

Things are going so well! I can't believe I've been here for half of the semester already... it feels like I just got here! Yes, I've been fortunate enough to do quite a bit of traveling with the International Society! My parents spent 10 days in Ireland, but just that weekend in Cork with me. Our dear friends from England also flew to Cork to spend the weekend with us! We took a trip to Mizen Head, which is the most southwestern point of Ireland, and also to Cove (Cobh) which was the last town/port that the Titanic stopped at before making its voyage! The following weekend, with the international society, we took a trip to Killarney and stayed in a hostel for one night - my first stay in a hostel! We did the Ring of Kerry on Saturday and then hiked around a lake at Killarney National Park on Sunday. Last weekend our trip was closer, just to West Cork, but we took a ferry out of Baltimore to Sherkin Island on Saturday, spent the night in a different hostel in Skibbereen and had a BBQ that night! Then on Sunday we went to Lough Hyne and climbed up a small mountain in Knockomagh Nature/Wood Reserve on Sunday. We got drenched at the top, because the heavens opened and we got soaked!! Beautiful weather for the rest of the trip, though! :) This past weekend is (was) a 4-day weekend. Since today is Bank Holiday, we didn't have school on Friday either! So I took a trip to Galway with the International Society! On Friday we went to Kylemore Abbey in Connemara, which was beautiful! Then on Saturday we took another Ferry to the Aran Islands, and spent the day touring around the largest of the three islands! On Sunday we went to the Burren and the Cliffs of Moher before coming home last night. This weekend was also the annual Cork Jazz Festival, so when we got back last night we went out to listen to the jazz music - it was SO much fun!! The atmosphere was great!

Academically, I find it very hard (but not impossible!) to motivate myself to study, because there are so many other fun things to do! :) I still attend all of my classes, of course - the tourism classes are my favorite, as well as the pottery class! I learn so much about the Irish history through my tourism classes. I actually went on a class trip with tourism students two weeks ago, and we saw King James Castle and Bunratty Castle and Folk Park! That was really fun, too! :) I have my first assessment in Sociology tomorrow. The style of the classes is much different from home, as we don't have any "homework," per se. The professors just assign one large project or essay that we have to work on independently throughout the semester, and then they are all due (for each class) at the end of the semester, along with the final written exam. So that's been a bit of a change for me, but like I said - not unmanageable, I hope!!

This coming weekend, I am going to be missing classes on Friday and Monday because I am spending four days in London with my Aunt! I have already spoken to my instructor (I have 3 different classes on Fridays and Mondays, but all with the same teacher), and she has already said it is completely fine if I miss those days, and she also told me to enjoy my experience! I am very relieved that she was so accommodating for me. Everybody is getting really excited for Halloween - all the shops and pubs and restaurants are decorated for it, which is really cool! Unfortunately I won't be in Cork ON Halloween, since that is the day I'm flying to London - but I'm sure it will be a really great experience regardless!

I think that's all the news that I have to share, for now - I continue to meet new people all the time, and I have friends from all over the world! It's amazing, and I know I will never forget them! I also have some great contacts for if/when I travel in the future, thanks to all my international friends! :)