Munich University of Applied Sciences,
Department of Social Work
Notes from a Field Trip to Illinois, USA

The group in front of JANE ADDAMS HULL HOUSE, Chicago

From back to front, left to right:
Stephanie Kößler, Sophie Kapsberger, Anselm Feldmann, Elke Schnaus,
Angela Auer, Melanie Filipovic, Petra Rumpel, Emanuel Kasprówicz, Kristina Kurringer,
Eva-Maria Krempl,
Clarissa Carsten, Lisa Edelhäuser, Lena Pandel, Angela Kraft, Ilse Sawitzki, Stephanie Kößler, Dr. Maria S. Rerrich;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diary</td>
<td>3-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last but not least...</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWW-Addresses</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUR ARRIVAL in Chicago: Wednesday, September 17th, 2008

After an almost nine hour flight, our Lufthansa plane from Munich disembarked on Wednesday afternoon at O’Hare airport. Everything went well and even our “Munich umbrella” (a present for Katie) managed to pass the security check. So after a short delay we started off to the West. Due to bad weather conditions, we had to fly above Greenland, which caused a further delay. But thanks the airline’s broad choice of films, music etc., we didn’t really care.

We met Dr. Rerrich at the airport and went to our hostel together, which was located in a pleasant Chicago neighborhood called Greek Town. The hostel itself was above a well known Greek restaurant, called Parthenon. We had a great welcome dinner at the fabulous Parthenon restaurant.

After that super delicious meal, some of us just fell into bed, while others still had enough energy left to explore the immediate surroundings. They discovered that we were just about 10 minutes away from Downtown Chicago, as well as from one of the greatest tourist attractions, the Sears Tower. Some of us also found out that a few blocks away there was a German Octoberfest taking place!
DAY 1: Chicago: Thursday, September 18\textsuperscript{th}, 2008

After this first night in the United States we were still tired because of jetlag but we met at 9 am in front of our hostel anyway. Together we went into the city to our meeting point for the boat trip. Our boat tour, organized by the Chicago Architectural Foundation, was leaving at Michigan Avenue. After a short security check we started the one and a half hour boat tour along the Chicago River. Although it was very windy (typical for Chicago – it is not for nothing that it is called the Windy City!) the sun was shining and we could enjoy the warmth. The tour went under some wonderful old bridges along the North Bench, Main Bench and South Bench.

We passed impressive architecture - buildings like Marina City (designed 1960, it looks like the NY Twin Towers), the Tribune Tower, the Lake Point Tower, the Old Post Office and many more. We could see the Sears Tower from almost every direction. With its 115 floors it’s the highest building of Chicago and the US.

This great boat tour gave us a small view of the architecture of Chicago and the buildings with their histories. After the boat trip we went for lunch in small groups before meeting up again at 2.30 at Hull-House Museum.

In 1889, Jane Addams and other women established this settlement for all the migrants who needed to come together in the impoverished neighborhood and help each other. This neighborhood help was accepted by many people in Chicago and was the first settlement house in the United States. The settlement’s facilities included kindergarten classes, a nursery, a music school, an employment bureau, libraries, sports facilities, clubs, a museum and music and art classes. The women of Hull-House were also involved in research and in
politics, with a focus on women’s, children’s, migrants’ and workers’ issues. Jane Addams, who spoke out as a pacifist during World War I, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work.

First of all we got a small introduction about Jane Addams and her life prepared by Emanuel and Petra. After a short film about the history of Hull-House we had a guided tour through the museum and the dining hall, the main part of what is left of the Hull-House buildings. Sadly, of the original seventeen structures only one remains and it is now surrounded by buildings of the University of Chicago.

After visiting Hull-House we all went our own ways. Some of us visited the Art Institute of Chicago or went up to the top of the Sears Tower to enjoy the great view at sunset. Others went out for dinner and had fun in the bars of Chicago.

**DAY 2: Chicago: Friday, September 19th, 2008**

We started this day in the Pilsen neighborhood, home to Chicago’s largest Latino community. Several of the group got up early to discover the area before we had our appointment at the „National Museum of Mexican Art“ at 10 am. This museum is located in the heart of the Pilsen community with exhibits dedicated to the work of Mexican and Mexican American artists. It was founded in 1982 and has the mission to display Mexican culture as one sin fronteras (without borders). We got a guided tour from Mario, a so called „Chicano“.

It was very interesting and afterwards we didn’t miss the chance to look around in the souvenir shop!

---

1 **Chicano** (feminine **Chicana**) is a politically-loaded word for a Mexican American (in the sense of native-born Americans of Mexican ancestry, as opposed to Mexican natives living in the United States). The terms **Chicano** and **Chicana** (also spelled xicano) are used specifically by and regarding some Americans of Mexican descent. ([Wikipedia.com](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicano))
Next on our agenda was a visit at the Indo-American Center (iac), located way out in the north of Chicago, in an area populated by South Asian and Russian Jewish migrants. The Indo-American Center’s mission is to promote the well being of South Asians through services that facilitate their adjustment, integration and friendship with the wider surrounding society, and also to nurture their sense of community and foster appreciation for their heritage and culture.

