Brussels is very much the exemplification of the urban European lifestyle. Smaller and more manageable than Paris or London, Brussels offers everything you may wish: cozy little squares with cafés, big avenues, outstanding museums, medieval cathedrals and churches, excellent restaurants and so much more.

Vesalius College and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) offers an ideal combination of American and European styles of education. With over 45 different nationalities on a student population of 350, Vesalius College is a buzzing academic environment, with all the benefits from small class groups.

Enrolling in a language class at Vesalius College, be it Dutch or French, will help you settle in your new environment and manage everyday activities. I should know, as I am a language professor at the college. My name is Kathleen Caenen—Kathleen as your RD, Professor Caenen in class. I am one of the youngest professors at the college, and I still remember vividly what it was like to be your age and alone in a foreign country. While I was studying for my MA in Romance Philology at the VUB, I spent a semester in Madrid. Previously, I completed my Law BA at the Université Notre-Dame de la Paix, a Jesuit university in Namur. Nowadays, I live in Antwerp with my husband, Kobe Saen. Antwerp is just a short ride away. You’ll learn to go everywhere using the metro and the public transport system, and you’ll navigate your way through the language maze. Although Dutch and French are the official languages in the city, you’ll hear at least five other languages every day—from Arabic to Danish, and from Afrikaans to Portuguese. A lot of people speak English; however, they may not be around when you need them!

Brussels can sometimes be a challenging city to live in, as there isn’t any dominant community or language group. The city is a true melting pot, and you can experience anything from North African markets to Icelandic cultural events. All this diversity can make Belgian culture somewhat hard to discover, but that’s just how the Belgians like it!

Kathleen Caenen is a native of Belgium. At Vesalius College, she teaches Beginners and Intermediate Dutch and French. She is also a guest professor on the Drew University Brussels Program and occasionally works as an editor for the Parliament of the Flemish Community in Brussels. Kathleen holds a BA in Law from the Facultés Universitaires Notre Dame de la Paix, Namur, and an MA in Romance Philology, French and Spanish Literature and Linguistics from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, the university to which Vesalius College belongs. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Belgian Francophone Literature and Women’s Studies. Kathleen lives in Antwerp with her husband and enjoys reading, cooking and painting.

You’ll see a lot of things that might be familiar to you; however, they will be different.

If you really want to get to the core of what makes Belgium so special, you’ll have some work on your hands, but I promise you one thing: it will change your life! With your host family you’ll eat chicons au gratin, or bouchée à la reine, while discovering what really lies behind the beautiful Brussels facades and how ordinary people face this century’s global challenges.

Hope to see you soon in Brussels!

Sincerely,
Kathleen Caenen
 Resident Director, BCA Brussels
Since 1962, BCA Study Abroad has been committed to helping students understand the complexities of the contemporary world by providing challenging academic programs and cross-cultural learning in locations around the globe.

From this start, BCA focused its educational mission on engaging students with ideas that matter.

As educators, we are convinced that no genuine understanding of global issues can be gained without a strong intellectual grounding in the histories, societies and cultures of the region in which our students pursue their studies.

Furthermore, we believe that student learning depends heavily on meaningful direct contact with local people whose lives are entwined with and affected by the issues we aim to understand.

By design, a significant component of BCA’s study abroad programs, both through traditional classroom education and in-field learning, is grasping the historical, social and cultural context of the big questions of the human condition.

Through this model, BCA strives to convey a more comprehensive and precise understanding of the world to the students who participate in our programs.

“ vous can buy anything at this market, but just wandering through the crowds is a memorable experience. The atmosphere is bright, buoyant, and diverse. On an average market meander, you may hear more languages than you can count on one hand.”

Carmen Guhn-Knight, Mount Holyoke College
About the Program

Our multifaceted Brussels program is a rich combination of challenging university academics, once-in-a-lifetime educational excursions and individualized learning opportunities. Few programs offer the diversity of experience that BCA Brussels does; each semester, students have the opportunity to study and experience firsthand important themes that affect our world today: global governance, sustainability and international business, human rights and international communication.
vesalius College
VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL (VUB)

BCA Brussels students attend Vesalius College in Brussels (www.vesalius.edu). Vesalius offers students a truly unique opportunity to study in an international city rich in culture and set squarely in the middle of world events.

The College’s teaching methods are characterized by small, interactive classes, flexibility in course selection and continuous assessment. All classes at Vesalius College are taught in English. As a small college with a student body of approximately 350 (including over 40 nationalities) and a low student to teacher ratio, the faculty is accessible and able to take a personal interest in the success of students to help them achieve their potential. These close working relationships form the cornerstone of the Vesalius educational philosophy.
Vesalius offers a wide variety of courses in several academic disciplines, including art history, communication, business and political science.

