

# Exchange Semester Fall 2022 at Sogang University (Seoul)

## My Experience



### 1. Application

Because I had read in other experience reports that one should start early with preparing the application, I started around six months ahead of the application deadline. While I think a little less time can still be enough, I was very glad I had planned in a lot of time buffer because receiving the recommendatory letters from the professors took some time. I was a bit afraid of the English level test since my English was a bit rusty at that time but the test was more like relaxed talking so I can assure you that you do not need to worry.

Moreover, I researched a lot about the three partner universities in Seoul to be able to find my first choice. It took some time, and I also wrote emails to each international office with additional questions regarding courses, language courses, on-campus housing, or student groups. Especially Sogang's inbound exchange officer Mr. Kim Dowon is very helpful and usually replies in just one day. I eventually chose Sogang as my first choice since it offered the most interesting psychology (because my major is psychology) and Korean culture courses. Furthermore, I liked Sogang's central location in Seoul.

One year ahead of my exchange semester, I started taking the Korean class by Dr. In Young Min at Heidelberg University which was a great preparation for the time in South Korea. I really recommend it if you do not have other classes at the time and studying Korean may also convince the selection committee of your true interest in Korea. Furthermore, in this course the books used for studying are from Sogang University. This is great if you want to take a Korean class at Sogang as well since you will have to take a Korean speaking test and they pay special attention to one's knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar in each level of Sogang's books. Even if you do not want to study Korean a lot, it will be much easier to get along in Seoul if you are able to read Hangeul. Even if you do not understand Korean, navigating and ordering food will be much easier because many shop signs and menus are written in Hangeul.

The interview was quite relaxed as well and – to my surprise – held in German. A few days later I received an email with the confirmation that I was accepted for Sogang University.

## **2. Preparation for the Exchange Semester**

### ***Official Application at Sogang University***

Even if you are accepted by Heidelberg University for the exchange, you still need to officially apply to Sogang University. This is only formality but pay attention to the date of the deadline since in my case it was the 30<sup>th</sup> and not the last date of the month (which would have been the 31<sup>st</sup>). A part of the official application is also the application for Korean language courses and for the dormitory.

### ***Visa Application***

I recommend applying for the visa via mail and doing this as soon as you receive the official documents from Sogang so that you can be sure that you will receive the visa in time for your flight to Seoul. Also, the official website for the visa application can be very confusing and sometimes even contradicts itself so it can be very helpful to just shortly call them to remove all ambiguities.

### ***Finances***

I knew before the semester abroad that it would be expensive, so I braced myself for spending a large amount of my personal savings. In Heidelberg's acceptance email was already written about the Baden-Württemberg-Stipendium for which you can apply directly at Heidelberg University. I had heard before that the odds would be quite low, but I was very lucky to receive it. While it will not suffice for all expenses, it was great help, and I can only recommend to try your luck.

### ***Travel Insurance***

I chose the travel insurance by HanseMerkur as my insurance since it was less expensive than the one recommended by Heidelberg University. It also seemed like DAAD's insurance would not cover if you decided to stay longer than the official time of the semester.

### **Course Selection**

Sogang's course selection is some weeks before the semester starts and Mr. Kim will notify all exchange students via email. The start of the selection period is in the morning in Korea, so it is in the middle of the night in Germany. Nevertheless, I recommend setting an alarm to select your preferred courses since some (e. g. Medium of Cultural Modernity, Art of Storytelling, Filming Korea) are very popular and will be full before it is morning in Germany. To choose which courses you want to take you can check Sogang's course catalog for all courses held in English and read their detailed syllabus (if it is not uploaded for the upcoming semester yet, you can check the syllabus in the course catalog for past semesters).

Sadly, in my exchange semester Clinical Psychology (the course I absolutely wanted to take to learn more about how psychological disorders are discussed and treated in a country where they are highly prevalent, but strongly stigmatized) was not offered. Since I had already finished all psychology courses that I needed for my studies in Heidelberg, I was able to choose freely and, in the end, only chose three courses so I would have enough time to enjoy and explore Seoul. Those courses were Psychology of Religion, Filming Korea, and a Korean language course.

### **Tuberculosis Test**

If you choose to live in the dormitory (Gonzaga Hall), you will have to do a Tuberculosis test in the month before moving in. The dorm's official statement asks for a skin test. However, skin tests for Tuberculosis are not common anymore in Germany so I got it tested via blood analysis in my general practitioner's office. It costed around 80 euros and was gladly accepted by Gonzaga Hall.

