

BUDAPEST SEMESTER IN COGNITIVE SCIENCE: Philosophy to Neuroscience for undergraduates

A STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM IN ENGLISH FOR
US AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Program Information and Call for Students
last updated the 13th Nov. 2023, replacing all earlier versions.



Eötvös University, South Science Building, entrance

Program Home Page: <http://bscs-us.org>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PROGRAM STAFF

General Director:	<i>George Kampis</i> , Ph.D., D.Sc., Dr. Habil., Professor of Philosophy of Science, Department of Artificial Intelligence, Eötvös University, Budapest, Hungary gk@hps.elte.hu
Co-Director:	<i>Péter Érdi</i> , Ph.D., D.Sc., Dr. Habil. Henry R. Luce Professor of Complex Systems, Director, Center for Complex Systems Studies, Kalamazoo College, MI. perdi@kzoo.edu
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US Coordinator:	<i>Ms. Judit Hegedűs</i> , MSc, Kalamazoo, MI, Peter.Erdi@kzoo.edu
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COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Kalamazoo College	Prof. Robert (Bob) Batsell
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HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

The BSCS program for US and international students was established in 2003 upon the joint initiative of the three founding Directors, John Bickle, Péter Érdi, and George Kampis, offering Semesters since 2004. In addition to US students, the program regularly enrolls part time and full-time students from Hungary and the surrounding region. Home institutions of BSCS alumni include Carleton Coll., Reed Coll., Northwestern U., Kalamazoo Coll., U. Cincinnati, Binghamton U., Birmingham Southern Coll., U. Southern Connecticut, Dartmouth College, Vassar College, Franklin and Marshall, UC Berkeley, Middlebury College, Bates College, and others. In recent years, the Program has been upgraded with improved facilities ensuring enhanced benefits to students. In the framework of BSCS, extended services with higher value added are available to students on the basis of individual agreements with selected sending Universities and Colleges. Starting January 2012, Tony Chemero has replaced John Bickle as US Director. Between 2003 and 2016 the program was run at the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, Eötvös University. Bw. 2016 and 2022 the program was hosted at the Department of Ethology. After a pause of three years (two due to the COVID pandemic, one due to the Ukrainian war) in 2023 we experience a new start, reflecting on new trends and old traditions.

FRAMEWORK

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The Budapest Semester in Cognitive Science (in short BSCS) is an undergraduate study abroad program for students from the US and other countries aimed at broadening their understanding of cognitive science from an interdisciplinary perspective. Lecturers of the Program are distinguished experts with noteworthy international research and teaching experience.

AFFILIATION WITH EÖTVÖS UNIVERSITY

The Program is run in Hungary by the Hungarian Cognitive Science Association (www.makog.hu) and on the US side by BSCS-US LLC, Kalamazoo, MI and is affiliated with Eötvös University of Budapest (Hungary) via a bilateral contract authorizing BSCS to use the name and the facilities of the University. Academic supervision is provided by the Faculty of Informatics of Eötvös University that also assumes responsibility (<https://www.inf.elte.hu/en/>).

THE UNIVERSITY

Eötvös University (pronounced Ötvösh, 'ö' as in German) is Hungary's leading science and Liberal Arts University. Founded in 1635 by Cardinal Péter Pázmány as a Catholic institution, the University owes its name today to Baron Loránd Eötvös (1848-1919), an eminent statesman and physicist with a considerable reputation in his own time. He was the first to provide compelling evidence on the equivalence of gravitational and inertial mass, as early as in 1889. Today, the University has more than 30,000 students and is based in several locations and buildings in the bustling Budapest downtown. The most recently built facility is the Lagymányos Campus where BSCS courses are held (hereafter Campus). The University's home page provides further details and background information, please visit <https://www.elte.hu/en/>.

HIGHLIGHTS OF BENEFITS

- **STUDY ABROAD AND EXPLORE EUROPE - AT A REASONABLE COST**

The key benefit provided by this Program to students is the opportunity to complete a semester abroad with a high-level academic content that is recognized by the sending institution and at the same time requires significantly less financial commitment than a semester undertaken in the US or in Western Europe, due to the lower cost of living incurred in Budapest.

- **CULTURAL EXPERIENCE**

The Program provides the opportunity to experience life in Hungary and in Central and Eastern Europe in a safe and assisted way. Member of the faculty have diverse backgrounds, and a significant number of them come from Eastern Europe.

- **GATEWAY TO VIENNA, PRAGUE, AND THE REST OF EUROPE**

Hungary is a member of the European Union. Budapest is located just 250 kilometers (155 miles) away from Vienna and 300 kilometers (185 miles) from Prague, making these wonderful cities, along with many other European destinations, easily accessible and perfectly suitable for a long weekend getaway. BSCS provides assistance to students who wish to organize such visits within Europe during their stay.

CALL FOR STUDENTS

The 2024 Call for Students is available starting from November 1, 2023. Applications are considered on a rolling basis, and a reply is sent in 15 days. The final deadline for applications in 2024 is April 15. Interested students may wish to contact the US Coordinator (at Peter.Erdi@kzoo.edu) and all applications should be submitted to bscs@bscs-us.org. The interested are also invited to visit the BSCS Web page <http://bscs-us.org> for additional information.

