

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

My name is Jamie Ryan. I am 24 years old and a Masters student at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University in New York City, with a concentration in Health Policy. I grew up in Philadelphia and completed my undergraduate degree in biopsychology and comparative politics at Tufts University in Boston in 2010.

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

I learned about the Columbia-EHESP exchange through an information session in New York in February. I had studied abroad before in Cambridge and Geneva, but I had not spent much time in France. I was excited to use my French language skills again!

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

I wanted to come to EHESP because I had heard good things about the school from one of my professors, Larry Brown. I am interested in comparative systems and I wanted to work on my French, so it seemed like a good fit.

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

As a foreign exchange student, I have learned to adjust to the different pace of life. Coming from New York where everyone is rushing everywhere, it took a little while to get used to the more relaxed atmosphere in Rennes. I plan on encouraging my friends back home to try to study or work abroad if they have any interest, as it is very rewarding to experience living and working in another country.

Is it necessary to speak French before coming?

It is certainly not absolutely necessary to speak French before going to Paris as people will just speak to you in English, but it is very helpful to have some French language skills in Rennes. While it is not necessary to be fluent, I think it would be a very different and less fulfilling experience if I didn't speak French at all.

What are your future academic and career goals?

I will finish my studies at Columbia in December. I am interested in working abroad, or in a US-based organization with an international focus.

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

My favorite thing about France is the food—I love the simple crepe sucre! I do miss warmth and sunshine, but I am told that this summer has been unusually chilly, so maybe next summer will be better. The major difference between France and the US that I have seen is that the cities in France are not over-developed. You will find cows and countryside only 15km from the center of Rennes. You have to go more like 50km away from Philadelphia to find farms!