## **3. Organizational Matters While in Seoul**

### **Applying for ARC**

If you stay in Korea longer than 90 days, you must apply for an ARC within 90 days of arrival. You can do this on your own by visiting the Immigration Office or apply on campus in the beginning of the semester. Although I arrived in Seoul two weeks before the start of the semester, I decided not to apply for the ARC on my own. Applying on campus was very convenient and the issued ARCs could be picked up in the Office of International Relations about a month later. Mr. Kim Dowon will let you know about the registration on campus and when the ARCs can be picked up. One thing I did not know before the ARC application: For the ARC you need a picture in which both of your ears can be seen. This caused a lot of us to spontaneously take pictures in the photo booth in Daeheung Station. They turned out surprisingly well though.

Good to know: While the initial permission to stay in South Korea with the visa is six months from the date of arrival, when receiving the ARC our permission to stay was extended to six months from the date of issuance of our ARC. Therefore, you will most likely be able to stay longer than six months if you want to.

By applying for the ARC, you are automatically registered for the Korean national health insurance. If you already have a travel insurance, it is possible to be exempted. For this you must pay a visit to NHIS Sindorim Branch *after* receiving your first invoice. You need to bring your ARC and insurance policy (and patience, since you will probably have to wait). They will check if your current insurance already covers enough and if yes, exempt you from the NHIS insurance. With HanseMerkur travel insurance I was exempted successfully.

### ***Paying in South Korea***

It is common in Korea to pay everything – even the smallest amounts – by card. Only when paying in markets, small clothing shops in subway stations or in Hongdae or for street food, you usually have to pay in cash.

A Korean bank account can be very helpful in Korea. You need one for example for ordering via coupang (I call it the Korean Amazon). If you want to open a Korean bank account *before* receiving your ARC, you have to pay a rather high deposit (320,000 won) which you only get back when closing the account again. I had some friends that opened a Korean bank account because their credit cards were often declined. With my DKB Visa card I almost never had problems paying which is why I decided to not open a bank account. However, some transfers for Sogang are only possible from a Korean bank account (e. g. the payments for dorm and language course). If you do not have one, you need to withdraw money, bring the cash to Woori Bank on campus and let them transfer it for you. Although this may sound like great effort, it did not take long at all.

### ***Sim Card***

Without an ARC (which you will not have in the beginning) you are not eligible for a mobile phone contract and need to buy a prepaid sim card that will provide you with – usually unlimited – data for a fixed time period. I made the mistake to buy a Sim Card by LGU+ at Incheon Airport. While data speed was great, it was extremely expensive and – most importantly – did not include text messages. Different from Germany in Korea this means not only that you are not able to send messages, but neither are you able to receive them. This was a big problem for me over the next two months (that I had already purchased the prepaid sim card for) since almost all websites require identity verification via text message and even the result of my (at that time still mandatory) COVID test on arrival was send (but not received) via text message. For the remaining four months I (like most exchange students I think) chose Chingu Mobile and can highly recommend it. The data speed is not as good as LGU+ was (still enough for streaming and video calling), it is unlimited and comparatively low-priced. The nearest Chingu Mobile shops to Sogang are next to Ewha Womens University and in Hongdae. I recommend the one in Hongdae since they speak better English, but you can also pre-order the sim card online from back in Germany and collect it on arrival at Incheon Airport.

### ***Useful Apps in Korea***

- **Naver Map:** Best app for navigation. Since Google Maps is not able to show footpaths in Korea, Naver Map is the best for footpaths and public transport navigation as well as finding good cafés and restaurants.
- **Papago:** Best translating service for Korean.
- **Gonzaga Hall:** If you live in the dorm, you can use this app to apply for stay-out, check the cafeteria's meal plan, check you penalty/reward points, etc.
- **KakaoTalk:** South Korea's messenger.
- **KakaoTaxi:** This app can be used to easily order a taxi. I have bad experience with just taking a cab that is standing in line or passing by because they tried to scam us.

## **4. Life in Seoul**

### ***Studying at Sogang***

I really enjoyed studying at Sogang University. Filming Korea was an extremely interesting course in which I learned a lot about Korean history and how it influenced Korean filmmaking. Sogang's campus is in the middle of Seoul near to the nightlife areas Sinchon and Hongdae. I really enjoyed living in walking distance to great cafés, restaurants, karaoke bars, busking, clubs, and more. I could

not have imagined a better location in Seoul. Sogang's campus is rather small compared to other universities in Seoul and you are able to cross it by foot completely in about ten minutes. Next to the dorm are several restaurants, GS25, a stationary shop, Starbucks and Gongcha.

