**The Economics of Conflict – London Maymester**

**About the TA**: My name is Bonnie Griffin, and I’m a third- year PhD student in French. I study Early Modern French literature, especially utopias and early science fiction. I love rock climbing and hiking, whether in the city or in nature. London is my favorite city, for the phenomenal museums, giant gardens, breathtaking architecture, and the walkable riverfront.

**On the program**: I really appreciated the set-up of the program. Most days begin with just a few hours of teaching, and are followed by an excursion (usually to a museum or important historical site). Instead of stranding you in a museum, the class is typically accompanied by a very informative (and entertaining) guide. The evenings are usually free, so you can check out London’s restaurants, nightlife, plays, other museum exhibitions- whatever tickles your fancy. There is a good balance of structure and freedom. The trip to France is amazing, especially for WWII history buffs. We visit key museums as well as historical sites, including some of the beaches themselves. If you don’t know any French, don’t panic! I will help with everything from ordering food, navigating excursions, planning an optional weekend in Paris, etc.

**Living arrangements**: We stay in Kensington, which is a very safe, chic, and fancy neighborhood. Our accommodations are organized by the FIE (Foundation for International Education). The rooms are like a cross between a dorm and a simple hotel. You’ll most likely have a roommate or roommates, and will share a bathroom. There is Wifi (of course), access to kitchens, and a common room with a TV. I don’t recommend you bring your entire wardrobe with you, but you will be perfectly comfortable. The best part of the accommodations is you are within walking distance of, well, everything: excellent cafes and restaurants (for a variety of budgets), pubs, Tube stops (London metro), some of London’s best museums (Victoria and Albert, Natural History Museum), grocery stores, Hyde park, and so on. This is also a VERY safe area- I felt just fine walking alone at night.

**Cost**: Although this is a very wealthy area, you don’t have to panic if you’ll be on a tight-ish budget. You can eat out at a restaurant every night, sure, but you can also be strategic. Since you’ll have access to kitchens and are near many grocery stores, you could certainly plan to cook (or microwave) some of your meals, which will save a lot of money. I would recommend having breakfast in your dorm (cereal, toast, etc.), getting a sandwich from one of the grocery stores for lunch, and getting, say, Nando’s (good, affordable chicken place) for dinner. You can spend anywhere 8 pounds a day on food, or 40 +! I’d set aside money for toiletries, too. Just buy your shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothpaste, etc. there- you can do it quite cheaply and that will save room for packing. You’ll get an Oyster card, so you won’t have to spend money on transportation (yay!) unless you go farther out.

**Additional tidbits**: This Maymester is what you make it! In the classroom, of course, you have the unique opportunity to go out and see the actual historical sites that relate to the conflicts that will be discussed. I know this is a very interesting class, because even I, a humanist (gasp!) learned a whole lot about economics and conflict. After the class, you can really explore your own passions (outside of Economics, your greatest passion). If you love theater, we will see a few plays, and you can see more. If you want to stay active, you can jog in Hyde Park. If you’re eager to explore further, we will have some free weekends, so you can easily get to France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Scotland, or elsewhere, thanks to trains or low-cost airlines. I loved Edinburgh! The nice thing about London is, there’s really something for everyone- be that local concerts, the Harry Potter studio tour (I recommend it), art museums, nightclubs, etc. Even without leaving the country, there are some fantastic places you can get to (Bath, Oxford, Cambridge, and so on). One way or another, this course gives you the tools to advance your understandings of economics, as well as expand your horizons by travelling. I hope to see you there, and please contact me if you have any more questions (bonnie.m.griffin@vanderbilt.edu)