Recommended University Courses

This is just a sampling of the rich array of courses offered at Vesalius. For more recommended courses or to search their offerings for yourself, visit our website at www.BCAstudyabroad.org.

CMM 251: Political Communication (3 credits)
The course looks at the use made of the media by political actors who range from presidents to terrorists, and it analyzes the ways in which communication strategies may be used to shape public opinion. It focuses on the roles of political reporting, advertising, and public relations in politics, and provides a detailed consideration of the political and philosophical implications of the changing mass communication landscape, fueled by the impact of the new communication technologies.

CMM 322: International Communication (3 credits)
This course, an introduction to the subject of world news and examines the theories, general issues, and problems related to the international function of the media. Students study the role of various media and their approach to global news, and in particular the 'western' news about 'non-western' countries, peoples and issues, analyzing the coverage in the social, cultural, and political domains. We will also analyze issues of Global Media to Governance and the recent NWICO debates.

ECN 301: Environmental and Ecological Economics (3 credits)
Students consider changing perspectives on the environment (neoclassical, modern, and heterodox) with a special emphasis on global climate change and sustainable development. They apply various methods to problems of population, food, energy, fisheries, forests, water, pollution, and industrial ecology.

LDU 101: Elementary Dutch (3 credits)
Students acquire an elementary knowledge of the Dutch language, and will be able to communicate autonomously very quickly. Basic communication skills will be exercised and phrase structures and vocabulary will be practiced. Students will also work on small, simple written texts. Students who have any prior Dutch knowledge will be given other exercises and assignments.

“The broader perspective and sense of understanding I gained from my semester in Belgium will prove to be valuable for me in many different facets of life back in the states. The process of meeting new people, experiencing new ideas, and adapting to an unfamiliar environment will hopefully help me a great deal as I move onto other new experiences in life.”
Malik Mubeen, Swarthmore College

EUROPEAN PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES (EPSS)
The European Peace and Security Studies (EPSS) programme provides in-depth and unique insights into the changing nature and fundamental challenges of contemporary security issues from a distinct Brussels perspective.

By pooling the combined expertise and resources of four leading educational institutions in Brussels—Vesalius College, the Conflict Studies Department of the Belgian Royal Military Academy, the Institute of European Studies (IES) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel as well as the University of Kent’s Brussels campus—students are taught by prominent specialists in the field of civilian and military security issues in both theory and practice.

The course emphasizes theoretical and practical analysis of the comprehensive, civil-military nature of contemporary conflict and crisis management from a NATO and European Union (EU) perspective. Students focus on the history, institutional procedures, policies and interrelations of NATO and the EU as well as their interaction with a wide range of civilian and military partners.

The program includes a high-profile guest lecture series and symposium provided by academic experts and leading practitioners from the EU, NATO, the United Nations and related security organizations.
A GLIMPSE INTO LIFE AT A MONASTERY

“I think everyone seeks a truly awe inspiring spiritual experience. For myself, that service was granted by the Tongerlo Abbey of Belgium. As soon as you walk onto the hallowed ground, you instantly feel a sense of peace. Though not necessarily spiritual, but incredible nonetheless, was the private screening we received of the oldest existing copy of Leonardo Da Vinci’s The Last Supper. Since the original was deteriorating quickly, a copy was soon commissioned by the King of France. This copy was in part painted by Da Vinci himself. … Standing inches from a 500 year old Da Vinci masterpiece, separated only by air, is something that few people have experienced. Add this to the fact that one of the monks in care of the masterpiece gave us a lecture on the history, and you certainly have an off-the-beaten path experience. In 50 years I will probably no longer recall each metro stop along my daily route to classes, however, I will be able to recount virtually each of the twenty-one hours that we spent in the monastery.”

John Paul Ellis, Bridgewater College
BCA Signature Courses

BCA’s Signature Courses focus student learning on intellectual development, cross-cultural awareness and trans-disciplinary study, both through traditional classroom learning and in-field experience. Much of this learning depends heavily on meaningful direct contact with local people whose lives are entwined with and affected by the issues we explore.

Required Course:
**ANT 301: Low Countries Studies: A Linguistic and Political Analysis (1 credit)**

Taught in English by Resident Director Kathleen Caenen, students will learn to discuss and explain the intricacies of the multilingual and divided society in Belgium and gain an understanding of the mechanisms underlying political and linguistic structures within a broader institutional perspective. This course contains one weekly lecture and will be completed with a series of visits to various sites of interest, linked with the course. There are assigned readings and some topics will also include a practical assignment, such as conducting a survey. Students will also learn:

- Why “Belgitude” is an export product when it comes to international political constructions.
- How the social security system in Belgium functions, how it came into being and the challenges the system is facing.