In September, there was a campus festival at Sogang with food trucks, a flea market, a giant slide, a horror film public viewing and a concert with K-artists like Colde and Jay Park on Thursday and Friday. This kind of festival takes place every year and should not be missed!

### ***The Dormitory***

I am really glad to have chosen the dormitory. The rent was not high and since I got to live on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor, my view was quite nice. Furthermore, living on campus is super comfortable. I was lucky that most of my courses took place in buildings next to the dorm. But since the campus is small, no matter in which building your classes are, you do not need to leave the dorm (and bed) early if you live on campus. In the building's basement are washers and dryers that you can use for around 1 euro each and there are drying racks on each floor. The basement moreover has a gym and a cafeteria. The cafeteria serves breakfast and dinner and you can order a meal plan already when applying for the dorm. However, with a meal plan you will pay for at least 60% of all meals (that means you should really eat in the cafeteria often). I chose not to buy a meal plan because the cafeteria does not provide vegetarian food and I was very happy about this decision. There are so many other options where you can eat, and I really enjoyed going out with friends for dinner and usually ate cereal in the morning. If you do not purchase a meal plan, it is still possible to eat in the cafeteria by paying there directly. Each meal is a bit more expensive than for those who purchased a meal plan but in my opinion this is the better option.

Of course, there are also disadvantages. All rooms are double rooms (with toilet and shower in each room) so you will have to share the room with another person. Therefore, the quality of your stay in the dorm depends on your roommate. If you already know someone who will come to Sogang with you, it is possible to apply for staying in the same room. Although I did not know anyone before, I was okay with my roommate but it was definitely the lowest level of privacy I have lived in ever. Furthermore, there is only a fridge, microwave and a water purifier (hot & cold) on each floor, not something you can really cook with. Moreover, there is a curfew from 12 am to 5 am. However, this was not a problem since the curfew only means that if you stay out longer than 12 am, you have to be back before 5 am or register beforehand that you will stay out the whole night. Therefore, you still can stay out long without getting any penalty points. When moving into the dorm, you must fill out some questionnaires and there are room checkups and floor meetings three times per semester. However, this sounds worse than it was; the checkups would only last about 10 seconds.

I would always choose to stay in the dorm again because the location was ideal, the rent low and I mostly only used it for sleeping anyway, not for spending my time during the day.

### ***Contact Person at Sogang***

Sogang University really has the perfect contact person for international students. As already mentioned, his name is Mr. Kim Dowon and he is super helpful with questions regarding Sogang, ARC, NHIS insurance (and so on) and usually replies on the same day. Furthermore, Sogang has a buddy program organized by the student group HUG (Hands Up for Gathering). Every exchange student gets assigned to a Korean buddy and will be contacted before the start or in the beginning of the semester. You can ask your buddy if you struggle with something, have questions, or need recommendations. There are more and less motivated buddies. It was a lucky coincidence that my buddy was learning German, so it was a lot easier to connect with her. We met around five times in the whole semester and I really enjoyed each time.

### ***Student Groups***

Sogang has many student groups. In the beginning of the semester, there is a fair where those student groups try to recruit new members. However, most of those student groups did not accept exchange students. The Jiu Jitsu club and club for conversation in English are some of the few that accepted exchange students.

The student group HUG not only assigns a buddy to every exchange student, they organize many activities for exchange students as well. When I was there, those activities included a welcoming party, gimbap making, temple stay, ice skating, taekwondo trial course, board games, and more. HUG events took place on Wednesday evenings (I sadly had dancing classes on Wednesday evenings, so I missed some events) and there were two weekend trips (including the temple stay) in November. The HUG activities are great to get to know fellow exchange and Korean students. Especially since it can be hard to get to know Koreans as a foreigner this is a great opportunity.

### ***Korean Language Course (KGP60) at Sogang***

A few days before the semester started, I had a Korean speaking test to be placed in the correct level. Since I had already passed level 1A and 1B in Heidelberg, I really wanted to be placed into level 2A. I was placed in level 2 but found out on the first day of class that it was level 2B, not 2A. Upon asking, it turned out that there was no level 2A offered this semester. I participated a few times but since I was missing all of the grammar and vocabulary from level 2A I hardly understood anything the teacher was saying. This was so frustrating that I asked to be leveled down although this meant for me to repeat a level I had already passed. Therefore, my Korean sadly did not improve much over the semester but the course itself and the teacher were really nice. However, in my opinion it is not okay that they do not offer every level and subsequently place you into the wrong level even though you pay 600 euros for the course. I know of quite some other students that were unhappy with their level placement. Nevertheless, I really think that the courses are great if you are placed in the correct level.

