

Please introduce yourself (where are you coming from? how old are you? what are you studying?)

My name is Angeline Protacio. I was born in the Philippines, but grew up in California. I am 25 years old, and I study Epidemiology at Columbia University.

Why did you choose France? How did you learn about the EHESP?

I chose France because I can speak a little French, and because I love the culture. I learned about EHESP through the reciprocal exchange program with Columbia.

What are the reasons you want to come to the EHESP?

I wanted to come to EHESP to see how public health is taught internationally, and also to gain practical experience applying what I've learned in the classroom.

What have you learned as a foreign exchange student? How do you plan to share your experiences with other students when you return?

I have learned that the crêpes, cider, and butter from Brittany are the best! I think that French culture is a lot more laid back than American culture, and I have learned to relax and be more patient. I have fallen in love with Rennes, and I plan to encourage other students to do their internship here.

Is it necessary to speak French before coming?

I think you should speak a little bit of French before coming. You can probably do your project just fine without any French, but it improves your experience if you can interact in French with the people you work with, and can understand a bit. The people in Rennes are very friendly and won't try to speak to you in English, so it's a great opportunity to improve your French!

What are your future academic and career goals?

I want to work in government, as an epidemiologist for local or state departments of public health.

What is your favorite thing about France? Your less favorite? How does it compare to your country?

There are many things I love about France. I love the importance of food, and the attention to where it comes from, how it is prepared, and how delicious it tastes. When the vegetables taste as good as they do here, it's easy to eat them at every meal. In the United States, it's difficult to tell what foods are real, and which have sugar, salt, and other chemicals added to them. The vegetables don't taste as flavorful, and many Americans don't care about making them taste like real vegetables. It's very frustrating. I also appreciate the transportation in France. It is easy to get around in the cities (buses and the metro are heavily used here) and there are many options (if you think the TGV is too expensive, sign up for a covoiturage!) In the United States, not every city has public transportation, and not everyone uses it. New York is a major exception, but in many other cities, you must have a car to get around. Good luck finding a train that will take you from Northern to Southern California in a reasonable amount of time, much less anything from California to New York that isn't a plane. I do miss the diversity of ethnic food available in the United States, though!