Salzburg Global Seminar 2015

Student Reflections
Zineb Baghdadi

There are many changes that can happen in a person’s life. Some changes are very tiny and would not affect your life very much. However, other events could be very important and could change a person’s whole life, such as getting married, having a baby, or losing someone special. The important event that changed my life is my experience in Salzburg. I cannot list one or two lectures but the whole experience was amazing and a life time experience. I enjoyed and learned from each moment I spent it around amazing people like Astrid SCHRODER, Jochen FRIED, Hedy ROSE, Peter ROSE, etc. History is what makes us who we really are and helps guide us to where we are headed. It really is “our story”. I had the opportunity to visit Dachau Concentration Camp. Using the word “opportunity” to describe my visit seems a little strange, because that word is usually associated with something “exciting”. My visit wasn’t really “exciting” but it absolutely was “moving.” This place was a big part of history and a big part of the war. The whole visit to Dachau was really upsetting but the most part that broke my heart was the gas chamber that was labeled “the shower room”. After reading the description about it I was really chocked.

Right after our return to the hotel. Hedy ROSE gave a lecture about her personal experience during the Holocaust and how she escaped the Nazi control. She really moved me with her story especially when she mentioned how painful was when her 6 years old friend called her “dirty Jew.” Her story and Dachau visit made me think of our present are we a better people now? Is the history going to repeat itself? Because when you watch the news or open up a newspaper every single day a person hears horrific events that happen around the world, mostly the Middle East.

As knowing my personality I am not that great in public speaking, I could speak to a little group very well, but when it comes to speaking to a big crowd, fear takes over me. But because of Salzburg Global Seminar I overcame this fear because I had to say a few words during the final group presentation, which was the conclusion. As a person knows the introduction and conclusion is one of the most essential part of the presentation. I could have not pulled this off without the support of my fellows and constantly pushing me to believe in myself.

Coming back after this seminar I see the difference in me, I have become globally aware of my surroundings and made me into a better person. Each and every lecture that was given to me has expanded my knowledge and made me realize that I can make an impact in this world, all I have to do is change my actions and make others to change their actions as well. We are all part of this Earth and it is our duty to keep it safe from harm.
Najlaa Bouras

Salzburg Global Seminar has broken down barriers separating people and ideas by spanning the world’s regions. We as students were challenged at all stages of development and institutions across to rethink our relationships and identify shared interests and goals. We were put on a task to attend extensive lectures that mapped out all global issues and were left to format a group and create a global perspective.

Salzburg Global seminar was focusing on Imagination, sustainability and justice, Three of the most important beginning tools to start initiating global healing. Regardless my familiarity with modern global issues, I was not very aware of how all global issues are connected together and can be brought down to one micro issue.

The Chinese version of world’s map was new to me and I never realized that our world’s map may not be necessary how we were thought it looked like, Africa and South America are bigger than what we were told yet totally isolated and dominated by northern countries (North America and Europe).

As an outspoken feminist who believes in gender equality and social justice in general, women issues were put into a task and were nominated as number one problematic to every nation; and solving women issues is step number one to solve every other social and economical problem.

Visiting Dachau was a very challenging task to me, reading about the Holocaust is one thing, but witnessing the brutality of such unjustified Fascism is a different experience. The most terrifying thing to me was the fact that these types of fascism still being practiced in the modern area, therefore, I will never look at the world the same way I did before visiting the Dachau concentration camp. My perspective on the past has always been that the past is over and should be forgotten, But as Professor Reinhalt Weighvager said “The past is never dead, It’s not even the past “.

My experience as a whole has been nurturing intellectually in my Global ethics class, but by participating in the Salzburg Global seminar I had gained the starting package to be an active member of creating a change and be an influence on other’s lives and the community as whole. I also learned more about myself that I was not familiar with. The combination of lectures, trips, interactions with others had thought me that there is so much to learn and so much to be done nationwide and in a global spectrum.
Safinaz Mashali

I do not know from where to start reflecting my overall experience. It was definitely a positive life changing experience for me as a global citizen. It all started before landing on Salzburg’s land when I first interacted with the other GCP 67 members on the plane. We all smoothly connected and shared our future long term goals and interests. We joked, we laughed, and we even communicated with the entire flight crew including the co-pilot. The faculties and staff members warmly welcomed us. They were supportive and friendly towards us CUNY students.

