

Smitten with the Mitten

June 23, 2017

One-credit MSU class sends students to explore Detroit, Grand Rapids, Jackson and Lansing



There's an old saying that the only thing better than being in love is falling in love – which casts Michigan State University in the role of Cupid this summer.

A one-credit class in the MSU College of Engineering has 160 students exploring, sight seeing and networking in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Jackson, and Lansing with an intent to help these Spartan engineers fall in love with a new hometown.

"We have 75 students engaged in Detroit this year," said Kyle Liechty, co-op/internship coordinator in the college's Center for Spartan Engineering. "That's up from 58 students in Detroit Semester in 2016.

Read more on the Jackson Semester in [MLive](#).

"Today's students want the urban benefits they can see in downtown Chicago, but closer to home. This one-credit class lets them see what Michigan cities have to offer in terms of employment, entertainment and fun."

Liechty explained that the one-credit class is an engagement activity for students who are employed in internships and co-ops. The class includes social and networking events, professional development and volunteer opportunities in each city, along with interaction with supervisors and technical site visits while on the job. Tours of leading businesses are a popular highlight on the class schedule.

"The community engagement component is used to enhance the learning with after-hour activities including community service, networking, team building, leadership, and exploratory activities throughout the four downtowns," he said. "The

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course and series of supplemental engagement events represent co-op in its purest form, through the extended interaction beyond the workplace to the mobile classroom and community."

"Our goal," he added, "is to help students glimpse a possible future for themselves - making it much more likely they accept jobs and stay in Michigan."



All four city class sites opened with a scavenger hunt and kick-off meeting to explore venues in each downtown. Activities in Grand Rapids, Jackson and Lansing are new in 2017. It's the third year for The Detroit Semester, which taps into the After 5 Detroit for mixers each summer.

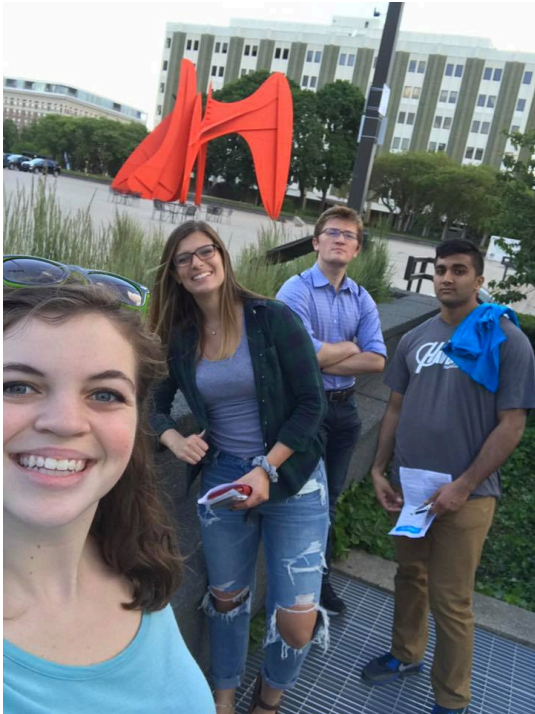
Vincenzo Vultaggio, a senior civil engineering major from Macomb, Michigan, is an intern at General Motors and taking EGR 393, The Detroit Semester. He finds the class to be a rewarding experience as an intern in Detroit.

"It allows me to take a class while interning and earn credit, but also connects me with other interns in the metro Detroit area," he said. "The Detroit Semester showcases a lot of what downtown Detroit has to offer to a young professional coming out of college. I have lived in metro Detroit all of my life, but never really got to experience Detroit the way I do with this class. We get to see all of the cool and fun things going on in the downtown."

Kayla Burmis, who will be a sophomore this fall in applied engineering sciences with a concentration in supply chain management, is spending her summer in Grand Rapids working for General Electric Aviation. She is from Jerome, Michigan.

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“The social and professional aspects of this internship have been incredibly fulfilling,” she said. “As interns, we have ventured to museums, restaurants, done yoga on the Blue Bridge, and simply wandered around admiring the many murals.

“EGR 393 has added to my experience with this city. We kicked off the semester with a scavenger hunt downtown that started with appetizers at Buffalo Wild Wings. This class gives students an opportunity to connect with other Michigan State University students. Most of us are in a foreign city with no family or hometown friends. If not for EGR 393, I would have never ventured outside of the 50 interns at General Electric,” she added.

Upcoming events include a dinner with executives hosted by the After 5 Intern Program in Detroit, a Jackson Young Professionals social event, the “Hello West Michigan” professional networking night in Grand Rapids and Lansing’s Runway on the Runway.

Each class ends with final presentations where students summarize their experience to mentors, hiring managers and colleagues.

For more information on the class and four-city experience, contact Kyle Liechty at liechtyk@msu.edu.

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