We had a very interesting conversation with Ms. Lakshmi Menon, who talked about the specifics of migration from India and has been a volunteer there since the formation of the center. Later on, two staff members provided information about their daily work at iac.

Some of the services the iac provide are, for example:
- Senior Citizen Services
- Civics Education
- Courses in Preparation for U.S. Naturalization Exam
- Voter Registration and Voting Procedures Review
- Teen and Childrens Programs

(www.indoamerican.org)
At the Indo-American Center with the iac staff and Ms. Lakshmi Menon (last row in the middle)

In the afternoon, we split up into smaller groups to do some research in other ethnic neighborhoods of Chicago, e.g. in the Asian quarter or in Andersonville (a Swedish and Middle Eastern neighborhood). Our goal was to discover as much as possible about each area, to get to know the diversity of the migration background of the population and to find out how they live or what makes the area special.

Then, for dinner, we met up again in Chinatown in a typical Chinese restaurant, where we shared our results. It was very interesting to exchange impressions and experiences of the various ethnic neighborhoods. “Interesting” is also a good word to use to describe our meal: a variety of typical Chinese dishes, prepared the real Chinese way, some of which were a bit daunting to the less adventurous eaters in the group. But there was something for everyone and most of us found the meal delicious. We had two “birthday girls” in our group, Sofie the day before and Clarissa the day after our Chinatown meal, so they got a “Happy Birthday” song and a nice Chicago calendar, and thus an eventful, interesting and fun day came to an end.
DAY 3: Chicago: Saturday, September 20th, 2008

This was our “day off” and gave us the possibility to discover Chicago on our own. Since our hostel was located just about 10 minutes from downtown Chicago, some of us did some shopping, others visited museums (e. g. The Art Institute of Chicago) and churches or went up to the Sears tower, and in the evening several checked out the nightlife ... and finally we had to pack our luggage for our trip to Carbondale.


Today we had to get up very early, because we had to catch our train at 8:15 to Carbondale. The railway station was a 10 minute walk away from our hostel.

It was a long ride down to Carbondale and one thing worth mentioning is that American freight traffic has priority over passenger trains, so we had to wait every time a freight train overtook us. That’s why we travelled for almost eight hours.

But the long journey was worth it: We had a warm welcome from the students of Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The students greeted us with huge and colorful welcome banners, which we thought was nice.
The students had also organized a car shuttle service to our accommodation, called “Boomer Hall”, located at the University Campus. Leaving our stuff at Boomer Hall, we were invited to a lakeside picnic (on the Campus Lake) with the students, several professors, including Dr. Elisabeth Reichert (who had organized this part of our trip with her assistant Katie Lenza), the Dean of the Faculty of Social Work, Dr. Miah, and surprisingly even the Mayor of the neighboring town of Marian. Even a journalist from the local newspaper had come to report on the visit of the student group from Germany! We were all very excited about this warm and welcoming reception, and after having a lot of food (pizza, vegetables, fruits, cakes and cookies) the local students had prepared several icebreakers for everyone to get to know each other. We had a lot of fun while learning more about each other. For the picnic we brought “Mozartkugeln” from Germany and one of our group told the American students: “These are Mozart’s balls – very delicious!” We had a big laugh.

After the “official part” of our introductory get-together, we took the opportunity to go food shopping with some students, do our laundry or have dinner.

**DAY 5: Carbondale: Monday, September 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 2008**

In the morning the American students picked us up for breakfast. Afterwards we went to a local Women’s Center where Abby Odior gave us an interesting report about the work of the shelter. Abby showed us the house which was a great opportunity to see how the mostly abused women and their children live. Women from all over the country come to this center to seek refuge in a place protecting them from their aggressive husbands.
After this great tour we had lunch in the Student Center, followed by a guided tour of the campus. Southern Illinois University is such a huge area: The campus not only has its own shops like McDonald’s, Starbucks Coffee, a grocery store and clothing shops, but even a swimming pool, a bowling center, a huge sports stadium, its own newspaper and its own lake. There are 22,000 students at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and also over 200 clubs to join: any kind of sports, languages, music or art, etc.

In the afternoon we went to a class taught by Dr. Hussein Soliman, who talked about counseling and explained some technical skills. We had the chance to take part in a group exercise with the American students. They did role playing in the class and we observed the situation between the counselor and the client. Afterwards we discussed the skills they had used in the conversation. It was a very interesting and exciting class.

Today, “The Southern – Illinoisan” published a short article about our visit at the University.
DAY 6: Carbondale: Tuesday, September 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 2008

Today the day started for some by participating in a “Happy Factory” activity. Happy Factory is a nonprofit organization that constructs toys for disadvantaged children and it has a branch located right inside the Student Center, so some of us went to work on toys while talking about the mission of “Happy Factory”. Others attended classes, such as “Welfare in the Social Institution” (Mr. Little), “Mental Health” or “Methods of Social Research” (both Dr. Paris). There was also the possibility to join a field trip to the Egyptian Area Agency On Aging, an agency that promotes the well being of senior adults and assists them in maintaining their independence in the community.

The classes and visits were all very interesting and there was always a communicative exchange of German and American students.