The atmosphere was definitely something different, beyond the meaning of beauty and peaceful unlike anywhere else I have been to. I cannot stop describing how amazing the view of the mountain’s own reflection on the Schloss Leopoldskron’s lake was. The conference and the accommodations took place at Schloss Leopoldskron Castle; an original location for the filming of the “Sound of Music” which is impossibly beautiful. Despite the long days and the challenging intensifying lectures and discussions, spending the spring break in an 18th century palace was spectacular. I feel fortune to be exposed to an opportunity when one discussed weighty enriched global issues beside a shimmering beautiful lake, over a table groaning with rich delicious Austrian cuisine every meal, or in a comfortable 18th century oak paneled library. Simply having the time and space to mingle with other GCP colleagues about Globalization awareness, Global conflicts, and past and present current events and sharing opinions is tremendously luxury I feel lucky to witness. Participation in the Salzburg Global Seminar offered me the opportunity to rethink my ways of approaching and researching more on global issues and share my perspective, empathy, and intercultural communication skills with others.

Hedy Rose's detailed Holocaust touching story and Dr. Reinhold Wagnlietner's “The US and the world: A Magical history Tour” enthusiastic lecture impacted me the most. The Dachau Concentration Camp trip was intense and upsetting for all of us. As much as I am enriched with the history of the holocaust, reading and learning the history was quite different practically when visiting and exploring the actual reality of these historical places that I read about. The most horrifying part of the camp was how the outcaste Jewish European citizens lived in what I saw looked like an enormous chicken barn and the crematorium house where one was executed with no mercy for being different and preaching their beliefs and political views. I was able to still inhale some of the foul odor gas in the gas chambers. I was speechless. I cannot imagine how much cruelty have occurred behind these walls. while capturing photos to be used for my future reflection paper, I was full of unexpressed emotions; curious and scared to stand in a place that was once a place where thousands of screaming lives were murdered cruelly. The sequence phases of how the crematorium house was established alone is extremely terrifying. I could not imagine how inhumane these prisoners were treated; not knowing how brutally their lives will end. After I reunited with some of my fellow scholars, I was not surprised at all to witness some of my peer’s gloomy and blue facial expression for what they just witnessed. I was ready to leave camp ASAP. It made me feel how lucky I am more than ever and how I should count my blessing for what the generation before me fought so hard for; being able to have freedom of speech and freedom of being whoever I want to be. But to think about this for a while, the same kind of inhumane acts and violence spectrum but in different methods and forms are still being practiced at the present time elsewhere. So the present humans on earth, did we ever learn anything from our ancestor’s long history?
The one think I took from this overall journey with me to NYC is having a will to learn lessons from previous mistakes and be willing to become a better person. I unfortunately learn my mistakes the harder way, possibly after the third time I made the same previous mistake. It was not easy to break from my shell more than the usual and be willing to accept and respect other's positive values and typical norms. I also learned to see things practically from a different prospective other than mine as a strong opinionated leader. As a science major myself I wasn't given that much of a chance to mingle more with humans with other desired interests other than the ones in the same pool with me. So this journey was a stepping stone towards being able to have more human communication and it was great one. I wish one would tell us not to get adapted to the Delicious cuisine as I will be having a little hard time adjusting back to the typical New York food and diminish my Salzburg withdrawal symptoms. I loved my own group topical conversation discussion the most. I got to meet some diverse colleagues. It was tremendously well driven and motivating to be around them, working all together as team players. Learning about their personal experiences and personal opinions, correlating our thoughts and reflections from previous lecture discussion, elaborating on current impressions of the city, negotiating and establishing our challenged topic for our ending presentation day. Our advisor Mr. Andy was truly helpful, optimistic funny and delightful human being to talk to. He was deeply engaged with our conversations and helped us to think a little outside the box.

This week relates to what my class previously discussed about globalization and cosmopolitan and how one can be a good global citizen if one measured his or her own native cultural beliefs according to Sissela Bok’s “from part to whole” on current global issues from different angles. On the last day before our nigh ending ceremony, I chose along with some KCC students to climb the Untersburg Mountain. How many times in my life I will climb a mountain? It took us 10 min using the cabin cars to reach one of the peaks of the Untersburg Mountain. I was speechless just observing what I was viewing from above. The city of Salzburg could not look more beautiful than my own expectation. It looked even better and the weather was ironically hot above there. After climbing for a while, my KCC peers and I bumped into the Rose couple Peter and Hedy and some other QCC students along with our own chaperon Dr. Beth King also enjoying the view from above.