BASIC INFORMATION

OBJECTIVES

The Program provides:

- an introduction to cognitive sciences at an undergraduate level;
- safe and assisted experience of living in a European environment;
- an opportunity to gain insight into Hungarian and European culture and history, as well as to acquire an optional knowledge of the Hungarian language.

LANGUAGE

All courses are taught, and all communication is conducted in English.

TUITION FEE

The Program operates on agreements with various Colleges and provides different services, as per agreement. For individual (self-paying) applicants the tuition fee for 2024 is USD 7,500 (see also Stipends).

STIPENDS AND THE FULL BSCS FELLOWSHIP; SUPPORT FROM OTHER SOURCES

For students whose social conditions do not permit them to pay a full tuition fee as well as for students from eligible countries, a stipend (from the practical point of view: a partial waiver on the tuition fee) is available upon request. Stipends are awarded by the Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis based on applications (no form sheet). Together with the request for a stipend, a proof of parental income and any further financial aid obtained is required. Students should inquire at their local universities and organizations for additional support.

BSCS is proud to offer also one full BSCS fellowship per year to every 10 accepted applicants. The full BSCS fellowship covers tuition. To apply, inquire at bscs@bscs-us.org.

The BSCS students are encouraged to obtain support from other fellowships covering Study Abroad (such as Gilman, Boren, etc.)

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TUITION AND WHAT IS NOT

The tuition fee includes:

- a 5-day Orientation Course upon arrival
- residence permits in Hungary (to be arranged by the Hungarian Coordinator)
- deposits and “cautions” (e.g., for keys in the accommodation)
- courses and course handouts, as described separately
- high speed Internet access at dorm and campus (the quality varies)
- two weekend excursions within Hungary
- Hungarian language course during the Semester
- cultural courses and other cultural programs, including one ticket for a major cultural event, e.g., at the celebrated Opera House in Budapest.

The tuition fee does not include:

- accommodation
- visas, passports, photographs, required health insurance
- travel from home to Budapest and back
- travels within Europe
- health insurance and other insurances
- local transportation costs
- telephone bills, medical costs, damage reparations, etc.

Based on individual agreements with selected sending Universities and Colleges, additional special packages of service can be provided to students.

ACCOMMODATION

We provide accommodation for a separate fee. The accommodation offered by BSCS in 2024 is contracted with the GoodMo apartment house (<https://goodmohouse.com>). It operates as short- or long-term accommodation for non-BSCS students as well (whereas BSCS students are placed together so as not to get disturbed in their study). Price for the 2024 Fall Semester is 1780 USD in a 2 bed/room dorm. Availability is limited (currently 18 students can be placed at GoodMo); student needs are satisfied on a “first come first served” basis.

STRICT NO-REFUND POLICY

The Program entails fixed expenditures (including lecturers' honoraria, costs of excursions etc.) and is fully tuition driven. As a general practice therefore, we apply a strict no-refund policy vis-à-vis all enrolled students.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

FULL STUDENT STATUS

During their stay in Budapest, BSCS students receive student status at Eötvös University with full access to Eötvös's student facilities. The obtained student card is a useful asset in buying transportation and museum tickets as well.

FACULTY AND COURSES

The BSCS Faculty and courses offered are detailed separately.

TEACHING AND RESOURCES

Students are not required to purchase textbooks for the courses (with the exception of the Hungarian language courses). All courses are based on the delivered lectures. Teaching material is developed (or, in the case of readings, collected) by the faculty and distributed to the students at no additional cost. Classroom teaching is supplemented by mandatory reading materials and by further assignments (such as Internet or library-based student research) outside of class hours.

Resources available to students include a library (at ELTE, with some English books), and Internet is also available in the buildings. Free WiFi is accessible in the majority of Campus locations, and it includes the dorm (quality varies).

MOODLE E-LEARNING PLATFORM

The main vehicle of structured course communication is the BSCS Moodle e-learning platform at <http://moodle.bsccs-us.org> (login provided to BSCS students and teachers).

CREDITS TRANSFER AND TRANSCRIPT

Attendance. Attendance of classes is compulsory throughout the semester. Altogether 3 days can be missed during the entire semester without a medical proof of sickness ("grace period").

Transcript: Every BSCS student properly attending the classes as above, and also meeting the requirements of each examination, receives a Certificate from Eötvös University demonstrating the duration and other specifics of the courses attended, as well as the grades obtained. US compatible official transcripts of Eötvös University are also provided for those eligible for the Certificate. Transcripts will be mailed to the sending US colleges/universities in a sealed envelope.

Credits: Students' home universities typically require the achievement of credits as result of a study abroad stay. In the case of doubt, the acknowledgement of earned credits by the students' home university must be negotiated in the application phase. BSCS's own credit system is based on the credit system of Eötvös University, which strictly follows the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System). For official ECTS information, please consult:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ects/en.pdf

In the ECTS framework, a one-semester course with 20 contact hours typically earns 2 ECTUs (European Credit Transfer Units). Accordingly, the entire BSCS semester earns a total of 24-30 ECTUs (see separately; see also "Grades" below). The 20 contact hours are equivalent to 1.4 US semester hours (for 14-week US semesters) and this allows a clear conversion of the transcripts to US credits.

