

March 2, 2007

TO: Students in the 2007 St. Mary's University  
Institute on World Legal Problems at Innsbruck, Austria

FROM: Professor Michael S. Ariens, Co-Director

RE: Flying to Europe This Summer

The following are some thoughts about flying to Europe. My advice is premised on the assumptions that you want a low fare and reasonably convenient arrangements.

**Persistence.** It often takes a good deal of work and time to come up with a low fare. If you regularly check the Internet, or make several calls to airlines and travel agents, you will probably succeed in finding an acceptable fare.

**Where to Fly to.** Innsbruck has a small airport, served mainly by Swiss Air, Tyrolean Airways, and Austrian Air. Relatively few participants fly into Innsbruck. However, British Airways began operating a flight directly from Gatwick Airport in London to Innsbruck last summer. If you fly in and out of England, however, be aware that Great Britain recently adopted a tax on air passengers, and it is substantial. Thus, it still is probably the case that it will be cheaper to fly to a city near Innsbruck with a major international airport, and then take ground transportation. By ground, Munich is about two hours away, Zurich and Milan about four hours, and Frankfurt and Vienna five hours. Most participants fly into Munich. You can then take either a van or the train from Munich to Innsbruck. You probably should count on about four hours for ground transportation. This includes about an hour to travel from the Munich airport to the Munich train station; time at the train station to find the right platform and wait for the next train; and two hours on the train to Innsbruck. Make similar allowances for traveling by train from other cities.

London is often the cheapest destination in Europe. It is now also served by two discount airlines, Easyjet ([www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)) and Ryan Air ([www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)), which fly to Munich and Salzburg, respectively, both of which are two hours ground travel from Innsbruck. Both discount airlines charge for anything more than minimal baggage. You may also fly into London and travel by rail to Innsbruck, stopping over, perhaps, for a day or two in Paris. A Eurail pass does not cover train transportation in England, but will cover your rail travel once you cross the Channel.

**What Did It Cost Last Year?** History is something of a guide to what you might expect to pay this year. Please make allowances for inflation and exchange rate fluctuations. Last summer, the going rate for economy airfares was in the neighborhood of \$1200. However, many students found student tickets through discounters for about \$900, and a few for even less money. At the other extreme, some persons paid over \$1600 for their "economy class" tickets. Obviously, you need to shop around.

**When to Fly.** July and August are the "high season" for flights between Europe and the United States. This year's program begins on Monday, July 2, and I recommend that you leave no later than Friday, June 29, so that you can overcome jet lag before classes begin. As you search for airfares, you may find that there is a difference in prices if you fly in June rather than in July.

**What Will It Cost This Year?** Airlines typically charge more for round-trip tickets in excess of thirty days. Because the St. Mary's program lasts five weeks, you will face this obstacle. Consequently, some of the fares that you see advertised will not be available to you since they will be restricted to travel lasting less than 30 days. Two good places to check for flights are Student Travel (1-800-781-4040; <http://www.statravel.com>) and Heather Noonan at Peter McLean, Ltd. (1-504-821-7578) (e-mail [Heather\\_noonan@yahoo.com](mailto:Heather_noonan@yahoo.com)). Other useful websites that you may want to check include: <http://www.studentuniverse.com>, <http://www.orbitz.com> and <http://www.travelocity.com>.

**Connection Time.** A transatlantic flight often involves three flights and two connections. If you miss your connection, the itinerary falls apart and you have to be re-routed on different flights, perhaps the next day. Or, you may make the connection, but your luggage may be delayed. Our advice is for you to schedule flights that have sufficient connection time. Connection time of less than an hour is chancy. An hour and a half or two hours decreases greatly the chances of missing your connection. If it's important to you to make fewer connections, which will reduce your total travel time and the chance that your luggage will be misrouted, pay attention to the number of "legs" you will be flying.

**When to Book.** You should book your flight as soon as you find an airfare that you can live with. Indeed, if you find a good airfare, act fast; it will disappear before you know it. The longer you wait, the harder it may be to fly on the days that you want to travel on. Plan on arriving in Innsbruck on Sunday, July 12, when Haus Karwendel is open to you. It is often particularly difficult to schedule flights returning from Europe to the U.S. in August, so act early. In scheduling your return flight you need to keep the exam schedule in mind. The earliest you should schedule a return flight is the day *after* your last final exam.

**Rail Travel.** Student Travel and the McLean agency (see above) also can provide information on Eurail passes for train travel, or you can check with Rail Europe at <http://www.raileurope.com>. There are many different kinds of passes available. Many students under 26 years of age buy a two-month unlimited-travel Eurail Pass Youth, but there are many other passes which cost less. Some passes permit you to travel for a limited number of days within a longer period (say, 7 days out of a 21-day period). Other passes may offer a fixed number of kilometers of travel at a discounted price, or some other arrangement. A careful comparison may convince you that it's cheaper just to buy point-to-point tickets, especially if you don't intend to spend all your free time riding the train to some distant location. You can also look at the German Rail passes available at <http://reiseauskunft.bahn.de/bin/query.exe/en>, or the Austrian Rail passes at <http://www.oebb.at/vip8/oebb/en/index.jsp>. Plan ahead, and then shop.

**Questions and Tips.** If you have any questions or would like to share with other students information about a bargain that you found, send me an e-mail at [mariens@stmarytx.edu](mailto:mariens@stmarytx.edu), or write to the co-director, Professor Mark Cochran, at [mcochran@stmarytx.edu](mailto:mcochran@stmarytx.edu). You can call 1-800-INTL-LAW or (210) 436-3544 to speak with Ms. Caroline Buckley (Innsbruck Coordinator). My direct line is 210-431-2009. Good luck on finding a low fare!