Overall, not just I gained an additional big fat family other than my own, but I also gained the confidence to be able to make a difference in this world. It always starts with one person to make this world a better place. As Mahatma Gandhi quoted “Be the change that you wish to see in the world” Thank you for this spectacular journey and a memorable opportunity engraved within me.
Boluwaji Olugbamila

I have wanted to go to Europe since I was in middle school. The rich history and culture always fascinated me but I have been frantically waiting for that chance to hop on a European bound plane. My mother elaborated how the time she spent in Seville and Rome empowered her immediately after her divorce from my father. I expected a huge culture shock as soon as we touched down in Frankfurt and then actually Salzburg. No culture shock. Just pure beauty.

“This is where we are staying?!!! A castle!!!” As our taxi pulled up to the Hotel Leopold, I lost my mind looking at the castle. Of course Professor Repetti and student alumni from Salzburg told us about the castle especially about how it was used in the Salzburg seminar but to be honest that added no awe to me. The castle was absolutely gorgeous right on a lake and has been around decades before the United States of America came into existence. I am just a twenty year old community college student, how am I staying in a Austrian castle?

“Why is this distinguished professor listening to a kid?” The lectures were incredibly informative and the opportunity to ask questions was crystal clear but the most surprising aspect was the amount of time one could spend picking the brain of a professor regarding a topic. These professors are highly distinguished in their fields all across the world not even just the country and yet they are allowing for students to pick their brain regarding various topics at the meal table. For myself particularly, Dr.Jochen Fried and Peter Rose I spent much of my time discussing issues with them not to elaborate on my own perceived sense of intellect but truly understanding their perspectives through their respective experiences and knowledge they have acquired over the years. For example, after Jochen concluded a lecture on the 15 challenges facing humanity I immediately approached him and disagreed with the belief that the status of women could easily change in these developing countries. We spent the next hour or so discussing patriarchal societies in these developing areas which then transitioned to the disparity of poor children without water to drink that are wearing European football jerseys. An earlier experience in the week with Professor Peter Rose surprised me. During a coffee break I told him about my recently published paper on the United States use of superheroes on the population during the 20th century. As we returned to his lecture presentation, he called on me to speak on paper more I was so shocked that I kept my responses extremely curt but filled with immense humility at this subtle honor.

“How did this monstrosity happen? Why is it still happening? Have we not learned anything?” I have attended the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC but stepping foot on the Dachau concentration camp was another matter entirely. It reeked of a hopeless air not a “sorry this happened” but rather “33 thousand people died in the camp that you are currently walking”. The Jewish church particularly scared me. The church is made entirely of a grey morbid stone and it descends underground. If you walk to the opposite side of the entry parallel to the wall and look through the opening of the church, you feel like a Dachau prisoner begging the sky to set you free. The experience especially walking through the fumigation chambers and the cremation areas troubled because simply that could have been me. I could have truly been just another statistic if God had not granted me the privilege of being born in a different time. But to that point…I’m not even 21 years old and two genocides of ethic cleansing have happened in my lifetime with the international community aware but remained paralyzed (Bosnia & Rwanda).
What now? For me the Salzburg didn’t change my future life trajectory but granted me much more fortitude in taking responsibilities for the problems of the world and understanding that I cannot wait for someone else to take action. That action must be me. Global citizenship cannot be pretty little ideal that I preach. I must epitomize global citizenship in every action. I must become global citizenship.
Irfan Prawira

Being one of the participants at the Salzburg Global Seminar is an experience that cannot be forgotten. Overall this experience can be a valuable lesson in my life. Being in a place like Salzburg was a very special opportunity.

For Salzburg Global Seminar program, I had the opportunity to learn more about what it means to be a global citizen. When I began to travel from one country to another, I can see how beautiful the world is, how rich the culture of a country, and also how many problems in this world. I was willing to try to make a difference for this world. It is certainly not easy. But I have always believes that I can make a change. When I was at a seminar like this and meet people who have the same idea with me is surely remarkable.

The theme of “Roots and Routes” given, makes my mind open and explore more what it really means to be a global citizen. The lecturers were outstanding. How proud I am to meet and exchange ideas with them. Almost every meal, they sit together with the participants. I also take this opportunity to talk and exchange more ideas. As a result, the abundant wealth of thought and opens wider horizons. Of all the lecturers, I can say that my mentor was Reinhold Wagnleitner and Peter Rose. We talked more broadly not only about what was discussed at this event but also experiences.

As someone who is interested in travel and also studying in Tourism major, Salzburg is a very beautiful and rich in culture. I used wisely my free time exploring the town located under the Alps. Many new things enriched my knowledge, encountered and appreciated the culture and met the friendly Salzburgers. This was an addition to this trip.