To help credit transfer with US colleges, in BSCS we have introduced major course codes and a grouping of courses into corresponding classes for a US style crediting. The four composite classes are: Philosophy of Cognition - **PHIL305**; Neural Bases of Cognition - **NEURO305**; From Cognitive Development to Consciousness - **PSYC305**; Foundations of Cognitive Science - **IDSY305**. Each class with a 305 code earns 4.2 US semester hours and can be credited accordingly.

QUALITY CONTROL

Since 2023 the main quality control is exercised by the Educational Committee of the Faculty of Informatics. A further component of surveillance is exercised through the US Director and the students' home institutions. Also, since 2004, six on-site visits were performed by US College administrators or faculty, who approved the program. The most recent of these visits took place in 2023, and appraisal can be found online at the BSCS home page. Additional on-site audits are always welcome by the Board.

EXAMINATIONS

The main form of assessment is a written or oral examination at the end of each course. Students receive a grade for each examination as well as a final grade (based on the average of the grades obtained) in the Certificate.

Written examinations take the form of a test or a short essay. An oral examination is conducted in the form of a dialogue between the teacher and a student, where, as a general rule, the student may take time to prepare his or her answers. Oral examinations at Hungarian universities are open to the public (practically: to fellow students), thus ensuring transparency.

BSCS students are entitled to have ONE repeated exam, the time of which will be communicated by the BSCS staff if necessary.

GRADES

In Hungary, grades are weighted on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating the highest and 1 the lowest: 5 stands for "excellent", 4 for "good", 3 for "mediocre", 2 for "satisfactory" and 1 "unsatisfactory/fail". (This directly translates to an A to F scale, just reversed.)

Eventual equivalence issues arising between the various national grading /credit systems and the Hungarian one should be discussed with the Student Advisor and the Study Abroad Office of the student's home institution and with the Student Coordinator of BSCS. In most cases the equivalence between the Hungarian and various other grading systems can be easily established.

ELIGIBILITY

The Program is open to undergraduate students of all disciplines with a sufficient personal maturity to adapt to a new environment and a foreign society. Consequently, any undergraduate student at a university or college of good standing, who by the time of the start of the Budapest Semester has completed the first two semesters of his/her studies, is eligible to enroll in the Program. Students from any academic background are welcome, however, familiarity with one or more of the following disciplines is likely most conducive to completing a successful semester in the framework of BSCS: computer science and mathematics; natural sciences; philosophy and psychology. Students from other disciplines should contact the BSCS Student Coordinator before application time to discuss the compatibility of their academic background and expected benefits to be derived from completing the Program.

The selection of students takes place on a competitive basis, with a record of previous academic results constituting the sole selection criterion. The general minimum entry requirement at application time is a US grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. Students with a GPA lower than 3.0 should write to the BSCS Directors about the possibility of a waiver.

HOW TO APPLY

Form sheets for application are available at <http://bscs-us.org>. Applicants are requested to supply a letter of recommendation from appropriate faculty. Application deadline for 2024 is April 15, 2024. Applications should be sent by email to bscs@bscs-us.org.

Applicants are assumed to be familiar with the current Program Description (available also online) and a signed application is understood as a contract to which the current Program Description is serving an undetachable part.

Applications sent via e-mail must be accompanied by a signed hard copy of the signature page (included in the downloadable application form) sent by airmail or surface mail to:

Professor George Kampis,
Dept. of Artificial Intelligence
Eötvös University, Budapest
H-1117 Budapest, Pazmany Peter s. 1/A
Hungary

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For any further information on the Program, kindly contact the US Coordinator, Ms. Judit Hegedűs (at Peter.Erdi@kzoo.edu) or the US Director, Prof. Vaibhav Diwadkar (vaibhav.diwadkar@gmail.com).

COURSE INFORMATION

COGNITIVE SCIENCE

Cognitive Science is a multidisciplinary approach to the human mind. It is sometimes considered a new “super-science” in the sense that it offers a common platform and a common language for numerous traditional disciplines ranging from biology and brain science to computer science to linguistics and philosophy; it offers a bridge overarching between STEM sciences and the Humanities. The benefit of studying cognitive science lies in the fascinating integrative world view that it represents, thus enriching the disciplinary knowledge of the student’s own academic field. Successful completion of BSCS enables students to pursue graduate studies in the field of diverse sciences in a later stage of their academic career. Student will learn about how the individual and the social mind works.

GENERAL TIMING & THE SEMESTER SYSTEM

Eötvös University runs a genuine two-Semester system, consisting of two independent 14-week semesters. The Spring Semester runs from early February to mid-May, while the Fall Semester stretches from early September to mid-December. The semester system fits well into the US “Long-Term Study Abroad” programs. BSCS is traditionally held in the Fall Semester of each year. In the year 2024, the core Program dates are:

September 2 – December 6.

An Independent Research Module (see the description below), formally part of the 2024 program, is also available in January 2025.

COURSES OFFERED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF BSCS

Every course is designed for the non-specialist student who has little or no prior familiarity with the given subject but is equipped with curiosity and is adequately intelligent to absorb new concepts, methods, and modes of thought.