Next, Katie had arranged for us to meet with Mike Fielo from Land of Lincoln, an organization focusing on helping low income clients with legal issues. In the evening we attended a meeting with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, a group devoted to improving the working conditions of migrant agricultural workers in the tomato fields in Florida, using strategies in the community work tradition of Saul Alinsky.

DAY 7: Carbondale: Wednesday, September 24\textsuperscript{th}, 2008

In the morning every student could spend the day however he or she wanted, so some of us stayed on campus to do some canoeing or just to relax after a long night out with some of the local students, whereas others went shopping to the university mall. Another group went hiking with some of the American students.
At 2 pm we had a class with the American students. The topic of this class was *Immigration to the EU*. Anselm did a great job with his presentation in English to give information to the other students. He focused on a definition of the EU, the member countries, the Schengen and Tampere agreement and on visa and migration policy dilemmas. After his presentation some discussion started and questions were answered. We also compared notes on migration in Germany and the US and talked about immigration to the United States.

After this first part of the class we had discussions in groups of 4 or 5 students and discussed several social issues, e.g. drug addiction, immigration and education.

After a short break we met again at 6 pm for another class with the US social work students, Dr. Reichert, Dr. Rerrich and several other teachers. All the teachers introduced themselves and talked about their research. We also got information about the Master’s degree in social work. Afterwards we had another discussion with the US students on social issues and discussed a variety of topics in small groups, such as the education system, children, immigration, teenage mothers, field work, child welfare systems, the health care system and volunteering.

At 9 pm our class was finished and we went out with some of the American students to see a guy juggling with “fire-balls”. It was amazing!
Wow - Today we were in the newspaper again. The Daily Egyptian, the student newspaper of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, wrote an article about our stay:

In the morning we were able to spend our time individually. A couple of us went to eat breakfast together with our American friends and later on drove to the shopping mall.

For today’s lunch the American students had organized our Farewell Party at a nice restaurant, called “Mélange”. There we took the opportunity to thank Katie for her great efforts and everything she had done for us, as well as Dr. Reichert for her support.
Then it was time to say goodbye and after a leisurely lunch we had to go to the train station, to be on time for our journey to Chicago. There was a bit of excitement when we realized that one of us was missing. Although his luggage was there at the station, Emmanuel himself had been left behind accidentally in Boomer Hall, but luckily there was enough time left to drive back to get him!

During the trip back to Chicago Anselm and Emanuel surprised us with a talent which we didn’t know they had before: They sang songs by the Comedian Harmonists and we were all thrilled! We overheard one of the other passengers in the car remarking that this must be a music group from Germany….

After we arrived around midnight, every one of us was glad to go straight to bed, after a long and tiring journey (and several long nights).

**DAY 9: Carbondale/Chicago: Friday, September 26th, 2008**

The departure day was a beautiful sunny morning in Chicago and some of us were on their feet and out and about to experience Chicago again one last time while others enjoyed a last long breakfast in Greek Town.

Just before eleven o’clock we all met outside the hostel and then it was time to take the subway to O’Hare Airport and catch our plane back to Germany.

**DAY 10, Chicago: Saturday, September 27th, 2008**

Landing 5:55 am at Munich Airport
Last but not least...

For all of us, the field trip to Chicago and Carbondale broadened our horizons. It was a great opportunity to get to know American culture and learn how Americans see the profession of Social Work.

In Chicago we learned about many aspects of migration to the United States. We studied the history and current experiences of migration of people from India, Mexico and other ethnic groups, and we became more familiar with the problems of migration and the fields of action of Social Work.

At SIU (Southern Illinois University Carbondale), we actively took part in classes and workshops, which were very enjoyable and informative. We got to know about the American health care system and learned about some aspects of Social Work with older adults as well with children. We had the possibility to visit a Woman’s Center and learned how problems are handled in the United States.

All in all it was very informative to talk with the American students and to compare notes about social issues in Germany and Europe and the USA. Our journey was not just an intensive learning experience, it was also a lot of fun, and we all made many new friends. Thanks to everyone in the United States and in Germany who helped make this field trip such a success!
WWW-Addresses of visited institutions, our hostel and other interesting links

- Chicago Architecture Foundation  http://www.architecture.org/
  Offers tours (e.g. boat trips) and exhibitions at 224 S Michigan Ave # 116, Chicago

- Chinatown Chicago  http://www.chicago-chinatown.com/
  Homepage of Chicago’s Chinatown with information about history, maps, events...

- Daily Egyptian  http://www.siude.com/
  Student newspaper of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale

- Egyptian Area Agency of Aging  www.egyptianaaa.org/
  Agency, which provides help to older adults in Southern Illinois

- Hull House Museum  http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/

- Indo-American Center  www.indoamerican.org


- Southern Illinois University Carbondale  www.siuc.edu/

- The Art Institute of Chicago  http://www.artic.edu/aic/

- The Parthenon  http://www.theparthenon.com/
  Our hostel and at the same time a nice Greek restaurant in Chicago, 314 S Halsted St

- Woman’s Center Carbondale  http://www.thewomensctr.org/