For the 12 Kingsborough Community College students who were selected to attend this seminar, I also get to experience that cannot be forgotten. How only in less than 2 months, the 11 other students and I met and tried to become a group. When the first met, all were excited and looking forward to the day of departure. Every Wednesday, we met in the classroom and prepare ourselves under the mentor of Prof. Repetti. We started to become close to each other. This was necessary because we wanted to make the group stronger. When the day of the departure, all excited and it appeared that we are a strong group. But what happened when arriving in Salzburg quite different. These12 characters are different and the differences usually create problems. Start of immaturity, ignorance, and blaming ensued. I think a strong group began divided. I am trying to be in a neutral position, without favor to one side. Unfortunately, these problems found by Prof. Beth King and the meeting with Jochen Fried ensued. Important lessons can be learned from this meeting. There are still a few students that selfish and did not care to solve the problem. As global citizens, we should be focused to solve the world's problems, but how can it happen if a small problem in this group cannot be resolved. I just hope that those involved can reflect on themselves and changed. From this experience, I also learn a new lesson.

Finally, I am really proud as someone who represents KBCC in Salzburg Global Seminar this time. New friendships I got from students of other schools as well as lecturers and staffs. All experiences I have gained in just a week that I hope will be a new chapter in my life. Thank you to all who have chosen me to be a part in this seminar. To Prof. Rick Repetti who invested a lot of information, Janelle who prepared for my departure and Prof. Rosemary Bufano that provided tips and information about the Salzburg Global Seminar.

I hope that all of us who attended this Salzburg Global Citizen 67 will be able to develop and polish the inner strength needed to generate limitless value from all forms of knowledge, to forge, in our capacity as world citizens.
Armin Rebihic

Few get to experience something as life changing as being part of the Salzburg Global Seminar program, especially at a young age as I have. The whole week I was at Salzburg (and the day spent at Dachau) was extremely motivating and inspirational. We met scholars, people with education in fields such as history, philosophy, literature, and the list goes on. Being surrounded by these intelligent faculty members and speakers put a whole new perspective on my life, and I believe I may speak for the others who attended the program.

The seven days were packed with presentations and speeches, one after another, with breaks for food in between every three hours with the occasional tea/coffee break. Besides eating like a king, I enjoyed the lectures.

My favorite, but certainly not happy day, had to be the one at Dachau. The whole day was just incredible and eye opening. Standing in the middle of the barracks of the concentration camps after going through the museum, looking and studying everything for approximately an hour and a half, felt eerie. One could only imagine what it was like to walk through the camp, filled with upwards of 60,000 people towards the end of the Nazi reign.

When we had returned in the afternoon, Hedy Rose, Peter Rose’s wife, spoke about her time escaping Nazi control by essentially hiding in a basement for a few years. Her story was completely in depth and was just unexplainable as to how she was able to hide, especially after her mother had passed away during hiding.

Besides the day at Dachau, the more memorable lectures had to be the two held by Darci Arnold. She had explained how the digital age is essentially taking over the world, but making it easier for human beings at the same time. We had further discussed whether this change was a utopia or a dystopia.

The other lecturers that were eye opening were Jochen Fried’s and Reinholdt’s Wagnleitner’s. These two incredible people were not only key to the program, but to me. I’ve learned so much from these two, while speaking to them on a personal level over the dinner table.

Astrid Schroeder was also a fantastic director of the program, making sure we were all in check. She also talked about her “maps,” especially the story she gave about the Berlin Wall coming down.

Peter Rose was also another person who was a knowledgeable person on his topic.

I could keep talking about all of the faculty and speakers there, but there is so much to say than in just two pages. The QCC and BCC faculty were also kind advisors. Prof. King was also incredible during the trip as our advisor, making sure we had gotten our work done and gotten to the lectures on time.

There is more to talk about, so I will be planning out my presentation to the school where I can further elaborate on these key points.
Faigy Roth

The past is never dead, it is not even past. Reinhold Wagnleitner mentioned this in his lecture on Thursday. This sentence, for me, was a real strong wake-up call. As I was doing my reflection, I realized the driving factor that caused me to leave my family, friends, community and everything else from my past behind. I faced great difficulty conforming with the rules and restrictions that regulated my community as well as my family. I gave the following example during my final presentation. We had a cleaning girl we referred to as “a foreigner.” She was not part of ‘us’. Therefore, my mother would dispose her plastic plates, cups, etc. wearing disposable gloves. Not being one of ‘us’ meant she was dirty and contaminated. This bothered me considerably. I consider all humans equal, us being no better than any others. Alas, I was called crazy, ridiculed when voicing this feeling of mine. It is painfully sad that similar things are taking place, albeit in different scenarios, in so many places in the world. Numerous cults, religions, and political groups have similar racist and bigoted views which destroy world peace, hurting the world in general, no community left unscathed.