The BSCS Professors have an extended experience in handling various student backgrounds, interests, and levels of competence within a single course. BSCS courses have been designed and Professors have been selected to fit these criteria without compromising academic quality.

BLOCK COURSES SYSTEM

BSCS is based on a block courses system. A block course means a one-week (i.e., 5 days), 5 hours per day, intensive course of 20 contact hours altogether (this includes 4 days of teaching, and consultation, as well as exam on the fifth). All BSCS block courses come in the form of lectures (occasionally accompanied with independent student work).

Each BSCS course is a block course except some special courses (see below). Classes of the special courses (e.g., Hungarian Language and Culture) are held in the afternoon. To a limited extent blocks may move within the block course system without prior warning.

Block courses are not uncommon at Eötvös and are generally welcomed by the students because of their highly concentrated character. A block course ends with an assessment in the form of typically a written or oral examination.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSES

COURSE SCHEDULE

Classes are Monday to Friday, 9:00 – 13:30. Location is in the Campus, North or South Science Building, room to be announced. A map is available at

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1qJ4NxMMkutU6TmJJV6soFJ4m4Wk&usp=sharing>

Breaks are typically from 10:30 to 10:45 and from 12:15 to 12:45. Each week covers one course, with the examination on Friday.

- **ORIENTATION WEEK (1. WEEK)** Required, 0 (zero) credit. Personal introduction, introduction to Hungary and Budapest, to the University and its facilities, to the specifics of the local educational system, how BSCS works, the timetables, etc. Includes a one-day intensive “crash” course of the Hungarian language (at the “survival level”).
- **REGULAR COURSES (2-13. WEEK)** All regular courses are required. They are 2 ECTS credits worth each, equivalent to 1.4 US standard semester hours (see CREDITS TRANSFER AND TRANSCRIPT above, for US equivalence). The table (next page) summarizes regular course information and their lecturers for 2019 (the 2020 credits are planned to be identical).
- **ADDITIONAL SPECIAL COURSES INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM**

Hungarian Language and Culture	2 ECTS credits,	1.4 semester hour	elective
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- **OTHER SPECIAL COURSES INCLUDED**

BSCS students are entitled to take any undergraduate course offered by the University not specifically designed for BSCS. More specifically, in each Semester the University offers several courses, some in English or other major languages, for which no special prior requirements other than student status is necessary.

The catalogue of these courses for the current Semester is available on Eötvös's Intranet and is made accessible for BSCS students during Orientation upon request. Usually, special courses begin one or two weeks after Semester start (in the 14-week semester, 12 weeks as a minimum are required for credit). The interested should inquire at the Student Coordinator.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CREDITS

To keep the students' work focused, no BSCS student is allowed to take more than 32 ECTUs. The offered semester hours for the core semester amount to 17.2 semester hours; and for the regular Hungarian language and culture courses 2.8 semester hours can be earned. As for the optional Independent Research Module, 5.6 semester hours can be credited.

OTHER DEPARTMENTAL CONTACTS

BSCS students are encouraged to seek contacts (assisted by the Program) within Eötvös University's research departments related to the students' own main fields. While this is not part of the formal requirements of BSCS, prior experience shows that informal contact between guest students and other research departments tend to produce fruitful results.

Eötvös University has a strong record of accepting guest students at all levels in various disciplines and in a large number of international programs.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH MODULE

The BSCS Semester covers four months. For students who wish to earn more credits or wish to spend more time in a study abroad arrangement, BSCS offers an Independent Research (IR) package.

IR can be taken consecutively to the BSCS semester or separately as a summer program. The cost of IR for the 2024 Semester is USD 1500 (including accommodation; note that IR is to be held in January 2025). Within IR, students are placed in various Eötvös research Departments according to their majors and receive research tasks suitable for their general background.

IR is available in conjunction with BSCS or separately and under identical conditions (student status, dormitory, infrastructure etc.). IR dates for the 2024 BSCS Semester are from the period of

6th to the 24th of January 2025.

The IR module involves max. 8 contact hours per day and can be accounted for 50% of the regular credits in the credits system; therefore, including additional independent work, the full IR module represents a 5.6 semester hour's workload.

THE COURSES IN 2023 (can be slightly elaborated in 2024, but no code changes are foreseen)

Schedule 2023	Course title	Lecturer	Contact Hrs	14 week semester hours	Course code
Sept. 4-8.	Orientation week	Ben Mahmoud Maissa and Vivi Szendy , Resident Secretaries in 2023.	10	0.7	n/a
Sept. 11-15.	Introduction to Cognitive Science	Dr. Martin Takáč (Slovak Academy of Sciences)	20	1.4	IDSY305
Sept. 18-22.	Cognitive Neuroscience	Dr. László Négyessy , (Institute of Particle and Nuclear Physics, Wigner Research Centre for Physics)	20	1.4	NEURO305
Sept. 25-29.	Cognitive Psychology	Ms. Rozália Ivády (Nógrád County Pedagogical Service, Salgótarján)	20	1.4	NEURO305
Oct 2-6.	Cognitive Neurophysiology	Dr. Zoltán Nádasdy (Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, Eötvös University)	20	1.4	PHIL305
Oct. 9-13.	Cognitive Design	Dr. Máté Barna (Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest)	20	1.4	PSYC305
Oct. 16-20.	Cognitive Informatics I.	Dr. Zoltán Somogyvári (Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Wigner Research Centre for Physics)	20	1.4	IDSY305
Oct. 23-27.	Cognitive Disorders	Dr. Andrea Berencsi, Dr. Bea Szenczi-Velkey, Dr. Bence Kas (Eötvös U, Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Education).	20	1.4	PSYC305
Oct. 29. - Nov.5.	Autumn Break	---	0	0	Holiday
Nov. 6-10.	Cognitive Informatics II.	Dr. Balázs Újfalussy (Inst. of Exp. Medicine, Hung. Acad. Sci.)	20	1.4	IDSY305, PSYC305
Nov. 13-17.	Philosophy of	Dr. Zsófia Zvolenszky (Dept. of Logic, Eötvös)	20	1.4	PHIL305

