Report on Spring Term 2016 at the Uni of Southampton (UK)

Choosing your modules
If you search for suitable courses it is useful to know following equivalents regarding terminology:
Masters Student = Postgraduate Taught
You are a postgraduate taught student and you will be part of the faculty of 'Humanity’ which includes 7 departments and one of them is ‘Modern Languages’.
Link for the courses list and for choosing your modules:
http://www.southampton.ac.uk/humanities/postgraduate/taught_courses/modern_languages.page

Once you have all the confirmation letters from Southampton, you can login on Sussed:
http://sussed.soton.ac.uk. In the different rubrics e.g. ‘students’ you will have access to e.g. blackboard and your new email account. One icon gives you access, so that you can enrol for your courses. Check how long your courses actually take place, so that you know for how long you need accommodation. This is important in order not to enter a contract (with a hall or a landlord) on false assumptions (because your courses might end 3 weeks earlier than the official term) and to avoid wasting money.

Personal experience for spring term (some info also useful for autumn term though)
If you are an experienced teacher, meaning you have some experience in teaching, then in my experience the following courses are really good (listed according to preference and quality):
1. LING6010 Language Teacher Education (very good, you need teaching experience)
2. LING6040 E-learning (very interesting)
Additionally, I highly recommend:
3. LING 6017 Research Skills
   Especially, if you are in Southampton (Soton) for the spring term, the term before starting your Master Thesis (in UK: MA Dissertation), it is of help for you to prepare your dissertation! It is of high quality and will give you a very good start for your search of topic and your literature review. The course is also available during the autumn term. Take it in any way.

Don’t take LING6013 Current Issues in Language Teaching Methodology. Even if they recommend it to you. If you are experienced this will be of no use to you whatsoever and even if you have no experience... I would not recommend it due to its low quality. Email Alasdair Archibald (aa3@soton.ac.uk) in case you want to discuss it directly with the person being responsible for you over there at Uni Soton. Take LING6040 E-learning instead.

Marking scale guidance
You will get graded regarding the Modern Languages department’s policy. This means that no one gets 100% ever – so, I was told. If you do decent, then you will get a MERIT (60-69) and you can be happy. If you are really really good, then you will get a DISTINCTION (70-79). Be happy with anything above 60 😊.
Getting ready for your departure

VISA
If you are Swiss you do not need a VISA. If you are not citizen of an EU country (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden) you need a VISA for the UK. Exceptions are nationals from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, since they belong to the The European Economic Area (EEA). It allows them to be part of the EU’s single market. Switzerland is neither an EU nor EEA member but is part of the single market - this means Swiss nationals have the same rights to live and work in the UK as other EEA nationals.

Flights
A) Zurich - Gatwick
The cheapest and most convenient flights from Zurich are easyJet to Gatwick Airport. The train fare to Southampton Airport Parkway Trainstation only costs 5 pounds! It takes approximately 1.5 hours. APTrainstation is only a 5 minutes ride from Wessex Lane Student Hall Complex, for example. Get on the UniLink-Bus right outside of the station (U1C or E1C). You can also continue with the train down to the City Center and get out at Central Station, where you can take a UniLink-Bus for any other destination.

B) Zurich - Heathrow
If you booked a room with one of the Halls of Residences (Studentenwohnheime), they will collect you for free at Heathrow and bring you for free to your chosen hall. You’ll automatically get the information of how to apply for that service in one of the millions mails they will send you. $\textcircled{2}$ But! They only leave 3 times from Heathrow. If you miss one of the departure times, you might ending up waiting at the airport for 4 hours!

That’s why, I suggest you to fly with easyjet to Gatwick, because the train journey with nationalrailway.com is the quickest and cheapest from Gatwick! You would arrive in Southampton Central station and there are many buses available to anywhere you’d like to go. Don’t worry about public transport in (Southampton) Soton – it’s quite good.

UniLink-Bus tickets cost 2 pounds per ride and 3.50 for a day ticket. Your UniLink-Bus pass for the whole term is included if you are staying in a hall. If not, you can check fares here: http://www.unilinkbus.co.uk/page.shtml?pageid=1046

Accommodation
A) For private Housing/Lettings
Here are some good links to find yourself a nice shared flat/house:

1. Get yourself private housing at https://www.spareroom.co.uk for nice and affordable rooms in Southampton in shared flats. There is also other sites for lettings, e.g. on the Southampton facebook group. Be careful with “fake advertisements”. Check very carefully before paying fees in advanced. Try to get in touch with people already living in that flat, e.g. via skype.
2. Controlled through the University: http://www.susu.org > enter the 'help and support' register > SUSU lettings

Private housing areas close to the Uni: Basset, Portswood, Swaythling etc.
B) For Halls of Residence (Studentenwohnheime)
Check online for halls of residence:
http://www.southampton.ac.uk/uni-life/accommodation/halls.page
Make sure to take an en-suite version where you have your own bathroom (unless you want to share the bathroom with 6 other people!).

There are advantages to each choice...
+ Pros for Halls
  • If you are not really the type of person to share a flat with people in general I would rather recommend you a room in a hall. You would still live with people in sort of a flat, but you don’t have to socialise if you don’t want to.
  • You have your own bathroom (make sure to book en-suite)
  • A cleaning lady cleans shared kitchen 4 times a week
  • UniLink Bus card is included in price
  • They pick you up at heathrow (if you want that)

+ Pros Private Housing
  • It’s cheaper (in most cases even allot)
  • You will be in a house rather than on a floor like you do in halls
  • You might be living with locals (not necessarily though)

- Cons in general
You can be unlucky with flatmates in any case. It could be louder in a hall, but not necessarily. When you apply for halls, make sure to do it early (even before you get the final offer letter) and then add on the comment space below that you would like to be allocated with PhD and Masters students (it’ll be quiet – I had lovely flatmates in my Hall in Wessex Lane). If you live in a private accommodation and next to a busy street it’ll be inconvenient as well… Make sure to get enough infos about your private accommodation in any case: ask about the age of the flatmates, where it actually is (so it’s not too far from Uni), and so on.

Conclusion
Studying in Soton was fantastic. Also make sure to make most of all the social opportunities the University offers. For example, become a member of the esn group during the induction week and you can be part of many trips for almost no money to different places in the UK. Over all, it’ll be a fantastic experience. Enjoy! 😊