Walking into the Dachau concentration camp, which opened in 1933, was a very sorrowful experience for me. I shuddered as I thought of how many thousands of people lost their lives on the very ground I was standing. People were worked to death, starved, shot, burned and tortured in the most abominable of ways until their bodies succumbed to the inhumane treatment ending their lives. I was thinking of the daily struggles, and constant fear, the prisoners lived with, dreading brutal treatment and terror detention including standing cells, floggings, these so-called tree pole hanging, and standing at attention for extremely long periods. I quivered the thoughts started streaming one after another of the most horrific of visions of what happened in this tragic place.

Some of the most despairing thoughts which haunted me for the rest of that day and the days following the visit were the following. My great-grandfather was shot to death in front of his daughter, my great-aunt, in the Auschwitz concentration camp. My grandfather, my mother’s father, was on the run from the Nazi’s for months. He went long stretches with no food or drink. When I was very young, he would tell me the story of his days during the holocaust and his dangerous escape. The nightmares that followed, which at times are still haunting me, are truly horrific. I have grandparents who were born in the liberation camps, however, their parents wouldn’t even think of discussing their horrific experiences. My grandparents and great-grandparents which managed to survived lost almost everyone and everything during this dreadful holocaust.

Obviously, negative effects of the holocaust will last for the next couple of generations. This, to me, is a very disturbing thought. Especially, when we are all very well aware of the many tragic events taking place in countless cities and countries these days. Speaking to Lavar Thomas, who volunteers in Rwanda for the Peace Corps was an eye opening experience. Sadly, society doesn’t learn its lesson and history keeps repeating itself time and again. One of the many issues that was reiterated countless of times throughout the lectures was the idea of our capabilities and qualifications on making decisive changes in this world. We were given the sense of empowerment, which I consider, the first and most important step in making the world better place globally. The idea of routes and maps persuaded me that no matter which career path I will take in life, I’ll always have the opportunity to leave a remarkable impact on others.
Lev Seleznov

I don’t know where to begin with my experience as my mind and my heart begin to race when I think of Salzburg. The city of Salzburg has become an idealization of a surreal and perfect world that has been frozen in time, while the Global Seminar is forever imbedded in me as an archetypal educational/cultural experience.

Arriving to the Schloss Leopoldskron was a moment of immense awe. As the huge medieval black gates slowly opened at our arrival I was dumbstruck with the image that was before my eyes. “Am I really here?” I asked myself numerous times. Even though the snowy Alps were covered by clouds, I was reassured by Peter Rose that they were there. From that moment on I built lasting relationships with fellow students and faculty. I could remember sitting in conference the first three days, looking out the window while the snow would slowly fall. I lost track how many times I asked myself whether this was real or whether I was dreaming. The lectures gave me an insight into different aspects of interpreting and evaluating everything around me. It taught me to question myself and my current perception of the world. The lectures were all sublime especially Peter Rose’s discussions on race relations and the sociological aspect on human rights. Hedy Rose’s personal testimonies were of immense value as they transported me back to the 1940’s and the incredibly harsh experience that she had to go through. Reinhold Wagnlietner’s lecture about the United States was groundbreaking as his words and extremely informative PowerPoint showed a list of problems that the U.S has but isn't addressing. These sessions pushed my intellectual understandings and boundaries to their limits!

Dachau was an emotionally and mentally exhausting experience but an experience that I needed to have. Roaming through the camp and observing all the historical pieces gave me a feeling that I was walking through history lessons that I have taken since an early age. Reading the captions at each destination made the whole experience increasingly unreal as I connected the horrible acts to a physical location. It was hard to cope with the idea that I was standing where those atrocities happened. As I continued walking I came across the three monuments that were constructed for people of the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish faith. I paid individual respect at each obelisk and site. When I continued on my journey I entered a small path that took me to the Orthodox Church that was on sight. This is where I had my single most powerful moment of the trip and maybe of my entire life. I had never shared before the impact that World War 2 had on my family and was always discreet with my family’s experience. Stories of sacrifice and pain are still told to this day. The mindset of an entire people has been changed and scarred for life. Both of my great grandfathers were killed attempting to defend their families from the horrors of the Nazi’s. In the Great War most of my family and relatives lived under Nazi occupation. It is under this occupation that they saw atrocities committed. If you ask any one of my grandparents they know one phrase in German “hände hoch” which translates to hands up. This saying shows how instilled those moments are within my grandparents and even my parents to this day. At this church I broke down. I thought of all the stories that were passed down to me by my family. I got on my knees, took out my cross and prayed. This moment was of divine realization, an apprehension of what my family and relatives have gone through. Writing this piece took some courage from my part.

