

Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi

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General Information:

I chose Bocconi for my exchange semester, because I wanted to combine the reputable academics with the experience of living in a vibrant, lively city that is Milan while having the opportunity to get to know Italy in much more detail than previous short holidays. Unfortunately, my semester turned out to be exceptional and thus (hopefully) not representative for future exchanges due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This, as it was particularly severe in the region around Milan, reduced my actual stay in Milan to the month of February. Nevertheless, I really enjoyed the opportunity to experience different courses and style of teaching and thus am still very happy with my choice, especially since after a few weeks the situation was no different from anywhere else in the world.

The registration process, once you are accepted, is well organized by the international student desk, which handles all issues during your time at Bocconi. They will contact you via Email and lead you through the process. During that time, you have the opportunity to apply for student housing on a first come first serve basis. I did not choose to do so. The dorms can be up to 40 min away from university or directly on campus. I found an apartment on housinganywhere very close to Bocconi, which went smoothly.

The course selection is also on a first come first serve basis, which makes it a little stressful, because my page kept crashing. I was then told by the international student desk to use the you@B app, which I highly recommend to anyone, because it worked immediately.

Overall, I really enjoyed my time at Bocconi, despite the difficult circumstances. I highly recommend it to anyone and hope that you will be able to profit more from the city itself than I did.

Academics:

I chose to attend five courses at Bocconi, which is actually the maximum that is possible. Most courses are worth 6 ECTS. Overall, I would say most of my courses were very well organized especially during these times. We did not miss a single week of classes. The university was very prepared for the situation and changed to online lectures, either live or recorded videos, in a matter of days.

1. Private Equity and Venture Capital:

6 ECTS: Core Electives / Immersion

This was definitely my favorite course at Bocconi, which is echoed by many other HSG students who took this course before me. It is a theoretical overview of PE&VC and therefore not too technical. There is no need to have completed a relevant internship or even do a Master in

Finance to easily keep up with the content. The quantitative components are very limited, but the theory is quite extensive, covering legal aspects, taxation, deal-making, deal-structuring and some valuation topics. Normally, the course would have consisted of a Midterm exam and a Final, but the Midterm was replaced with a group project. The Final was 100% Multiple Choice, which it normally is as well. Overall, if you are interested in PE&VC or maybe want to discover something new, this course is the perfect opportunity to do so and I can highly recommend it.

2. Financial Statement Analysis:

6 ECTS: Core Electives / Immersion

I took this course as a non-attending student, because it overlapped with another course. With some courses at Bocconi a non-attending student has to study several books and papers in exchange for not participating in the lectures and thus has to take a different exam. This is not the case in FSA, because the professors want to allow students to take the course even if they do an internship. It is therefore not a disadvantage, especially because the slides are very extensive. And since the lectures were cancelled after three weeks, it did not matter anyway. The grade was based on a Final Exam only, which is also the case in a normal semester. If you have taken similar classes before, it is not too difficult, but certainly requires some effort. It is not as catchy as a more theoretical course such as PE&VC, but it is based on practical application including several real-life case studies. I can also recommend this course.

3. Finance for the Green and the Circular Economy:

6 ECTS: Independent Electives

This course covers the financial perspective on a green and circular economy. It is very detailed due to an extensive quantitative case study, which is only talked about in class. I personally found the topic very interesting, but the professor sometimes lacked the ability to explain aspects properly. He is a very reputable researcher in the field, so I attributed it mostly to language barrier. During the lecture, he also hands out pieces of paper, if you participate (yellow for good comment, blue for excellent comment). Dependent on the number of those, you had the opportunity to gain two extra points. In my opinion, this made it a little forced in the lectures, because many only asked questions until they were given their paper and, because no one ever received two per lecture, then became very quiet. It also prevented students from asking questions about the content, because it showed that you did not listen carefully or just did not understand his explanation. But of course, this is just to help you. I just found it unusual and unnecessary. The final grade consists of a final exam only, unless you chose to participate in a midterm assignment. It is a quantitative analysis of a circular company in comparison to a more linear one. I chose not to do so, because the professor was unable to provide clarity on the assignment and the way we could receive the necessary data without access to the library before we had to decide to do it or not. Overall, I think there are better courses to take.

4. Business History

6 ECTS: Contextual Studies

I was positively surprised by this course. It is mandatory for the students of the Master in Management, which makes it the largest course I took. The course deals with the long-term

development of business and entrepreneurship from pre-industrial times until today. There are different professors for the course, depending on the group you select, which I think explains the varying feedback in other reports. I was in the group of Andrea Colli, which I can highly recommend. The grading consists of a group assignment and a final exam. The content is underlined with several cases, which are discussed in class. The professor expects participation and therefore asks you to read the cases before. I personally learned a lot, because the course is very broad and provides an excellent overview without going into too much detail. It is focused on key developments.

5. Globalization, Inequality and Divergence from Historical Perspective

6 ECTS: Contextual Studies

This course covers the development of globalization, inequality and divergence of the worlds' population from as early as the first human settlers until today and future projections. I found it very interesting and was surprised by the extensive historical capabilities of Bocconi. Many papers that were quoted and discussed in class were written by professors who work at Bocconi. I think it was the first time, this course was taught by a new professor, who just finished his PhD. As a result, the lecture improved continuously, and he was increasingly able to explain the topics. In the beginning, I was a little disappointed since he was not 100% stringent in his arguments. This improved significantly after a short period and I ended up learning a lot. The grade consists of a midterm, which was replaced by an individual assignment, a group project, which is quite extensive as it required data analysis, and a final exam. This requires some effort, but it is well spread out during the semester. I can highly recommend this course.