	Language	University, Budapest)			
Nov. 20-24	Neural Computation	Dr. Gabriella Keszthelyi (Department of Stochastics and Dynamics, Tech U Budapest)	20	1.4	NEURO305
Nov. 27-30.	Consciousness	Prof. George Kampis (Department of Artificial Intelligence, Eötvös U.)	20	1.4	PHIL305
Dec. 4-8.	Cognitive Developments	Dr. Zoltán Jakab (Eötvös U, Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Education)	20	1.4	PSYC305
Sept.11.- Dec. 8.	Hungarian Language and Culture	Dr. Mária Gedeon (Eötvös Collegium)	40	2.7	LANG 2 CULT 1
Jan. 1. – 26., 2024	Independent Res.Module	Individual supervisors selected from various Budapest research institutions	60	4.2	IDSY 2 or depending on the project
Total Sept. 4-Jan. 26.	16 courses		340	23.8	

Course Syllabi for the old courses are downloadable from <http://www.bsccs-us.org/>

CORE TEACHING FACULTY

PROFESSOR VAIBHAV DIWADKAR

Wayne State University, School of Medicine, Detroit, MI. Research in Psychiatry & Behavioral Neurosciences, Psychology. Uses imaging to study the functional organization of cortico-striatal and cortico-limbic networks in normal development and to understand dysfunction in these circuits in vulnerable and disordered adolescent populations.

Web: http://tnp.wayne.edu/faculty_schizo.php

PROFESSOR PÉTER ÉRDI

Author of *Mathematical Models of Chemical Reactions* (with J. Tóth, Princeton UP, 1999), *Neural Organization: Structure, Function, and Dynamics* (with M.A. Arbib and J. Szentágothai, MIT Press) and *Complexity Explained* (Springer). He is Henry R. Luce Professor of Complex Systems at Kalamazoo College, and Head of the Department of Biophysics in KFKI RMKI at the Hungarian National Academy of Sciences.

Web: <http://kzoo.edu/~perdi/>

PROFESSOR GEORGE KAMPIS

Author of *Self-Modifying Systems in Biology and Cognitive Science* (Elsevier, 1991).

Web: <http://kampus.web.elte.hu>

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR ZOLTÁN JAKAB

Author of *Why Not Color Physicalism Without Color Absolutism?* (Commentary on A. Byrne and D. Hilbert: Color Realism and Color Science), *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 26 (1), 2003, 34-35
Technical University, Budapest

Web: <http://www.cogsci.bme.hu/DoCS/munkatarsak/JZpub.html>

DR. LÁSZLÓ NÉGYESSY

Studies the structure and dynamics of cortical networks at large and mesoscales using experimental and theoretical approaches. He aims to decipher the role of concerted population-level interactions in local and global information processing in cognitive functions such as tactile perception and cognitive control. Answering these questions is essential for the application of brain-computer interfaces and understanding brain diseases.

Web: <http://cneuro.rmki.kfki.hu/people/laszlo-negyessy/>

PROFESSOR ZSÓFIA ZVOLENSZKY

Web: <http://phil.elte.hu/zvolenszky>

RESIDENT SECRETARY

BSCS employs a Resident Secretary who is responsible for all administrative matters and all contacts during the students' stay in Hungary and while they are studying in the BSCS. She is also the main contact for the parents (and families) of the students. The Resident Secretary is fluent in English.

The Resident Secretary has office hours every day 13:30 – 14:30 in room D1.111 (South Bldg.) and he is available at all times 24/7, by cell phone in case of an emergency, during the whole semester of BSCS. Or you may wish to call Prof. George Kampis at +36 30 282 8982. Please avoid

calling the Resident Secretary outside the Semester, however, as the call might not be received. In all off-semester matters consult the US Coordinator or the Program Directors.

The name, email, and phone number of the Resident Secretary are tba.

VISA AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Important changes. Currently all US citizens planning to stay more than 90 days in Hungary (including BSCS students) are required to have a visa or a residence permit to Hungary.

Accepted students will be informed about the details and the procedures to follow. From 2019 on we require BSCS students to come with a “D visa” (study visa) to which we provide support after acceptance.

Foreigners visiting Hungary for more than 90 days (also visa holders) must register with the Office of Immigration and Nationality in Budapest (<http://www.bmbah.hu/>). BSCS students will be informed about the necessary documents and will be assisted when in Budapest.

BSCS staff provides full assistance with the registration in Budapest. Registration currently involves a fee of ca. 75 USD, to be paid up front.