I see the Alps as a metaphor for my journey in Salzburg as a whole. In the first part of the week the clouds covered the view, resembling the lack of understanding and insight that I
had towards global citizenship. As the week progressed the clouds disappeared and the mountain appeared, I was taught to look at things from different perspectives and developed a sincere sense of comprehension. On the last day of the Salzburg Global Seminar I climbed to the top of the Berchtesgaden Alps, the same mountain which eluded me the first few days. This act was a metaphor for a change that occurred within me as an individual. I have now understood what the implications of becoming a global citizen are and what my next steps should be. We as individuals all have a choice and can make a difference in the world. Whether we begin to change things with our wallets or enroll in NGO’s like the Peace Corps; everyone has the opportunity to better the lives of others. It all starts with one person. My stay at the illustrious Schloss has not ended, just as Leopold Anton Eleutherius von Firmians heart is buried within the Chapel at the palace, a piece of my heart and soul will always linger in Salzburg.
Samantha Sowizdral

We sometimes think we know it all, but in fact we know nothing at all. “The great deal of intelligence can be invested in ignorance when the need for illusion is deep” (Saul Bellow). After reading the essay Illusions of Cosmopolitanism by Gertrude Himmelfarb, I understood more about the reasons behind lifting the veil of ignorance about who we are in a world of immense ideology, concept and understanding of self. “The system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and the artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another” (Bates and Plog 1990).

“The importance of cultural identity is to ensure that the values we hold as truth are not of insignificant matter, but of great expansion of the self. When the “common code” varies from each cultural influence, they challenge those common codes. “This is the message I wanted to share while reflecting on Himmelfarbs argument. We stay true to the ideas of self that shape us as individuals, this identity is needed to understand the world around us, but it also needs to be taken down when these ideologies create harmful homogenized beliefs that demonize others different from us. Peter Rose summarized this concept in his chapter about race and gender: “Both practices reflect ideological stances relating to notions of superiority and inferiority by those in positions of power and influence treated accordingly” (They and We: Racial and Ethnic relations in the United States. 16). These politically and psychological charged concepts are what shape societal views, they categorize people based on a certain set of beliefs and perceptions that don’t always reflect the greater picture: “To resist our tendencies to make right and true that which is merely familiar, and wrong and false that which is only strange” (Robert Kegan)

My experience at Salzburg was foremost a self-reflection of identity. I had always desired to see myself as a global citizen, but at times I was not sure of where my place was within the global community. I have always had the desire to travel, be culturally aware of the perspectives of the diversity that surrounded me where ever I went.

This past week was a personal reflection of the barriers, ignorance and misinterpretations I hold myself as a hybridized multicultural person. The concept of trending is an idea that has always struck me as a significance force behind the motive of individuals within a society, the need to belong is a deeply driven notion that is fearful to abandon and leaves a feeling of distance from the comfort of conformity. I understood the concept of homogenization, but could never understand the appeal of its cultural trend. This experience at Salzburg helped me to realize that there is a much bigger world with much bigger problems, and my own countries love of trend and conformity is the demise to a world of cultural identity.

While at Dachau, I spent a lot of time in reflection. During this time I reflected on the lives lost, the pain suffered and the freedom taken for granted by all of us living in a democratic state. This tragedy is a reflection of human emotions and the lack of concern for human lives. When Astrid shared her story, I felt connected to the humanization of homogenized beliefs. She was an example of these conformities and the lifted veil of a recognized human emotion that is connected to the ones that surround us, her story had a profound impact on me as she represented the truth about ancestries, our ties to our families and traditions and our obligations as humans to find truth seek social justice.
What was most memorable was the cosmopolitan feeling that was echoed through the monuments at Dachau. On site, this cosmopolitan feeling was emulated through the Jewish memorial, The Mortal Agony of Christ Chapel, the Carmelite Convent, the Protestant Church of Reconciliation and the Russian-orthodox Memorial Chapel. This made me feel the sense of urgency found in the cosmopolitan ideas that were represented by these monuments and the stoic incentives creating a global society. This tragedy brought homogenized ideologies into hybridized philosophies. It illustrated the necessity to make a passage to cosmopolitan union, and the proof that it can be done.
As we all boarded the plane filled with excitement for the adventure we were about to experience, I think we all underestimated the magnitude of impact it would have on us. I know I did. Although I knew it would alter our lives forever, I didn’t quite measure the severity of it. It’s one thing to perceive an experience through mere thought but undeniably incomparable when lived.

