In order to participate in a semester abroad at Ajou University as a student at University of Würzburg someone has to apply at the International Office of Würzburg which keeps the partnerships with a lot of different foreign universities. After you are nominated by your home coordinator you have to submit an online application at Ajou University by giving some documents like grades and also a short essay about yourself. If you get accepted by Ajou University you will receive the necessary documents within some time. These documents are also needed for the visa application. Besides the visa you need a valid passport and furthermore Ajou University wants a health checkup for tuberculosis which can also be done in Ajou hospital itself (I recommend that because it's free and easy). The dormitory on Ajou campus consists of 4-bed and 2-bed rooms and the floors are separated by gender (rules are really strict so if you get caught on wrong floor you will be expelled). If you are nominated by the home coordinator in Würzburg you don’t have to pay the dormitory fee (should usually be around 500 USD for one semester).

The weather in Korea can be compared with German weather, anyway Spring and Summer are little warmer and much more wet than in Germany.

Korea is a very modern country so you are able to pay nearly everywhere by credit card or micropayment systems so
it is really recommended to get one. Public transportation is very good and cheap and usually you pay by using the T-money system (micropayment). You can charge your student ID card with Korean WON in order to use this. If you want to get from Ajou University (Suwon) to Seoul center (~40 km) you have to pay around 2000-3000 WON (2 Euros).

A few days before the semester starts you will receive some Emails about the classes taught in English and how you can apply for them (online application through the Ajou webpage). The application for a lot of undergraduate courses works first come first served, so it’s good to be fast. Anyway, there is a second possibility to get your desired course in the “course change period” which takes place a week after semester has started. You can drop and change courses in this time. In order to participate in graduate courses you have to talk to the professors in person and get his permission to participate.

Ajou University offers a lot of Korean language classes. Korean 1 is very easy and if you want to learn the Hangeul (alphabet) and a few basic sentences you can go there. Anyway I think if you really want to learn Korean fast and efficient it is much better to buy a good book and study yourself. There are a lot of Koreans that are interested in German people and they will be glad to help you with your Korean language.

Besides the classes Ajou and the AGA “Ajou Global Ambassadors” offer a lot of events and trips. The trip to Gyeongju in the south-east is very famous. You will visit ancient Korean temples and stay one night in a hotel there. The party and “talent” show in the hotel are seen as a highlight for a lot of exchange students and it’s really good. Besides Gyeongju, trips to Everland (amusement park),
temple stay, bungee jumping, field trips and much more are offered. Furthermore you can join a lot of different clubs, for example the “friends club” which also goes for a lot of different trips and activities so you should never get bored. In the mid of May there also was a really big festival at Ajou University campus which was by far the best event in my opinion. There were a lot of booths, tents for food and drinking and a stage with different groups and singers (really famous ones: 2012 PSY had a performance and 2013 the group 2NE1 performed).

Another important point to mention is Korean food. If you are not really able to adjust to new stuff, Korea is probably not the best country to go to. If you can adjust fast and want to try a lot of new stuff, Korea is perfect. The food is a 180 degree turn compared to German food: It’s spicy and has not many carbohydrates but a lot of vegetables and fatty meat (I lost 10 kilograms in this semester and I ate a lot). Anyway, you are able to get usual western fast food like Burger King, MC Donald’s, KFC and Subway, but the real Korean food is completely different. The food in the cafeterias of Ajou University is good but gets boring very fast because the menus are not changing a lot. Anyway, food outside of Ajou University is really cheap compared to German food (starting at 4 Euros for a big meal) and very delicious!!!

In conclusion I have to say that going to Korea was one of the best decisions in my life. If you want to see a lot of new things it’s the place to go because really everything is different. I think it would not have been better somewhere else!!!