### ***Public Transport***

Public transport is just the best in Korea. It is so much cheaper than in Germany and with the T-money card it is super convenient. If you avoid rush hour, it is also very comfortable. But even during rush hour it is still so quiet inside the subways and you will see some Koreans just dozing off. In general it is quite common for Koreans to take a nap in public; be it inside the subway, inside the library or inside a café. To be honest, I took a liking to this and took a nap inside the subway a few times myself...

In the beginning I only took the subway and avoided to go by bus because I was overwhelmed by the pure amount of buses. However, I learned pretty fast that Naver Map guides you very well through the jungle of bus lines and I ended up preferring the bus for shorter distances because of the great view you have of the city. The only downside to public transport in Korea is that there hardly is any from 12 am to 5 am. Another reason why it is great to live in walking distance to one of Seoul's nightlife areas!

Keep in mind: Always tap your card when transferring so you do not get charged twice!

### ***Grocery Shopping***

The GS25 directly next to Gonzaga Hall is great (especially since it is the only convenience store I have been to that offers vegetarian gimbap!!) but for larger packaging sizes I recommend Emart. The nearest one to Sogang is next to Sinchon station and they offer a large choice of products for an affordable price. Since the dormitory only has a refrigerator and a microwave but no kitchen, I only

bought groceries for breakfast. Emart offers No Brand products which are even less expensive and can be found in a separate section. However, fruits are very expensive in supermarkets but the small vendors on the streets usually have better prices (they do vary a lot though). I found the best value for money in Sinchon (when you walk past the daiso next to Sinchon station and continue walking on the left side of the big street towards Hongdae for about 50 meters, there is a fruits & vegetables shop inside the building on the left side).

### ***Shopping in Seoul***

Shopping for clothes in Seoul *can* be fun. I really like Korean fashion and there are so many small clothing stores with affordable prices. I enjoyed walking through Hongdae or Gangnam station and looking at all the different clothes. However, especially in those small shops it is usually not possible to try on clothes, particularly tops. Since I did not want to buy clothes without knowing if they fit, I bought most of my clothes in bigger stores that allow you to try them on. Nevertheless, I ended up buying quite a few items from those small stores – they are just too cute. Additional to clothing, I really enjoyed shopping for skin care and jewelry (which is much cheaper in Korea but still real silver) in Korea.

### ***Eating Out***

It is much more common and affordable (especially if it is Korean food) to eat out in Korea than in Germany. Since the dorm does not have a kitchen, I would either eat in a convenience store, street food or in a restaurant. On the next pages where I describe my favorite places in Seoul, I have included some of my favorite restaurants as well. Furthermore, as already mentioned there are many options to eat on campus as well. By chance I discovered a small Korean restaurant run by an old lady and her (supposedly) husband three minutes from Sogang's back gate. It is called 재모식당 and I came there quite often for great vegetarian bibimbab for 5,000 won including banchan, soup, omelette, and a small yogurt drink in the end. Best value for money!

### ***Festivals, Concerts and Trips in and around Seoul***

In late summer and fall there are so many concerts and festivals in Seoul. Not only are there the free university festivals, I also went to a free K-pop festival in Incheon with numerous K-pop groups. A month later there was a similar free K-pop concert in Seoul that I could not go to because I heard of it too late when all tickets were gone already. There were also many free K-culture performances like taekwondo demonstrations. The firework festival in Yeouido Hangang Park is a must-see as well. Furthermore, there were free Korean history trips for international and exchange students organized by a student volunteer group belonging to the Choi Jae-Hyung Memorial Association. These trips were promoted on Sogang's website and one had to apply by filling out an online form in the beginning of the semester. I was able to participate in two tours (one in Seoul and one to the DMZ). The whole tour including food and drinks was free so it is a great opportunity to learn more about Korean history. To not miss any of these great offers, it is best to inform yourself early about free festivals, concerts and trips.