This entire journey leaves me utterly speechless because I can’t even come to grips with the idea that it happened. Being back in New York only emphasized this very impact. When you’re introduced to the entire world through the lectures of bright, intelligent individuals and through interactions with peers beyond the limit of our own group, it’s a challenging concept to redirect your perception to its prior form. From my standpoint, as someone who is vaguely if not extremely unfamiliar with the terms and ideas that were expressed, I was incapable of thinking the way I used to. It’s an understatement to declare that my horizons were broadened.

Each and every individual I came into contact with contributed a weight I was so willing to carry only because it helped me grow and expanded my mind limitlessly. From Darci Arnold’s lecture about awareness of the technologically advancing world to Hedy Rose’s touching story of courage and survival, the boundaries were nonexistent. The lessons they provided were all of which covered extremes and mediums of a beautifully colored spectrum.

The visit to Dachau Concentration Camp brings me to the verge of still unexpressed emotions. I can’t bring myself to remember a time when something was this difficult to wrap my head around. It didn’t hit me when we got to the grounds. It didn’t hit me when we explored the Roll-Call Square or the bunkers. It hit me tremendously when we reached the Crematorium. The brutality was so evident in this one area, I couldn’t understand how so much evil could be expressed within these walls. These were human lives, tortured and burned to their death simply because they were deemed different and unacceptable. To label a life as unacceptable is a form of degradation beyond my understanding of inhumane acts. It’s impeccably heartbreaking to stand in a place, alive and unharmed, where thousands among thousands were murdered through acts of manipulation and brutality.

That one experience led to a million questions and realizations; that in some form or another, these inhumane acts of violence and degradation of human lives based on seemingly insignificant differences in the spectrum of humanity are still present. It’s a matter of, in some sense, experiencing the realization that misfortunes such as this have happened and are still happening and it underlines the very purpose for why we were chosen to attend this life altering experience.

We are the future and it starts with us. Whether we have to be introduced to the dark sides of the world by standing on the same grounds that mass murders were committed or simply by perceiving interactions, ideas and events unfamiliar to our common understanding, we are molded in such a way that our future becomes clear and our purpose strong.
Jamila Wallace

Our first lecture, on Mapping Ethnocentrism, was the perfect opening for a week-long conversation on globalization and the cosmopolitan concept of global citizenship. It wasn’t the novelty of the information dispensed that struck me; in fact, I was familiar with most of the ideas discussed. I was more so moved by the fact these complex and controversial ideas were being presented at all. I felt a sense of pride and relief—proud that I was thought to be worthy of these discussions and relief at the intellectual freedom the presentation implied was encouraged in the Global Citizenship Program (GCP). By end of that lecture I knew I was in the company of some great minds. I grew simultaneously eager and self-conscious—eager to hear the upcoming lectures and pick the brains of the esteemed speakers, and self-conscious about my own lack of knowledge and sophisticated opinions.

My insecurities were somewhat quelled by the end of the following lecture. The speaker was the sociologist Peter I. Rose, and the topic was “They and We: Dilemmas of Diversity”. I was in awe of his level of insight on the U.S.’s xenophobic history and current race-related tensions; I couldn’t take notes fast enough. I was instantly a fan. I skipped the scheduled coffee break to speak with him. This was my first experience with another great aspect of the GCP (i.e. the accessibility of the faculty and advisors). We ended that evening with a traditional Austrian barbeque, at which I further tested this accessibility by sitting with advisors of Queensborough Community College. The night progressed with more bonding, this time with directors of the GCP Astrid Schroeder and Jochen Fried. Conversations with faculty at meal times and post-lecture became somewhat of a ritual. It was a welcome change in student-faculty dynamic.

Our third day was quite intense with a full day of lectures and scheduled small group meetings. We barreled through talks on “Corporations as Global Citizens”, “The Digital Economy and YOU: Product to Robot” and “[Astrid Shroeder’s] Maps of Europe”. The highlight of the day’s talks was a Skype session with KCC and GCP alumnus Lavar Thomas, who spoke about his “Experiences as a Peace Corp Volunteer in Rwanda”. In just the few days I had been participating in the GCP, I felt empowered to make a difference, but felt naïve and helpless in my musings. Hearing from a graduate of my college and the GCP about his path to the Peace Corp and the role the GCP played made my thoughts on leading a more socially responsible life seem more feasible.

