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[ANNYEONG HASEYO!](#)

Thank you for taking the time to visit my blog. I will be documenting my journey to Korea from pre-departure to the day I return to Hawaii.

Be sure to click the links at the top of the page to find out more about me, Yonsei University, and The Freeman Scholarship.

This expedition to Korea and studying at Yonsei University, would not be possible without support from the Shidler College of Business at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and also a generous scholarship provided by the Freeman Foundation.



ABOUT ME

DECEMBER 4, 2013

I was born and raised here on the beautiful island of Oahu in Hawaii. I attended a public elementary school until 7th grade, when I transferred to Punahou School, a prestigious college preparatory school that is well known in the islands. I graduated from Punahou and began my college career at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, with a focus on Accounting, Finance, and International Business.

Growing up, I was surrounded by my Chinese relatives, while my only close Korean relative, my mother, rarely tried to impose the Korean culture/language onto me. At the age of 12, my mother passed away, and my chances of learning of my Korean heritage were demolished. I went to Korea at the age of 17 to visit my Korean relatives there and to experience a culture that felt lost to me.

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My first experience in Korea made me realize how little I knew of other cultures, and even about myself. My week-long visit had me craving more as I felt I did not learn everything I needed to during my short stay there. I do want to travel the world and learn more about different places and cultures, but not until I have started to discover myself.

My goal for this blog is to show the steps I take during my study abroad in the hopes of educating and inspiring anyone else who wishes to follow in my footsteps. This blog may also provide inspiration for people who wish to forge their own path and need guidance or advice in their planning/travels.

For any questions about my journey, feel free to email me at kevin733@hawaii.edu



THE FREEMAN SCHOLARSHIP

DECEMBER 4, 2013 KEVIN733

“The Freeman Foundation was established in 1994 through the bequest and in memory of the businessman and benefactor Mansfield Freeman, a co-founder of AIG. The Foundation is dedicated to strengthening the bonds of friendship between the US and the countries of the Far East. The Shidler College of Business is grateful to have the Freeman Foundation as a partner in offering travel scholarships to deserving undergraduate students interested in study abroad to Asia.”

The Freemans have put millions into scholarships to help American students understand Asia and its peoples and cultures. The foundation also supports numerous Asian studies programs at the University of Hawaii and donated funds to the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council that supported study tours to Asia for high school students.”

—From <http://shidler.hawaii.edu/freeman>

Taken from <https://kevinatyonsei.wordpress.com/>



Without the generosity of the Freeman Foundation and the support of the Shidler College of Business, I would not be able to experience going to Yonsei University and to Korea during my Spring 2014 semester. I am also grateful for the network that comes with the Freeman Scholarship, as my transition from Hawaii to Korea and back would not be as smooth, had I not met the wonderful network of Freeman alumni.

A special thanks goes to Rikki Mitsunaga of the Shidler College of Business, who helped advise me in classes and also recommended I apply for the Freeman Scholarship in the first place. Another special thank you is directed towards Darrell Kicker and Sara Otis in the Manoa International Exchange Office, who sent me helpful application reminders, took care of sending my Yonsei application in on time, and for coordinating the program in the first place.



YONSEI UNIVERSITY

DECEMBER 4, 2013 KEVIN733

Since its founding in 1885, Yonsei University has been synonymous with international education and exchange in Asia. As the most internationalized and open institution of higher learning in Korea, Yonsei by far enjoys the longest history of international education in Korea with the most extensive network of exchange partners world-wide.

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Yonsei maintains the most extensive international network in Korea with 603 partner institutions in 59 countries and educates the largest number of international students among Korean universities, with nearly 4,000 students in the academic year 2009. In addition, Yonsei University currently ranked as the top private university in Korea in the 2009 QS World University Rankings published by The Times Higher Education Supplement and in The 2009 Academic Ranking of World Universities by Shanghai JiaoTong University. Even more, Yonsei University is actively strengthening its international status as a competitive research university by launching the “Global 5-5-10” program in 2007. The main goal of the program is to achieve global top 10 ranking in at least five of the 12 selected fields (which are Korean studies, Chemistry, Astronomy, Biomedical Science, Material Science, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Metabolism Disorders, Nanomedical Research, Aging Studies, and Medical Engineering) within the next five years.

