Sociology With Year Abroad Degree - Report from Joycelyn Oyibo

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Joycelyn is a Sociology finalist who will be graduating this year from the Sociology with Year Abroad programme. Joycelyn spent last year studying Sociology at Trent University in Peterborough, Canada which is one and a half hours north of Toronto. Amongst her most significant experiences Joycelyn notes the exposure to a new culture and being fully immersed in that culture for a year. This provided an opportunity to be 'out of her comfort zone' which proved to be a fascinating aspect of studying and living abroad. While on the year abroad programme she met countless other international students and made friends with people from all over the world.

Joycelyn chose to focus her year abroad project on the field of ethnicity, location and identity because her own experience of travel made her reflect on how this results in the need to define or recognize one's own identity.

Ethnicity has been an aspect of Jocelyn's life which she thought about often during her time in Canada. Being a year abroad student made her aware that she is more British than she had previously realized. For Joycelyn this has been an important discovery because when in England people often ask her where she is from to which she replies that she is Nigerian.

She notes that "I have to explain my nationality, whether this is Canada, England or West Africa. I can never be accepted as one who belongs to a particular country". As a result of studying sociology abroad Joycelyn learned that, "Canada and America are not original countries and that everywhere is so made up of everywhere else. The country where people look like me is the one where I can't speak the language, the country where people sound like me is a place where I look highly alien. I also learned that every country that claims to be multicultural has the issue of defining race and issues of belonging". Joycelyn highly recommends the Sociology Year Abroad programme to her peers despite variations in how sociology programmes are structured and delivered in other countries compared to the excellent standards of the University of Birmingham because overall studying abroad really enhances one's university experiences. In conclusion she notes that, "As a Sociology student I think it's important to experience another education system since education is the driving force of society".

For further details on the Sociology Year Abroad Programme please contact the co-ordinator Jose Lingna Nafafe at **j.lingnanafafe@bham.ac.uk (mailto:j.lingnanafafe@bham.ac.uk)** .

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