wide range of services like cinemas, McDonald's, Chinese restaurants, etc... and gives you the possibility of hiring adventure activities like snowmobile trips and husky sled racing, reindeer farm visiting, and more enjoyable nature related offers. I have to admit that my best and most recommended activity was the snowmobile excursion, having the opportunity of crossing the Arctic Circle line by snowmobile over frozen lakes and deep snow forests.



More interesting spots near Rovaniemi are the city of Oulu, the ice castle from Kemi, and the Arctic species zoo from Ranua.

The only disadvantage of the city obviously is the cold and also the distances between places since. In exception of the city center, the housing from the surrounding area (including the University campus) follow a spread building system and a detached house system, being recommendable to buy a second hand bike or use the public transportation (students with the student card receive a 50% discount buying the monthly bus card at the city town hall, and the second hand bikes can be acquired for 30€ at the second hand shop on Harrikatu street).

The accommodation also can constitute a problem since most of the abroad students are located in buildings that are not heated enough (this is, the "Kuntotie" student blocks numbers 3 and 5); but at least is cheap (170€ per month more or less).

Regarding the University, the application process and the accommodation arrangement takes a long process that should start in early October, but once you get to the University the overall experience from my point of view is good, being recommendable to participate at the introductory days offered the first week before classes, being also important to apply for the student card issued by the student union (that gives discounts for the University meals and the public transportation). The time to study is very big since most of the courses for abroad students have only one class per month, giving the option in most of the cases to pass the subject writing a long essay or combining an exam with an essay, giving always the right to the student to negotiate this issue with the lecturer. Since the academic point of view the personalization of each student on how to face each subject is a total advance for the student skills development and time organization, so I would give a 10 over 10 regarding the management of the educational system. Also some of the lecturers were just incredible, in the sense they based their lectures in participation and group working, making the student to get involved in the topics and create a communicative thread between the class and the lecturer. I would give another 10 over 10 to the

lecturers and I hope this report will help people aiming to go to the University of Lapland.