Yonsei University provides excellent global programs for international students. Its English-based degree programs include Underwood International College, the highly selective four-year undergraduate school which serves as an intimate, elite setting within the larger institution of Yonsei, Graduate School of International Studies, the graduate school renowned for its global competitiveness, and Global MBA, the MBA program that is reflective of the modern business environment of the world. Yonsei University also offers the most comprehensive and modernized international non-degree programs for ambitious international students, which include the Exchange Program, Study Abroad Program, Tailor-Made Programs, International Summer School, and the various Korean language programs of the Korean Language Institute.

International students participating in Yonsei University’s extensive degree and non-degree global programs get the valuable opportunity to receive the best international education in Asia through its globally renowned faculty members and innovative and extensive curriculum, with over 700 courses taught in English. For instance, a significant number of top economists, including 2007 Economics Nobel Laureate Eric Maskin, will soon be joining the faculty of Yonsei College of Business and Economics. In addition, UIC, GSIS, and Global MBA professors form a unique and highly distinguished faculty from leading universities, including Harvard University, Stanford University, and Columbia University. Yonsei University also offers students a rigorous, globally-focused curriculum that can guide students to excel in their respective fields on an international level.”

– Taken from <http://oia.yonsei.ac.kr/>



PREPARING FOR THE TRIP – APPLICATION, KOREAN VISA, DORM (PART 1 OF 4)

JANUARY 20, 2014 [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

I am lucky enough to be studying at the prestigious Yonsei University in South Korea. But like most universities both in Korea and the US, there is an application process and arrangements must be made by the student to take care of the different living arrangements.

Luckily, my experience was made relatively painless by utilizing the [University of Hawaii's MIX](#) (Manoa International Exchange) Office. Through MIX, I was able to quickly send in all required documents ([The MIX Application](#) and [Yonsei Application](#)) and they were able to answer all my questions about both applications. If you have not done so yet, get your passport renewed right away and also pick up some additional passport photos for the Yonsei application forms, the Korean Visa, and Alien Registration once in Korea. While I was busy filling out paperwork, I also applied for an [international drivers license through AAA](#), and the US Global Entry Program. [The Global Entry Program](#) allows me to be considered “Low-Risk”, and grants me preference for TSA Pre-Check (When available at major US Airports like Honolulu International), and also expedited customs and immigration service when returning from overseas. Since I have several weeks till departure, I figured I could get all these additional perks so I could have a better experience.

For most students studying abroad, it is likely you will need a Study Visa to stay in the country for an extended period of time. In my case, I needed to apply for a D-2 visa at the Korean Consulate to study abroad. The experience was made very easy due to a [Korean Consulate on](#)

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[Pali Highway](#), which happens to be literally 5 minutes away from my house. [The Korean Consulate Website](#) lists all the details and requirements to obtain the study visa, and the people at the consulate are all very nice and can speak English well. There is one extra requirement that I had, because I am ethnically part Korean. I had to provide my Father's passport, along with my own, to prove that I am not full Korean. Apparently, Korean Americans may sometimes be considered to still have dual citizenship depending on what year they or their parents were born, and also if any of the parents had dual citizenship. I am not entirely clear of the details, but if this applies to you, check with your consulate.

While I am waiting for my visa to be approved, I also had to sign up for dorms. There are two dorms for international students at Yonsei's Sinchon campus, the International House (I-House), and SK Global House (Global House). You can find more information about the houses at the [Yonsei International Housing Website](#). When deciding which house to live in, here are the main deciding factors I read:

International House

- Older building
- Cheaper rooms
- Double rooms only
- No private bathrooms (One communal bathroom on each floor)
- Refrigerator in each room & one shared-kitchen on each floor



SK Global House

- Newer building
- Rooms are more expensive
- Option of Single or Double rooms
- Private bathrooms in each room
- No refrigerator in double rooms and only one shared-kitchen in entire dorm (Floor B3)