For general information about traveling and staying in Hungary, US students may wish to consult the Hungarian Embassy in the US:

Embassy of Hungary
Department of Consular Affairs
3910 Shoemaker St., NW
Washington, DC 20008
(202)-362-6730
<https://washington.mfa.gov.hu/eng/>

ARRIVAL IN BUDAPEST

Program representatives will meet students upon their arrival (airport or rail station), provided that they come at pre-arranged times (usually this means certain hours of the weekend before the program begins). Please note that this is a general policy and BSCS cannot, as a general rule, pick up students arriving at random times, except in emergency or otherwise unexpected situations.

It is vital that the organizers in Budapest are informed about students’ travel well ahead of time. Students are requested to forward their travel itinerary to the Resident Secretary as soon as it becomes available.

Should a student’s arrival in Budapest be delayed or affected by any unforeseen circumstance, the resident secretary should be notified.

ASPECTS OF DAILY LIFE

THINGS TO BRING ALONG

Students should not forget their passport, air tickets, at least one major credit or debit card, and a sufficient amount of money in cash and/or travelers checks to cover immediate expenses upon arrival. It is advised that students bring along their laptops (most chargers are compatible with a European travel adapter).

It is important that students bring an ample supply of any medicine they frequently use, as well as shoes and clothes that are appropriate for all seasons. Rooms come completely furnished, and are supplied with bed linen, kitchenware, etc., further necessary items can easily be found in local shops.

The accommodation is equipped with washing machines, or a coin laundry is available at a convenient distance. Thick items, such as sweatshirts, take two to three days to air dry, and spin

dryers are rarely used in Hungary. Towels and other personal hygiene items should be arranged for by the students themselves. While traveling, all forms of ID, cash, and a week's supply of any vital medication should be kept in the student's carry-on luggage. Although unlikely, checked-in baggage might be placed on a wrong plane or fail to make the connecting flight. (For this the BSCS program is not responsible, and we hope it never happens.) Before check-in all luggage should be equipped with a label featuring the student's final destination as follows:

Budapest Semester in Cognitive Science
Eotvos University, Department of Ethology
H-1117 Budapest
Pazmany P. s. 1/C,
Hungary.

ELECTRICITY

The voltage used in continental Europe is 220 Volts. Also, the plug is different. This renders most American appliances useless – unless they are convertible, battery-operated, or you have an adapter. In the US, European adapters can be bought at every major electricity shop and at airports. Note that the outlet geometry is also different. Outlet adapters also exist that switch between the different systems and are available in the US for a few dollars. Today most general use electronic devices (such as laptops, portable CD players etc.) come equipped with a built-in conversion system between 110/220 Volts (but not between the mechanical outlet geometries). In such a case all you need is a mechanical adapter. In case of doubt, students should check their devices and consult a member of the Program staff in advance.

CLIMATE

Climate in Budapest is similar to that of other cities with continental weather at similar latitude in Europe (e.g., Paris, Vienna, or Munich). It can be quite windy near the river Danube (next to the campus). It should be noted that overall in Europe, temperature is measured in Centigrade. Zero Centigrade is 32 Fahrenheit, and every 10-Centigrade difference makes another 18 Fahrenheit (i.e., 50 Fahrenheit is 10 Centigrade, 68 F is 20 C, etc.).

CURRENCY

Hungary is a member of the European Union, but not in the EURO currency zone. The Hungarian currency is called Hungarian Forint, or Forint (Ft) for short. As a general rule, students should not carry much Forint in cash, as there are many ATMs in the city (a few of them directly on the Campus). ATMs also tend to give a good exchange rate. You can exchange dollars or travelers checks to Forints at the airport, rail station, or any of the hotels or banks in Budapest. There remains a currency black market in Hungary, and there is also a good deal of counterfeit currency in circulation; students are strongly advised not to trade currency with strangers.

Major international credit cards (in particular, MasterCard and Visa) are accepted at many places, including most restaurants, bookshops, and food stores.

Personal checks, cashier checks, money orders, etc., cannot be readily exchanged in Hungary (but will be first sent back to the issuing bank to cash them). International banking is usually quite slow. Checks are not in use in Hungary (while credit cards are). Although you may deposit a personal check at some selected banks, it may take several months (!) until the check is cleared. It is a good idea to bring some personal checks along in case you have to mail away for something like a GRE registration. It is not a good idea to exchange all your money at once. The bank will convert Forints back to USD but will charge you again for the transaction. Exchange rates vary day-to-day reflecting changes in the international monetary market.

GENERAL GUIDES

Information pages about student life in Budapest:

<http://welovebudapest.com/budapest.and.hungary/9.reasons.to.study.abroad.in.budapest>

<https://studentsbudapest.wordpress.com>

(Note that links may change quite often and you may wish to consult search engines instead).

Further information, such as how to buy a monthly student bus and travel ticket, how to buy a cell phone, etc., are provided during Orientation Week, which is compulsory for Program participants. A general tourist site is <http://budapestinfo.hu/en/>

ENGLISH ON THE STREET

While not too many Hungarians tend to speak foreign languages, it is possible to get by with English practically anywhere. One is likely to find at least one English-speaking person almost at all places. A handful of basic Hungarian words will help out in most real-life situations. People tend to be co-operative and friendly towards foreigners, and they usually appreciate all efforts to communicate in Hungarian, as above.