The focus for the fourth day was the Holocaust. Visiting the concentration camp in Dachau, Germany, and listening to the survival story of Hedy Rose inspired me to take isolated acts of social injustice more seriously. For the rest of the evening, I thought about the tension associated with the Muslim community over the rise of crimes committed by Islamic fundamentalists, the routine excessive and often lethal force used by U.S. police against Black men, and if current trends could be foreshadowing of another war/genocide. My desire for a lifestyle change seemed more urgent that night.

Unsure at the time of how to articulate my new concerns for humanity, I kept them private throughout my small group’s discussions and planning the next day. I recommended the subject of Globalization vs. Anglo-Americanization based on my group members’ experiences as migrants to the U.S. Appropriately, the lecture for that day was “Mapping Globalization”. From this lecture, my group got a better idea of how to discuss certain aspects of globalization. As my
group continued to flesh out our presentation the following day, another timely lecture, “The U.S. & the World: A Magical History Tour”, helped my group to better understand U.S. influence on cultural globalization.

Our final full day in Salzburg began with our group presentations. I was impressed by the creativity and depth of the presentations of my peers, and I was so proud of the evident growth each of us had experienced throughout the week. It was clear that the GCP had been life-changing for us all. I type this reflection knowing I have yet to fully grasp the experience. However, I know that I am forever humbled by this experience and grateful to all those who made it possible.
Sarah Younus

The event that touched me the most in Salzburg Global Seminar was visiting the Dachau Concentration Camp. Going to a place where people were treated brutally, killed by their own kind. At one moment, they were all part of one society, and then the next minute turned their back on each other. I have taken a Nazi Holocaust course in the fall semester, so by going to Dachau reminded me of what Professor Tomback told us in class. The one part of Dachau that was upsetting to me was the crematorium, seeing the room, were people got burnt and taken their body to the next room. Tricking them that they are taking them to the shower, meanwhile it was a gas chamber. After, this visit I was in emotional distress, seeing it with my own eyes I could not handle it. Another thing Dachau that I felt was seeing the churches and in the Protestant Church was a platter full of candle lights and a rose. It made me felt that even though the concentration camp was filled with horrific events, but these people had hopes. Hopes that they survive another day, hope to go back to their normal life. But, imagine hearing people scream and wondering will I be able to see the sunrise again or am I the next person to be faced with brutality. As I was walking with my boots I was struggling the whole time and had such great difficulty. Imagine the people who were living there and walking barefoot, and completing chores, during cold days and sunny days as well. I have respect for the people who survived such brutality. I really hope that this type of event does not repeat again.

One part of the lecture of The Dilemmas of Diversity by Peter Rose that I love what he mentioned was “you can change your religion, philosophy and wives, but you can’t change your grandfathers”. As Martha Nussbaum mentions in her argument in For love of country one should not forgot their roots in order for them to become a world citizen. As a Pakistani, people are shocked or cannot believe that my ancestors are Indian and that my grandfather was in a British army before 1947; which is a big part of South Asian history because it was the partition of Pakistan and India. No matter what I can’t deny this because it is a part of my roots.

Overall the Salzburg Global Seminar has made me more aware of the world and how to be globally conscious, and how to accept others no matter who they are. This seminar has made me into a new person and it has changed me in a good way. Meeting new people and interacting with faculties face to face every single day has made me realized communication is one big part of human society. Each and every lecture made me realize how much there is more to learn and in order for the world to change, the people have to change and by change it is through education.
SALZBURG GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM - www.salzburgglobal.org

Since 1947, the SGC program has brought more than 20,000 participants from 150 countries to the Schloss Leopoldskron castle in Salzburg, Austria for seminars focused on critical issues confronting the global community, covering topics as diverse as health care and education, culture and economics, geopolitics and philanthropy. It provides an intensive international experience for participants to explore issues of worldwide concern and to view them from a perspective both literally and figuratively outside the borders of the United States. Students develop the tools to be more discerning in their assessment of information pertaining to world affairs and to understand what it means to be a "global citizen." The seminars are designed to be participatory: prompting candid dialogue, fresh thinking and constantly in the search for innovative but practical solutions. Students accepted into this program must register for PHI 7900 – Global Ethics (3 credits, 3 hours) in the spring. The Salzburg Seminar portion of the course occurs during spring break. Participation is limited to 12 students and is by application only. Go to www.kingsborough.edu/honors and click the Salzburg link to download an application.

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