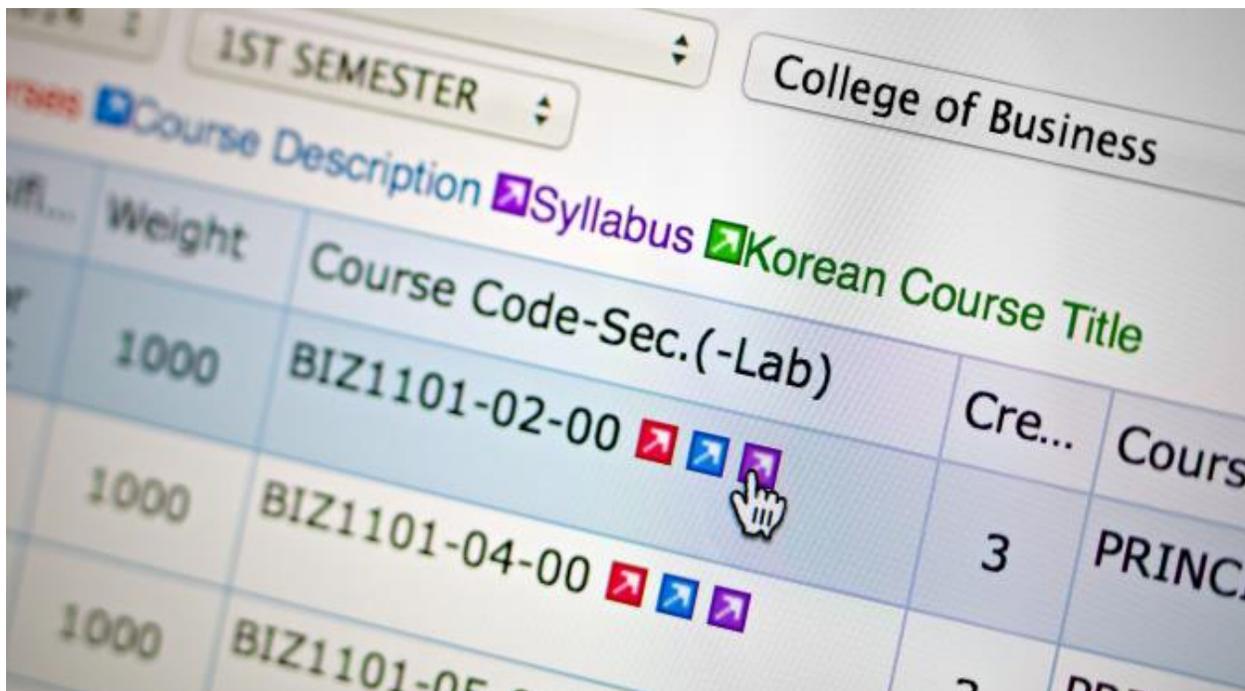
I opted to apply for the Global House Single room. Although it is more expensive than a double, I've heard the extra privacy gained is well worth the cost. When applications open up, be sure to be on the website and keep refreshing! You should have already created your profile page on the website and it will save that information, making the application itself easy and fast. But just because it will be quick, don't dilly dally because only a couple days after the dorm application opened, there was a notice saying they had to close the application simply because there were too many applicants and they could not fit anyone else into the dorms. This was especially scary because I had applied for a single room, which is generally most sought after, and if my application did not "pass" (meaning approved), then I would need to find other housing. Luckily after the few weeks of waiting, my application status changed from under review to "pass". Then I was given the bank and payment information. I was also advised by friends to send a little bit more money than what was listed due to potential exchange rate differences. If you are over or under the amount owed by a small amount, you can pay more or get a refund during your first week at Yonsei.

Now here is my first blunder that happened this past week. I have been putting off doing my international wire transfer because I believed it would only be a day or two to go from my bank

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to Woori Bank (Yonsei's preferred bank). So I put it off till this past Friday (The payment is due on Monday Korean Time). BIG MISTAKE! I was told the transfer would go through immediately, and it did on my bank's side, but due to the way international wire transfers work, my money would not reach Yonsei's bank account until the following Thursday or Friday due to all international wire transfers requiring 3-5 business days to be approved. Yonsei will cancel any housing application that is not paid by the deadline, so as you can imagine, I was freaking out. I quickly scanned the receipt I received from my bank for my transfer and emailed the SK Global Housing Office (skghouse@yonsei.ac.kr) with my receipt and explained my situation. Upon no email response, today (Sunday in Honolulu, Monday in Korea), I bought some [Skype credit](#) and called the housing office using my Skype account, since my cell phone plan does not allow for international calls. The person on the line spoke English well and I explained my situation to her. She asked me to resend my receipt and she can hold my application for the next few days till the money is received. I got a quick email confirmation that my application will be held and it seems that I am in the clear for now. The 12 cents used on Skype may have saved hundreds of dollars in finding other housing near campus.