MEALS

BSCS students should rely on the choice of available shops and restaurants in this respect. Besides, the Dormitory offers a student kitchen in the common area. The Orientation Week gives detailed information about on-campus student restaurants, nearby supermarkets, food stores, etc.

Special needs such as vegetarian, cholesterol-free, or religiously approved (Kosher, Halal, etc.) food is increasingly common in Budapest and should be obtained relatively easily at specialty places (please inquire). Living costs are relatively low in Hungary by most Western standards. For comparison, an average daily shopping may cost 3000 Forint (ca. 9 USD), and dinner in a reasonable city restaurant starts in the same range. A complete lunch in a student restaurant costs approx. 1000 Ft (ca. 3 USD).

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The public transportation system in Budapest is safe, cheap, and very well spread throughout the city. The student package contains necessary maps and descriptions. Tickets are valid for all public transport vehicles: subway, buses, trams, electric street cars ("trolley bus").

For accessing any city destination from the Airport, the best value for money is the "Airport Minibus", which operates as a multi-customer taxi, and costs approx. 8000 Forints (approx. 22 USD).

GENERAL LIVING COSTS DURING THE PROGRAM

Using the above data and related estimates, as well as experiences of our students, non-binding estimates ("educated guesses") for the general living costs during the whole semester are:

Food: 2,000 USD

Phone: 300 USD

Cultural programs: 350 USD

Personal costs including local transportation: 450 USD (International travels not included).

Note that all these costs can vary greatly due to different backgrounds and personal needs. To compare, an average Hungarian student lives on approx. 100,000 HuF/month, i.e., approx. 1,000 USD per Semester, including everything but accommodation excluded.

MAIL AND PHONE

To call a telephone number in Budapest from abroad, use international call prefixes. From the United States, you prefix the number with 011-36-1. Dialing 011 summons the international switchboard (from ATT), whereas 36 is the country code for Hungary, and 1 is the city code for Budapest.

Notice the difference in time zones. Budapest is on Central European Time (CET, i.e. GMT+1), which is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (New York.). For example, when it is noon in New York and 9 a.m. in San Francisco, it is 6 p.m. in Hungary. At 6 p.m. in New York, it is midnight in Budapest.

To make a call from Budapest, you need to dial 00 for the international switchboard, then the country code (which is 1 for the US and Canada) followed by the area code and the telephone number without pauses.

Your mailing address in Budapest (for letters, packages or FedEx, etc.) will be:

Name_of_Student
Budapest Semester in Cognitive Science
Department of Artificial Intelligence
Eotvos University
H-1117 Budapest
Pazmany P. s. 1/C.
Hungary

SAFETY AND SECURITY

By most standards, Budapest is a safe city, except for a few distinct areas and at certain hours. The most typical street crime is theft at a crowded place, and fraud by black market dealers. Common sense is usually sufficient to avoid or to solve such situations. Open threat or unprovoked violence towards strangers is very rare.ß

The US Embassy home page in Hungary (<https://hu.usembassy.gov>) explains the basics of safety in the city, together with the most typical criminal tricks (such as “fake police”, i.e. civilians playing police – bear in mind that real police ALWAYS wears a uniform and ALWAYS comes in 2) deployed against tourists and visitors on the street – most of these street tricks are highly international.

HEALTH AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

In terms of public health and security, Hungary can be considered a highly safe country. Each BSCS student is required to hold a valid full health insurance that covers all accidents and usual medical treatments for the entire duration of their stay in the framework of the Program. Students arriving without proper health and accident insurance are required to obtain one at their own cost. If necessary, the Resident Secretary provides help and advice in this matter. In case of emergency or any crisis situation, the Resident Secretary or one of the emergency services provided below should be contacted.

MENTAL HEALTH

Studying abroad is a challenge for most students. Many of them are a continent away from family for the first time in their life and experience this as a difficulty. Maintaining solid mental health during the study abroad stay is an important and sometimes difficult task. We are fully aware of these difficulties and sympathetic towards the students struggling with them. A student group called “Kortárs Segítő Csoport” (Eng.: Peer Counseling Group) is a voluntary helper group operated by psychology students at ELTE. They provide free and semi-professional help also in English and are a useful stepping-stone with strong contacts to fully professional or even medical helpers if necessary. Their English webpage is at <http://kortars.elte.hu/english/>.

STUDENTS WITH AN LBMTQ+ BACKGROUND

We encourage students with LBMTQ+ and other backgrounds. The program is supportive of these needs and the University tends to be a safe and tolerant environment. Hungary is a moderately open and tolerant country. Most Hungarians tend also to believe that private matters should in general be kept private, i.e. activism (of any kind) is seldom endorsed.

INTERNET ACCESS

BSCS students have broadband Internet access on a few university PCs located in the Department, during opening hours on workdays between 9:00 am and 18:00 pm. Campus buildings also support wireless connections (standard Wi-Fi), their quality varies. Many students use their own laptops in Budapest and BSCS students are encouraged to do the same. Internet (broadband connection) is available in the accommodation.