### ***Cultural Differences***

While coming to South Korea did not result in extreme culture shocks, there are still noticeable differences from Germany. Some of those differences (like the silence in public transport or the certainty that personal items will not be stolen or the non-existent aggressiveness in Koreans, even when they are drunk) I really liked. However, there are some differences that bothered me and I think this will happen to every international in South Korea. For example seeing all the elderly people still having to work in the food vendors or by trying to sell vegetables, sitting on the ground in the

cold the whole day was really hard for me. Furthermore, the strong thinking in hierarchies based on age and status can be good to a certain extent but I found it too much sometimes (e. g. I had the feeling Korean students would not dare to openly disagree with a professor and while respecting elders is super important for young people, elders themselves would sometimes not really respect younger people). Just brace yourself for encountering cultural differences. Overall, I did not find it very difficult to adjust to the life in Korea.

Another difference that really benefitted me: It's not common to spend the whole day at home. Koreans love going out and usually do not meet with friends at home. Furthermore, it is super common to study in cafés, which was something I loved. In contrast to Germany, in Korea you can stay multiple hours in a café with your laptop without having to feel bad (the very hyped "Instagram"-cafés are usually an exception, but they are too crowded to study calmly anyways).

Personal recommendation: My all-time favorite café in Seoul is Sinchon Blues. It is near Sinchon Station exit 1 on the fourth floor. It has a really relaxed atmosphere, a great view, the owner is super nice and the drinks are great and less expensive than in other places (they have oat milk, too!).

Sadly, most Koreans are a bit guarded towards foreigners so it can be hard to find Korean friends. As already mentioned, HUG's activities and the buddy program are great for getting to know Korean students. One additional thing I noticed: As soon as you leave Seoul's crowded streets, there are *a lot* more Koreans (especially in middle age) that want to talk to you. I had so many interesting conversations while hiking Seoul's mountains, relaxing on Hanagae Beach, or traveling through more rural areas.

## 5. Favorite Places in Seoul

- **Sinchon:** The nearest to Sogang, this area was a great place to go for dinner, drinks, and studying. It is also a popular place for busking.
  - o Favorite café: Sinchon Blues
  - o Favorite restaurant: NewYork B&C (great pasta with a small salad for 10,000 won)
- **Ewha:** I really liked the area around Ewha Womans University. There are a lot of vegan options there. Furthermore, I recommend walking over Ewha Womans University's campus. The architecture regarding the auditorium building with the park on top is so nice and with the other buildings around it felt a bit like being in England. I went there in fall when all trees were colorful.
  - o favorite café: Veganique & Coffee Doga Heritage (both cafés are vegan)
  - o favorite restaurant: 전골떡볶이 (great tteokbokki with nice owner and walls full of post-its that every customer can leave there) & Sunny Bowl (vegan food)
- **Gyeongui Line Park:** A several kilometers long park through Seoul where once ran the railway line to North Korea. It passes Sogang University which is why I often took a walk there. You can walk from Sogang to Hongdae through this park and the little bridge lined with flowers is just beautiful. Biroso is a nice little café in this park near to Sogang (oat milk available).
- **Hongdae:** A very popular neighborhood with a lot of nightlife, shopping, restaurants, and busking. I spent an extreme amount of time just watching dance groups perform and listening to the singers and I would do it again every time.
  - o Favorite café: Rhodendron
  - o Favorite restaurant: Rosso1924 (affordable and not-sweetened pizza which is not easy to find in Korea) & Dookki Tteokbokki Hongdae (unlimited tteokbokki hotpot)
- **Yeonnam-dong:** A super sweet neighborhood next to Hongdae and the Gyeongui Line Park. Just walking through the streets made me happy with those numerous cute cafés and



restaurants. Also, the part of the Gyeongui Line Park that goes through there is another popular place for busking.