It is still a little over a month until I leave for Korea. And despite a couple errors I make here and there, I am still excited to be heading to Yonsei and studying abroad in Korea.



PREPARING FOR THE TRIP – CLASSES TAUGHT IN ENGLISH (PART 2 OF 4)

JANUARY 24, 2014 [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

The language barrier in Korea is something that I have been worrying about since I applied for the international exchange program. My understanding at the time was that Yonsei offered abundant English-taught business courses. I also was given a list of blanket agreements for course equivalencies at the Shidler College of Business, meaning I could take courses at Yonsei,

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and provided the course ID matched, I would not have to petition to get credit for the respective course at Shidler.

However, my understanding of the classes was led askew, due to a dissonance of information provided from Yonsei and UH Manoa. In short, there may or may not be all the classes you require, and due diligence is required to see if the classes that Yonsei offers in English would make Yonsei a good choice for an exchange school. Before I go further into explaining my process, I must offer a short disclaimer: I can only attest to my experience seeking classes for my business degree, and my explanations and directions are suited for my very particular case. In my opinion at the time of this blog post, Yonsei would be a good choice for a business student in their junior year, looking to fulfill business core courses.

Now that you know my previous understanding and also my revelation, here is what you can do to avoid my mistake.

First of all, you will need to visit the [Office of International Affairs' Website](#) to find the application for the school and also some information about the courses and academic calendar. You will find this information under Programs -> Fall/Spring -> Look on the left hand column for Courses or Academic Calendar. Don't worry if they are not up to date, they don't vary much year to year.

If you are looking for the class catalog & syllabi, you will need to navigate to the [Yonsei Portal Website](#). If necessary, you can translate the page into English using a button in the upper right hand corner. Next, on the main page, look for "The Main Portal Service", and click on the link that says "Course Catalog And Syllabus: Undergraduate and Graduate". The link should open up a new window with some Korean at the top, and drop down links for the Program, College, Major, Year, and Semester. In my case, because I am looking primarily at Business courses, I changed the college to the College of Business (Not Business & Economics), and the major should default to Business Administration. Then I hit the small magnifying glass next to that menu, and many courses popped up. Business courses are identified with "BIZ" in the course code. If no courses popped up for you, check the year and semester, and maybe look back one or two semesters to see what classes were offered during that term, you may be checking too far in advance (The course lists are updated in July for the Fall Semester and in December for the Spring Semester).

Year	Class	Weight	Course Code	Sec.	Lab	Cr.	Course Title	Instructor	Time	Room	Ref.
2	Major	1000	BIZ1101-01-00			3	PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTING	KIM Jee Hong	Tue7,Thu8	DW4M110	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1101-02-00			3	PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTING	Choi, Wan W.	Mon7,8,Wed8	DW4M110	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1101-03-00			3	PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTING	Lee Ho Young	Mon1,4,Wed4	DW4M110	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1101-04-00			3	PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTING	Gural Andrea	Mon1,2,Wed2	DW4M110	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1101-05-00			3	PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTING	Gural Andrea	Mon1,4,Wed4	DW4M110	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1101-06-00			3	PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTING	Lee Jee Hong	Tue4,Thu5,6	DW4M110	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1101-07-00			3	PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTING	Choi Jung Sun	Tue5,6,Thu4	DW4M110	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1101-08-00			3	PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTING	Lee Hyun-Ah	Wed5,Fri5,6	DW4M110	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1102-01-00			3	ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	CHANG, EUN MI	Tue1,Thu2,3	DW4M113	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1102-02-00			3	ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	CHANG, EUN MI	Tue2,3,Thu2	DW4M113	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1102-03-00			3	ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	Oh Hongseok	Tue4,6,Thu4	DW4M113	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1102-04-00			3	ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	Jung Donggi	Mon1,2,Wed2	DW4M113	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1102-05-00			3	ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	LEE SUN SEOK	Wed5,Fri5,6	DW4M103	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ1102-06-00			3	ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	KIM DO HOON	Wed7,Fri7,8	DW4M103	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Major	1000	BIZ2119-01-00			3	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	LPI, Ung Ki	Tue7,8,9	DW4M112	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now there are many business courses offered every semester (I currently count 116), however this includes all the ones in only Korean, so you must filter the list by clicking the check box next to "English Course Only". You know it worked when you check the far right "Ref." Column, and there is a circle with the #2 in every box. This Ref. box will be crucial to knowing

Taken from <https://kevinatyonsei.wordpress.com/>

whether or not you should take that course and you can check to see what the codes mean by clicking on them. The other thing to note is under the Course Code-Sec column; there are typically three colored boxes. By clicking the purple box on the right, you bring up the syllabus for that class. Another problem is sometimes the syllabus is not available for that class or section in a particular semester, so you will need to backtrack a semester or two to find a syllabus that has the same course code and professor.