SPORTS FACILITIES

The University Campus is still in expansion and relatively poor in terms of sports facilities at the moment. Details will be discussed after arrival as well as upon request. Students should thus mainly use public facilities. Please consult the Chair or the Resident Secretary for more details and advice. But then, Budapest is a city which offers virtually all imaginable sports activities, from wall-climbing and skateboarding to paragliding and horse riding, most of them usually available at low to reasonable cost. Students are advised not to forget about their gear and licenses, etc.

EXCURSIONS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS

BSCS offers its students two weekend excursions, whose costs are included in the tuition fee. A weekend excursion is a two-day (one-night) trip to a scenic and historically relevant place in the country of Hungary.

The expected destinations of the first excursion are:

Szentendre (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Szentendre>)

Esztergom (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esztergom>)

Visegrád (<http://www.visegrad.hu>)

An expected destination of the second excursion is:

Tihany (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tihany>, <http://www.tihany.hu/index.php/en/>)

Further excursions can be organized on a cost-effective basis to several neighboring countries to gain a genuine Central European experience. Individual trips can also be arranged during the weekends. Assistance in the organization of such trips is provided by BSCS staff. Based on individual agreements with selected Colleges and Universities further value-added services can be provided. Arrangements of this kind underway with a number of institutions and is open to every college and university.

While BSCS does not offer organized cultural programs in Budapest, students are encouraged to organize programs on their own as they should be able to move about the city with ease after the comprehensive Orientation Week). Useful and informative websites exist in English, such as <http://funzine.hu/> and have proved to be very helpful to students.

BSCS staff is also happy to give advice in terms of do's and don'ts. Student dormitories usually close at 10 p.m. (curfew), which puts a natural limit to independent student activities. Students

who need personalized guidance to cultural programs or wish to be accompanied by locals should inquire at the Resident Secretary. Local Eötvös students who volunteer to assist foreign students can be easily found on prior notice.

DECENCY

BSCS students belong to the student community of Eötvös University and the University's rules apply to them. Students are expected to conduct a decent student lifestyle. Resident BSCS staff monitors and helps extracurricular student activities to strictly keep this goal.

The University Campus is located in the downtown area of Budapest, a city of over 2 million inhabitants (2,5 million in the Metropolitan Area). It is important for students to be aware of their share of responsibility with regard to their behavior on Campus and in the country in general. Improper lifestyle, in particular with respect to the use of alcohol, drugs and delinquency of any kind cannot and shall not be tolerated. Every disciplinary offense will be reported to the student's home institution.

LEGAL MATTERS

In the course of the BSCS Programme, students are exposed to the usual risk of property damage and bodily or personal injury, including injury that may prove fatal. There are dangers, hazards, and risks inherent in any international travel. The activities included in the Academic Program and BSCS do not assume responsibility for any such personal injuries or property damage. Students must know the dangers, hazards, and risks of such activities beforehand. Being permitted to participate in the academic Program, they agree to assume any and all risks and responsibilities of the above kind.

Specifically, BSC is not liable for accidents, illnesses and medical conditions that are inflicted or come about during the duration of the program but stand in no causal relation to it, such as medical conditions arising outside the classroom. Please consult your health insurance for coverage. In case of any incident, Hungarian law and Hungarian jurisdiction apply.

EMERGENCY

The most important emergency phone numbers within Hungary are the following (no prefix for them in Hungary):

General Emergency number: 112
Domestic directory assistance: 198
International directory assistance: 199
Posting a telegraph over telephone: 192
Automobile club emergency service: 188
Drug Stop Telephone Hotline: (+36 80) 505 678

Appendix: a sample transcript detail (after switching to an all-electronic system in 2014)

EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY

THE INSTITUTIONAL GRADING SYSTEM

Grading in a given subject is done on a five point scale:

An **excellent (5)** grade is assigned to the student who thoroughly knows the entire subject matter in all of its inherent relationships and is able to independently apply his/her knowledge with absolute certainty;

A **good (4)** grade is assigned to the student who thoroughly knows the entire subject matter of the course and can safely apply its content;

A **satisfactory (3)** grade is assigned to the student who knows significant portions of the subject matter of the course and is able to apply them with suitable safety;

A **pass (2)** grade is assigned to the student who knows the significant parts of the course on a satisfactory level and is able to demonstrate an acceptable level of familiarity in the application of the content of the course;

A **fail (1)** grade is assigned to the student who does not command sufficient knowledge and demonstrate skill in applying the practices of his/her chosen field;

LIST OF SUBJECTS

2018/19/1

Course name, code	Hour	Type	Language	Requirement	Grade	Credit
Brain imaging and cognition xxn9119	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		
Cognitive Developments xxn9121	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		
Cognitive Ethology xxn9120	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		
Cognitive Informatics xxn9117	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		
Cognitive informatics II. xcogn2b18ea	2 / w	Lecture	Hungarian	exam		
Cognitive neuroscience xxn9114	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		
Cognitive Psychology xxn9109	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		
Consciousness xxn9112	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		
History of philosophy XXN9323	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		
Hungarian Culture xxn9123	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		
Hungarian Language xxn9122	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		
Introduction to Cognitive Science xxn9127	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		
Neural computation xxn9128	2 / w	Lecture	English	exam		