- To show, discuss and/or explain various elements of Belgian culture including art, literature, Belgian humour, social values, local traditions and local cuisine.

**Course Readings**

- *Neither Here Nor There: Travels in Europe* by Bill Bryson
- *The Interdisciplinary Study of Urban Bilingualism in Brussels* by Els Witte and Hugo Baetens Beardsmore
- *Europe Since 1945: A Concise History* by J. Robert Wegs and Robert Ladrech
- *Belgium, A State of Mind* by Olivier Mouton, Marie-Anne Wilsens, Frédéric Antoine and Marc Reynebeau
- *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies: Belgium, Waterloo, Ontario* by Kenneth Douglas McRae

"Interning at World Natural Care challenged me both professionally and personally. Not only did I gain academic credit, but I was allowed to gain real work experience through the projects I was given as well as learn how to communicate and interact more effectively in an international setting."

Amanda Turbett, Cedarville University

THE VESALIUS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (VIP)

Student-interns are provided a professional experience and, through the VIP (www.vesalius.edu/career/vip), partners receive the assistance of young, dynamic and highly educated individuals.

During the internship, students tackle either a single project from inception through completion, or work in the context of a larger organizational project in which they contribute a substantial part. Whether having full responsibility for a project or working as a team player in a bigger enterprise, students exercise their skills and provide the internship partner with high quality performance. Examples of partner placements include:

- The British School of Brussels
- Citibank
- EU Observer
- European Youth Forum
- European Parliament
- BigBentoBox
- AGE Platform Europe
Living in Brussels

Since the formation of the European Union, Brussels has been considered the de facto capital of Europe. It is home to most of the European Union’s institutions. Due to the large number of European Union main institutions, Brussels is a major source of political and economic influence. Brussels is also a very international city. Neighborhoods, restaurants, people, and languages are all diversified in Brussels. While French is the dominant language, Dutch (Flemish) and English are widely spoken.

Belgians value a strong work ethic and an appreciation of culture. They are generally goodhearted people and are open to interaction with foreigners. They have a love for life and believe in living it to the fullest by working and playing hard. Most Belgians hope for a mixture of material wealth, good living and strong family values.

Housing and Student Life

BCA Brussels students live with host families, an ideal way to become immersed in the Belgian culture. You will have breakfast and dinner with your host family and BCA will provide a stipend for lunch. There is a student restaurant and some smaller cafes on campus where you can buy an inexpensive lunch. You can also go to the Gare du Midi on Sundays for the Sunday Market. There you’ll find fresh, inexpensive produce.

Vesalius College offers a range of social activities to suit all tastes, including many sports and clubs. Past BCA students have enjoyed writing for the school’s newspaper, participating in the Business club and participating in the student government.

“I appreciate different viewpoints and always try to see things in multiple perspectives. In Belgium, there are French-Belgians and Dutch-Belgians. There are some who believe in separation between the two cultures and some that embrace the unique identity that a Belgian person has with multiple languages and a varied background. It was compelling to see the inner-workings of that society as the government struggled to solve problems and attempt to move past language barriers. I loved living and studying with people from all over the globe, and I am grateful for the experiences I had with each and every person I met.”

Katie Sallade, Elizabethtown College

EDUCATIONAL EXCURSIONS

Brussels is centrally located in Europe and many major cities are just a train-ride away. In the past, students have enjoyed excursions to:

- Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp in Belgium
- Paris, Amsterdam and Köln
- Rotterdam, Maastricht and The Hague in the Netherlands
- Florence, Italy
- Barcelona, Spain
Mission Statement
Rooted in the values of peace and justice, BCA Study Abroad promotes international understanding, awareness of global citizenship and academic scholarship through educational exchange.

BCA Brussels Quick Facts
Dates of Study:
• Fall Semester: Mid-August through mid-December
• Spring Semester: Mid-January through late May

Application Deadlines:
• Fall Semester: April 1
• Spring Semester: October 15

Language of Instruction: English
Host University: Vesalius college–Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)
Housing: Host families

BCA Study Abroad
50 Alpha Drive
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
Phone: 1-866-222-6188
Fax: 717-361-6619
Email: inquiry@BCAstudyabroad.org

BCA’s Comprehensive Fee covers:
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• Academic Transcript
• On Call International Travel Assistance

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