I utilized the blanket agreement list provided to me by the Shidler College of Business, to help my search. The blanket agreement helped me figure out what classes I should aim to take so I would have an easier time transferring credits back. The problem is that many classes under the blanket agreement are not offered every semester, especially those that fulfill major specific courses such as MKT 381 or FIN 311. Sometimes, it will be necessary to explore other classes that may be covered by the blanket agreement. I am talking specifically about the courses at Yonsei with an IEE code. Sometimes there may be International Business courses that are offered more frequently, and all IEE courses are offered in English. To find these IEE courses, change the college to “Study Abroad Course”, and the major should default to “Undergraduate”. There are many introductory and intermediate Korean Language and Culture courses, with some business classes mixed in. As stated before, courses may not be offered consistently, so be sure to do some research and have alternative courses you can take in case you do not get the ones you want.

One other popular class many people want to take is the KLI (Korean Language Intensive) course that provides a crash course in the Korean language. To find these courses, keep the college menu as “Study Abroad Course” and change from Undergraduate to Korean Language. As always, if there is none showing up, you will need to look back a semester to see how many courses for each level is offered.

The only other important note pertains primarily when using the search function. The search is excellent, especially when switching from Course Code to Course Title. Then you can search using keywords like “International”, “Introduction”, or “Korean”. The thing to be wary of is in the Ref. Column and it is a little circle with a “c” in it. The legend translates the code to “Offered at International Campus”, but the International Campus is the one near the Incheon Airport, so do not pick any course with a “c”. Also if you see anything in a syllabus or catalog that says the course is being offered at the Yonsei Wonju Campus, Wonju is a couple hours outside of Seoul, so that is not recommended either.

Overall, while Yonsei does offer a decent amount of English-taught courses, the ones I require for my degree are not consistently offered every semester. I still do have a plan that will allow me to graduate on time, and with flexibility and proper academic planning, I believe you will have a decent amount of options, just like me. Also, even though I have provided a step-by-step guide on what I did, I recommend you do your own reading and ask many questions to make sure you are continuing on your own academic path. Study abroad and International exchange programs should not be seen as a burden on your academic career, and instead should be seen as opportunities to learn more in a different environment.



PREPARING FOR THE TRIP – COURSE REGISTRATION, EXTRA PREPARATION TIPS, YONSEI BUDDY PROGRAM (PART 3 OF 4)

FEBRUARY 11, 2014 [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

As stated in the previous post, there are limited numbers of higher-level English-taught business courses. Likewise, these particular classes are highly desirable, which causes some worry among students who require the class to graduate on time. I am luckily not one of those people, but unfortunately, I did not get all the classes I wanted.

After I looked at what classes I did want, I had a first choice set of classes, then a second, and even a third set of classes, just in case I did not get anything. Be sure to pay attention to the times and on what days the classes are held, as you cannot schedule classes on top of each other. Nothing will happen till your registration day, until the Yonsei Class Wish List opens up. I highly recommend you log in at the beginning of the window to see how you register and to pick the classes you want. Yonsei will save whatever classes you add to the list, so in case you don't stick around for the entire 3 hours, you can return and you can still quickly register. The scary thing about this part is you can see how many other students want the exact same class as you, and for the class I did not get, I was competing against 60 students for a total of 5 seats in the class. Once it comes to your registration time, start clicking on the course code on your wish list, the page should automatically refresh every time you click, and it will tell you if it was added successfully or not. Be fast, because you are literally competing with people all around the world.

Taken from <https://kevinatyonsei.wordpress.com/>

It is worth noting that many BIZ classes are capped at 5 exchange students being allowed to register, but if you cannot get in, you can attempt to go to class on the first day to get an override from the professor. I took the extra step and emailed my professor asking what the chances of me getting an override were, and he said it is very unlikely since both international and Korean students want that class.

