

Fall 2019 at the IKMZ

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It is not an easy feat to describe in one page the amazing semester I spent at the IKMZ. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity and the support that I received, especially when I was in need of help sorting a few issues. Bettina, Valeria, Mike, Frank, Meg, and many others made my stay an unforgettable experience, giving me a helping hand every time I needed it.

From the welcome reception to the holiday party, I always felt welcome. The lunches, dinners, formal meetings, and informal conversations were great opportunities to learn about research, the university, and Swiss culture, and for that I am grateful. I am also thankful for the opportunity of sharing my research with so many highly respected scholars in media and communication. Building relationships is invaluable, and being able to work on collaborative projects is certainly one of the most important outcomes of my time in Switzerland.

Working with students made the experience truly special. I had the opportunity of teaching an amazing group of students in my undergraduate seminar 'Environmental Communication.' I had heard that Swiss students were not used to actively participating in class discussion. Not this group. We had great discussions about serious issues — climate change can be a depressing topic to discuss — and they were extremely engaged. On top of that, their first assignment was so good that I had to go back to my emails to double check if this was an undergraduate seminar and not a master's level one. This was one of my favorite teaching experiences. The quality of the students in my seminar is a clear reflection of the world class education they are receiving. And this is only because of the quality of the faculty at the IKMZ.

Spending my sabbatical semester in the amazing city of Zurich made things even more absurdly remarkable. Things just work as they should, almost all the time. The ease of transportation and the range of amenities available had me and my family busy pretty much all the time. We would hop on a train for a couple of hours — time wisely used to write uninterrupted thanks to the lack of Internet connection — and visit some fairytale town or a world-class museum. By the way, the Landesmuseum is the best museum I've ever visited, and the Museum of Communication in Bern made me feel like a kid in a toy store. Switzerland is a marvelous country with so much to offer and I certainly plan to visit it again.

I am now back home frequently thinking about my time at the IKMZ and Zurich. It was a refreshing, enlightening, fun, and exciting experience. It was without a doubt the most exciting semester I've ever had.