

the **epic** ADVANTAGE

Student/Faculty Collaborative Research Experience

EPIC ADVANTAGE: Cross-Cultural Health Psychology in Sweden

Dates: June 4 - 24, 2019

Leaders: Beth Mechlin, Nina Roghed, Program Assistant

Application Deadline: October 15, 2018



Description of Experience and Research:

This research project will explore a variety of factors that influence mental and physical health in Sweden, a country with one of the highest life expectancies in the world (According to the World Health Organization at birth a Swede is expected to live 82.4 years, while an American is expected to live 78.5 years). Students will examine a variety of individual health behaviors (such as diet, exercise, drug use, and attitudes toward work/life balance). Students will also examine larger societal influences on health (such as economic inequality and the health care system).

Location:

We will visit multiple sites in Sweden to learn about factors that influence the health of people living in Sweden. We are planning to spend time in Stockholm (capital and largest city), Malmö (3rd largest and most diverse city in Sweden), Lapland (home of the Sami people located in the Arctic circle), and Motala (a smaller city). We will also be taking a day trip to Copenhagen, Denmark.

Faculty:

Beth Mechlin is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Earlham who contributes to the Neuroscience major. She teaches courses about a variety of topics including Health Psychology, Stress and Health, Cross-Cultural Psychology, Behavioral Neuroscience, and Research Methods and Statistics. Her research generally examines the relationship between stress and health, commonly with a focus on the ways in which race and socioeconomic status contribute to health. She loves traveling and exploring new cultures and has visited over 30 countries to date.

Expectations for Students:

Students will be required to participate in a 1-credit orientation course during Spring 2019. This course will provide some basic background information about factors that influence health and will help students to devise their individual research questions. It will also allow us to learn some basic information about Sweden and get to know each other before we begin our journey. While all students will be learning about a variety of things that influence health in Sweden, each student will be choosing one specific factor to focus on in greater detail. Students will select this factor during the spring semester and work with the faculty member to develop a plan to study it while in Sweden.

While in Sweden students are expected to:

Treat everyone with respect. This includes all the locals we meet as well as the faculty leader, program assistant, and other students.

- Keep detailed notes about experiences, observations, and reflections related to their project.
- Immerse themselves in the culture and area.
- Be engaged in group activities.
- Design a research poster reflecting their work on the project.



- Design a group presentation of learning.
- Luckily almost everyone in Sweden is fluent in English, so no knowledge of the Swedish language is necessary to participate in this program.

Course Prerequisites: Psychology 245: Research Methods and Statistics (although students who have not taken this course but who have taken other research-based courses may be considered).

Learning Goals and Outcomes:

- Investigate - Students will collect data to learn more about health behaviors and how they differ by culture. They will investigate how the practice of health behaviors in Sweden contributes to a longer life expectancy than in the United States.
- Diversify - Students will learn more about a different culture and a different way of thinking about health. They will gain exposure to different ideas about the relationship between an individual's responsibility for his/her health and a government's responsibility for the health of its citizens.
- Apply - Hopefully students will learn more about positive health behaviors and apply this information to improve their own health.

Dates of Experience:

June 4 - 24, 2019

Start and End Point of Program:

Students will fly roundtrip to Stockholm Arlanda Airport

Application Dates:

October 15, 2018

Applications can be received from students starting on Sept. 15, 2018. Application window closes on Oct. 15, 2018.

Link to Application:

Apply in Handshake

Preparation:

Students will be required to take a 1 credit EPIC Advantage Orientation seminar during the Spring 2019 academic semester. This seminar will provide the necessary background and travel logistics for students to maximize the experience. Class meeting dates/times will be determined in the future.

Student Eligibility:

Rising Sophomores, juniors, or seniors are eligible to apply.

Cost to Student:

This experience is funded as an EPIC ADVANTAGE opportunity. Funding includes travel, room and board, and other expenses required by the program. Passports and immunizations as well as other personal expenses will be covered by students. Students who are accepted and withdraw after January 15, 2019 must reimburse the college for all expenses committed on their behalf.

Program plans subject to change.

Program Policies: <https://earlham.edu/academics/off-campus-study/program-policies/>