Alas, I did not get that one class (Strategic Management) that would have counted for BUS 345 at Shidler, I did get one (International Conflicts & Cooperation) that counts as an International Business Elective. I also registered for the Intensive Korean Language course, which is held everyday in the evenings. My other classes I am currently registered for are Free Trade Agreements, and Korean Language & Society. I am planning on dropping one of the last two classes, since I believe I should not crowd my schedule with classes to allow for more time to explore and have fun while in Korea. Here is my class schedule as of today:

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Time
9:00 to 9:50				International Conflicts & Cooperation (NMHB 205)		9:00 to 9:50
10:00 to 10:50		International Conflicts & Cooperation (NMHB 205)				10:00 to 10:50
11:00 to 11:50			Korean Language & Society (BYHS319)			11:00 to 11:50
12:00 to 12:50	Korean Language & Society (BYHS319)					12:00 to 12:50
1:00 to 1:50	Free Trade Agreements (NMH 106)					1:00 to 1:50
2:00 to 2:50			Free Trade Agreements (NMH 106)			2:00 to 2:50
3:00 to 3:50						3:00 to 3:50
4:00 to 4:50	Intensive Korean Langue (KLI4F-1)	Intensive Korean Langue (KLI4F-1)	Intensive Korean Langue (KLI4F-1)	Intensive Korean Langue (KLI4F-1)	Intensive Korean Langue (KLI4F-1)	4:00 to 4:50
5:00 to 5:50	Intensive Korean Langue (KLI4F-1)	Intensive Korean Langue (KLI4F-1)	Intensive Korean Langue (KLI4F-1)	Intensive Korean Langue (KLI4F-1)	Intensive Korean Langue (KLI4F-1)	5:00 to 5:50

If you are approaching your departure, you should have already thought about housekeeping matters at home. For example, making sure somebody can help take care of your mail, suspending a cell phone contract, buying warm clothes, etc. But there are a couple things to prepare specifically for Korea and Yonsei that would make life much easier. First of all, get a TB test if you will be staying in the dorms. You will need a clean statement from your doctor proving you are not sick to move in, otherwise you will be required to get it while in Korea, which may be difficult if you do not know the language. Also, join Facebook groups or join KakaoTalk to introduce yourself to people at Yonsei or in Korea. Gather a sufficient supply of medications, and other important things that will be difficult to get in Korea (Reese's Peanut Butter Cups are apparently very hard to come by there). Use common sense when buying/packing, and don't try to pack every little bit of home with you, it should be part of the fun to start fresh and experience shopping in Korea.

Taken from <https://kevinatyonsei.wordpress.com/>

Speaking of shopping, I recently received an email about the Yonsei Buddy Program, which is a program that assigns you a mentor, typically a native Korean student. Each particular student is assigned a mentor based on likes/dislikes, interests, and what you ask of the mentor. The program will place a group of exchange students with a single mentor, forming a cell. The cell is supposed to be a way to meet other exchange students so you can go out and have fun, while the mentor is a guide to help facilitate activities and may advise on certain topics such as shopping or clubbing.

I have heard mixed reviews of the Yonsei Buddy Program, ranging from excellent to virtually non-existent. Some mentors choose to interact with their cell often and will plan outings for the students, while other mentors may only meet once and will not be seen again. It depends a lot on the mentor's personality, but also the other people in the cell. I signed up for the program because it does not cost anything, and it may turn out very good for me.

It's about 10 more days till I depart and I have all my flight and hotel arrangements made. Still so much work to be done at home, but I am excited to experience Korea soon.



PREPARING FOR THE TRIP – PACKING, ATTITUDE, EXPECTATIONS (PART 4 OF 4)

FEBRUARY 23, 2014 [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

Taken from <https://kevinatyonse.wordpress.com/>

I have arrived one day early in Incheon and am ready to go to Yonsei tomorrow! I did not want to come the day everyone moved in because there were no inexpensive flights that came in the morning, only in the late afternoon, which would mean less time to get settled and to move in.

As I packed, there are a few things that you should definitely bring or buy beforehand, as they are either things you need or it's hard to find in Korea.

