

First of all, I would like to show great delight for your preparation that you intend to learn in University of Cologne (UoC). UoC is authorized as the elite university in Germany and its study atmosphere is one of the best. It is my great pleasure to talk about my experience in Cologne. My learning experience is from October, 2013 to July, 2014. In these ten months, I received uncountable warm hearted help from teachers and students in Institute of Geography, UoC.

I lived in Efferen during my staying in Cologne. It is a typical student community and has quite tranquil environment. Efferen is located in a town called Huerth, which is in the south of Cologne (Fig.1). The convenient public transport takes me only 30 minutes to from home to the library, including the time I walk. Although Efferen is highly evaluated, it costs me 181 euro per month. However, as an exchange student, I have to pay for extra 30 euro as a fee for short-term rent. Around the Efferen S-Bahn

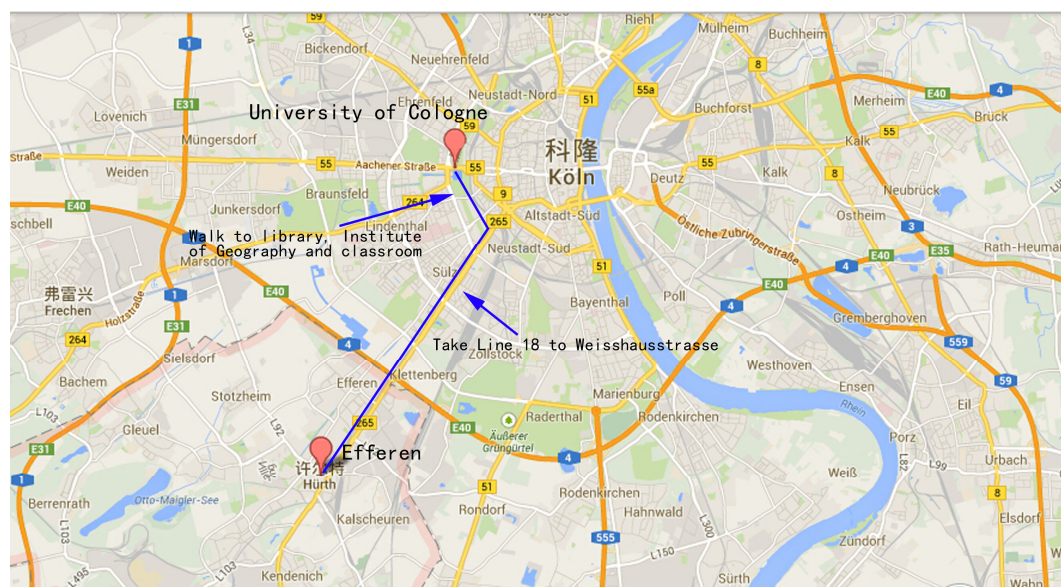


Fig. 1 Location of Efferen.

station, there are the supermarkets “Lidl”, “Rewe” and “Netto”. Kreissparkasse Köln Bank is alsnearby. There are also some restaurants and a barbershop. There are not lots of recreational or commercial facilities, but exactly meet the demand for your everyday consumption. Martina Bock, a warm hearted German girl in UoC, helped me to find this perfect accommodation. She started to take her masters exams, so

she might not be able to provide this help in future.

In total 10 months staying, I took three professional classes and German course. In professional classes, each student is required to write a report about the topic that is given to her/him and to present it. In the course "Food Security and Globalization" taught by Ms. Bernzen, my topic is "The Exclusion Debate: Potential and limitations of global food and environmental standards for small holder farmers in the Global South". In the course "China – Natural Resources and Socio-economic Developments" held by Ms. Hartmann, my topic is "Effects of transition? Informal housing, labor and business". And in the course "European Regional Development" by Prof. Dannenberg, I was supposed to give a presentation about gentrification. More or less, the course in Germany is quite different with the ones in China. It seems that classes in Germany include intensive communication between teachers, presenters and students. All in the classroom can discuss his/her own opinions freely, and the others may explain why he/she agrees or objects. The most important thing I learned from professional classes in UoC is not the knowledge but how to think. Each class takes 90 minutes, but you wouldn't feel boring but just surprised that time passes so quick!

For traveling in Europe it is necessary to bring daily use articles, like tooth brushes, toothpastes, mugs, towels, etc. In China, almost all hostels provide these things for customers but in Germany, few of them would do that.

For the future exchange students, you should be aware that making an appointment in advance is quite important. In Germany, even having a haircut requires appointment, which makes me a little bit surprised at the first time.

Beyond that, lots of information could be collected from the homepage of Institute of Geography or UoC. Teachers and friends in Institute of Geography may also inform you. UoC is a well-known international university and lots of lectures by famous scientists would be held. Keeping eyes open and attending lectures are pretty important during your abroad study.