- favorite café: Café Neulbo (you can make your own keychains here)
- favorite restaurant: Plant (best western vegan food in Seoul)
- **Jongno-gu:** Comprising Bukchon Hanok Village, Gyeongbokgung Palace, Insadong, and Ikseondong, this neighborhood shows the more historic side of Seoul and is definitely a must-see.
  - Favorite café: There are so many great cafés but I want to recommend a tea house – Bukchon Asian Cultural Art Museum. You pay around 6,000 won for entry and you can choose a tea. The observatory offers a beautiful view over the hanok village. We came there just in time for sunset; it was magical.
  - Favorite restaurant: Osegye Hyang (best vegan Korean food)
- **Hangang Park:** There are several parks along the Han river that are great for picnicking and enjoying the sun. I loved renting a bike in Yeouido Hangang park and doing a bike tour over Mapo bridge to the Northern Han river side and back to the Southern river side over Yanghwa Bridge. Yeouido Hangang Park was also where the Seoul firework festival took place. The firework festival is one of my favorite memories in Seoul since it was the most majestic firework I have ever seen. If you want to go, definitely go there early, otherwise it will be hard to find a place to sit. Banpo Hangang Park has the rainbow fountain installed along the Banpo bridge which is a sight to see as well. When I was in Seoul, there was a night market there every other weekend and some singers, which overall resulted in a great atmosphere.
- **Lotte Tower:** As the currently sixth highest building in the world, the view is stunning, especially at sunset. Do not make the same mistake as I did; only go there when the air quality is good..
- **All mountains in Seoul:** Apart from going up the Lotte Tower I had the best views of Seoul when I was hiking. Mountains are everywhere in Seoul and since Koreans do love hiking a lot there are well maintained trails on all those mountains (although the guideposts were not always clear). The mountain I hiked the most often was Inwangsan (it is a short, not too steep hike that can be done without hiking shoes and offers a great view over Gyeongbokgung and the Namsan. The picture on the first page is the view) while the hike I enjoyed the most was Gwanaksan (depending on which exact trail you take I would recommend reserving the whole day for it. The view is breathtaking. If you do not have courses every weekday, I would recommend going hiking during the week because the trails can be quite crowded on weekends.
- **Noraebangs and photo studios:** Those two are in my opinion two of the most fun and unique things you can do with friends in Korea. Singing karaoke in noraebangs is in my opinion much more fun than singing karaoke in Germany because in Korea it is only you and your friends in one room, so everyone can sing their heart out and just have fun. Photo studios are a bit like taking polaroid pictures because they are printed out directly. The pictures are high quality, you usually also get a short video that was taken simultaneously to the pictures, and it allows you to leave Korea with a bunch of silly pictures with all of the people you had a good time with.

Even though Seoul has so many things to offer that you probably will not be able to explore all of them, there also are many great places near to Seoul and in the rest of South Korea that I was really glad I came to travel a bit in South Korea.

## 6. Favorite Day Trips from Seoul

- **Suwon:** The Suwon Hwaseong Fortress is great to walk around, offers a nice view of Suwon and at times for me felt like walking around a knight's castle. Afterwards, it is easy to find a nice café since the streets are full with them.
- **Hanagaek Beach:** Located on an island next to Incheon airport, it took me 2 hours to go there with public transport from the dorm. I went there quite spontaneously to enjoy one of the last warm days and it was the best thing I could have done. I was there on a Monday, there were hardly any tourists and the beach plus the whole island is super nice. There is a long bridge over the water along the cliffs that allows you to walk to a second smaller beach. From there, I chose to not walk back the same way over the bridge, but over a short trail a bit up the mountain. From there I had a great view over the bridge and the sea.
- **Nami Island**

## 7. Favorite Multi-Day-Tours

- **Jeju:** South Korea's vacation island is full of lovely nature and offers sheer relaxation. Accommodations are very affordable and public transport is good enough (even though we initially wanted to rent a car, it sadly is quite difficult and expensive for foreigners, so we decided to settle for public transport).
- **Busan:** As South Korea's second largest city located directly by the sea, it is a great destination for a weekend trip. With the beach directly next to the buildings, I perceived Busan to have a completely different vibe compared to Seoul. The KTX takes you from Seoul to Busan in a bit over two hours.
- **Gangneung:** A popular holiday spot by the sea that can be reached by bus in 2.5 hours from Seoul Express Bus Terminal. I was there in winter and even though it was freezing, I enjoyed it a lot.

## 8. Conclusion

I am really thankful I was able to experience studying in Seoul. Seoul is a great city with a lot of different and interesting aspects. In my time in Korea, I got to learn a lot about Asian, especially Korean history. While there are cultural differences that may be a challenge sometimes, I was able to concentrate on the positive aspects and Seoul ended up feeling like home for me. I have been back in Germany for some weeks now, but I already am looking forward to travel to Seoul again. Of course, the quality of my time and therefore my positive feelings in Seoul depended a lot on the people I met there and the friends I made. I was lucky to meet a lot of friendly and open-minded people that enriched my time a lot which I am extremely thankful for. For me, Sogang University was the right choice and I will be wearing my HUG college jacket for the rest of my life. For everyone who wants to experience a different culture but still live in a developed country, I can only recommend doing an exchange semester in South Korea. Likewise, Sogang University is the perfect choice if you find suitable courses and want to live in the middle of Seoul.