1. 220v Plugs (See [here](#) for more info)
2. International Power Strip (I recommend [this one](#). It's an absolute must-have if you are in the dorms)
3. American Candies; Reese's Peanut Butter Cups & Gummi Worms especially. Use these to snack on and give them away as gifts.
4. LAN cable for internet, ethernet adapter if your computer needs it.
5. Chapstick for winter months
6. Cough/cold medicine
7. Toilet Paper (Just 1 roll to get you started in the dorms)
8. A camera to take pictures of all the places you go!

Aside from this list, you can expect extremely cold weather during winter months and very hot and muggy weather in the summer months, so pack clothes accordingly. One of the things you do not need to pack is an umbrella, since you can buy them for about 2,000 KRW (About \$2) in any convenience store. Also be sure to bring your laptop and charger, all necessary toiletries, and if you can fit it, bedding for your dorm (The beds are approximately the size of a US twin).

Going into this adventure, I was told by multiple people that the secret to having fun in any study abroad experience is to say yes as much as possible. If someone offers you to try something or to go somewhere, try to say yes as much as possible. Don't just stay cooped up in your dorm room, go out and explore! This yes-attitude will let you have fun and meet a lot of new people.

Also, as I've already arrived in Korea, I can tell knowing the language is extremely valuable, especially for someone like me who looks Korean. I am expecting my limited knowledge will hinder what I can do, but I will be able to survive. Provided I can make friends who can speak Korean, I will be able to enjoy the country much more.



THE YONSEI EXPERIENCE – ARRIVAL TO DORMS, ALIEN REGISTRATION CARD, AND CELL PHONES

FEBRUARY 28, 2014 LEAVE A COMMENT

This post is going to be a lot of directions and is mostly a guide of what I did.

Airport ✈️ to the Dorms

1. After getting off the plane, you will head towards baggage claim. There is a train you must get on to take you there. Pass through immigration in the “Foreign Passport” line. Go down to claim your bags and go through customs.
2. Get some money exchanged (I recommend ~\$100) and find a bus ticket booth. Tell them you are going to **Ewha Women’s University Back Gate**. The back gate part is important as it will drop you off by the dorms. You should get a ticket for bus 6011 which costs 10,000 KRW (~\$10). I then recommend you go towards 5A, which is the first stop the bus will make at the airport, so that the bus will be less crowded when you get on.
3. The bus driver will usually help get your bags on the bus or put them under the bus and give you a little claim ticket. After you get on, be sure to keep listening to what stop is coming next. The driver may not always stop so you need to press one of the call buttons to get their attention to stop. If you miss your stop, you can always get off and take a taxi to the dorms, just look for a line of taxis on the side of the road and say “Yonsei University”, and most drivers can understand that. You can take a taxi into campus and have them drop you off right at the dorms.

4. If you took the bus, get off at Ewha Back Gate and there should be two crosswalks. Take the longer one of the two towards a restaurant called “Slow Garden”, and head right.
5. You should pass a large restaurant with a green sign called “Jessica’s Kitchen” and there should be a bus stop in front. Keep going up the street.
6. Keep going till you hit a small street that goes to the left. You should see a wooden restaurant and some curved glass shop called “The Fashion”. Go up the small street.
7. Pass a concrete building called “Lord Sandwich” on the right and you will eventually see the entrance to SK Global House.
8. Once inside, you will see pillars with names and numbers on them. You must find your name and room number first before you can check in. When you check in, be sure to have a copy of your passport and TB test report to hand in.
9. Be sure to attend the dorm and academic orientation that is typically held the day after move-in day.

Dorms to Seoul Immigration Office (For Alien Registration Card)

Be aware that this place is *very* busy throughout the day. I recommend leaving the dorms at 8:30am so you get there shortly after the office opens at 9am. It only took me an hour to get mines done, but some people take much longer, especially if they don’t follow the posted directions (Which are entirely in Korean). Get this done soon after you arrive as it takes 3-4 weeks for you to receive the card.

