Over the summer, I experienced the best month of my life in Munich, Germany, as a part of a study abroad program at Pitt. Although it is technically a graduation requirement to have an international experience for my major, it was something I had always planned to do during my undergraduate career. In choosing the exact program, what stood out to me the most was the location. Not only does Germany have amazing pretzels and beer, but it is also a country with rich history and culture that I felt that as an American, I could greatly learn from. For this project, I intended to make a flyer for this specific program that would capture attention by utilizing stylistic themes I thought represented my vision of Munich.

Because location was the largest factor in my decision to attend this particular study abroad program, I chose the focal point of the image to be the word “German”. I created this effect with the intention of intriguing an audience of other engineering majors at Pitt who are also interested in studying abroad. I chose to give the letters alternating black, red, and yellow colors that both reflect the colors of Germany’s flag and add contrast to the cooler tones, making it “pop”. I also chose a more medieval looking font to represent the stylistic theme of an older Germany, also adding a contrast and intrigue. The name of the program, Engineering the German Way, descends from the top of the page and is organized in a manner that fills the negative space left from the buildings in Marienplatz. I used different fonts for each word because it looked more stylistically pleasing to me, and a dark blue color for these words to establish a cooler tone, since the picture I used as a background is one of Marienplatz, the center of Munich, at night. I also utilized the negative space left from the buildings to relay a few details regarding the program and had them descending in terms of size, which I feel depicts an organization that is more sequential and pleasing to the eye.

In terms of struggles, I felt very challenged in both designing the visual and learning how to use the program. My last experience with editing photos was with the program “Paint” about 10 years ago, so naturally I was very unfamiliar with creating visual representations through a program such as GIMP. I noticed early on when looking at tutorials regarding the uses of certain tools, that having a windows computer (or possibly just my personal computer) was making it more difficult to utilize the various functions of the program. I eventually came to accomplish the effects I intended to achieve, but the approach did not come intuitively and was very much a process trial and error that involved many YouTube videos. It took me a while to really understand how the “layers” worked, especially when cutting an image out and pasting onto another image, which is what I intended to do with a picture of the alps. This process was especially challenging, but I ended up achieving the effect I wanted by layering several images of the alps onto each other to create a more succinct foreground where I could post a link to more information onto. In finishing the visual project, I used a “fuzzy border” to create a more blended effect and tie everything together.

My source materials were two images that I found by utilizing the “CC” search on the creative commons website. In meeting the terms of this license, the search bar filtered out pictures from various websites to only include those that were “modify adapt or build upon” and “use for commercial purposes”. As mentioned, I found two images that I wanted to use: one of Marienplatz, and the other of the Bavarian alps that were posted from a website called “pixabay” that lists free images. I used the picture of Marienplatz as a background, and then I cut out the alps and layered them in the foreground. I also modified the images before putting them together to create an effect that was in line with the vision I had for my flyer: the original picture of Marienplatz is much brighter and warmer, but I modified it to have cooler tones and allow the focus to be on the text. I also modified the picture of the alps to have more of a “blur” and less detail to allow the text to be more easily read.

Overall, I think I was effective in meeting my goals. I had originally set out to do more complex effects, but through the process of working on it, I realized that my ideas altogether were too overwhelming for one visual. In realizing that, I was able to establish a focal point that was intended to create a level of intrigue to my audience. If I had more time, I would consider improving the image by utilizing more features that I had not been aware about and playing around with different images.