Be sure to bring the following:

- 30,000 KRW Application Fee + 3,000 KRW Mailing Fee
 - Application (There are copies at the office)
 - Copy of your passport & visa (Copy machine at the office costs about 2,500 KRW)
 - Passport-size picture for application (Photo booth at the office costs 7,000 KRW)
 - Certificate of Enrollment (Should be received at Academic Orientation)
1. Go to the subway and ride the Green Line (Line 2) towards Hongik University/Hongdae, and get off at Yeongdeungpo-gu Office Station.
 2. Transfer to the Purple Line (Line 5) towards Gimpo International Airport, and get off at Omokyo Station.
 3. Take Exit 7 out of the station and walk straight for 10 minutes towards the Seoul Immigration Office. You should keep walking till you hit a large intersection, it will be on the opposite side of the street to your left.
 4. Go inside and walk to the 2nd floor to the Seoul Southern Immigration Residence Section (Yonsei dorms are in Seodaemun-gu)
 5. Immediately go straight to a touch-screen machine and click Non-Chinese application. Take your ticket with your number and head to the left side of the office.
 6. If necessary, fill out your application, make a copy of your passport, and print/cut your passport-sized picture.
 7. Go towards the back corner of the office to the ATM and pay the 30,000 KRW application fee. I also recommend paying 3,000 KRW extra to have the card mailed to you so don’t have to come back to wait in line.
 8. Stay in the waiting area till your number is called. You can see which number they are on from the TV in the waiting area.



Getting a Cell Phone Sim Card

First of all, if you want to use your current cell phone in Korea, you must make sure your phone is unlocked. You can either ask your carrier to do it for you, or go to a shop at home that can do it. There are places that can do it in Korea, but they are expensive and you may need to give up your phone for a day or two so they can send it away to get in unlocked.

There is a relatively inexpensive place that can provide you a SIM card, fairly close to Yonsei. They also have a terrific English speaking staff, which is why I went there.

Be sure to note the following:

- Bring your passport and phone
 - You must have been in Korea for at least 3 days to get a SIM card
 - Olleh Wifi exists in most places around Seoul, so you won't need too much data.
1. Take the Green Line (Line 2) towards Hongik University/Hongdae, and get off at Hongik University/Hongdae.
 2. Take exit #9 and there should be an Olleh store on your left after reaching street level.
 3. Walk in a go up the stairs to the 2nd floor and go to the English service counter.
 4. Get the voice and data plan you think you need. Remember that you will need to refill your data plan every month, but you can go to any Olleh store to do that.



THE YONSEI EXPERIENCE – FIRST IMPRESSIONS, MAKING FRIENDS, KOREAN CULTURAL RULES

MARCH 2, 2014 [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

I have been in Korea for about a week now and things have gone exceptionally well! I have had no problems with my dorm and am very glad I got a single room. I don't have much of a view from my balcony, but I got to explore the dorms and surrounding area to see where to buy things. There is a convenience store right downstairs where you can buy food and other essentials. There is also a coffee shop, bento place, burger shop, and a nail salon downstairs as well. I am also a 10-15 minute walk from Sinchon, the main shopping/dining area close by.



I was lucky enough to make many new friends, all of them speaking a decent amount of Korean. Many of them are from Singapore, a couple are from Japan, one is from China, two from Thailand, and through my mentors program, a few from Korea. They all can speak English well and their home languages as well, which is just amazing. The “Just say yes” attitude I talked about in a previous post really pays off. Food is pretty cheap in Korea, and going out to eat almost every night is normal especially for college students.

As I’ve walked around and talked to people, I’ve learned there are certain cultural rules to follow when in Korea. Just like in Hawaii or America, we have certain expectations of people such as yielding to pedestrians when driving or tipping at restaurants, Korea has its own expectations that I recommend you follow. However some of these may be disregarded if you are with fellow international students, but it’s best to live like a Korean when in Korea. Here are some of the rules to follow:

- Making and maintaining eye contact or talking to Korean strangers is generally frowned upon.
- Running to get to places quickly is common.
- Dress to blend in, sticking out is usually bad.
- Drivers care little about you or the traffic signals; cross the street at your own risk.
- Stand to the right on the escalator to let people pass on the left.
- Talking loudly on trains/busses is frowned upon.
- Do not sit on the different-colored seats on the ends of the trains, they are meant for handicapped people or the elderly.
- While eating, blowing your nose at the table is extremely disrespectful. If you must blow your nose, excuse yourself to the bathroom and do it quietly.
- While drinking, always try to pour for others before pouring for yourself, especially if you are younger.
- At restaurants, there is sometimes a call button to get the waiter’s attention. You will usually have to ask to get more water or something else, otherwise they will not come check on you.

Taken from <https://kevinatyonsei.wordpress.com/>

- Finally, there is no tipping at restaurants or services, and all tax is included in the listed price.

