An Ohio University student was left to find her own way home from Greece after being found guilty of plagiarism on a study abroad program at sea.

Allison Routman, an Ohio University senior from Minnesota, along with a student from California Baptist University, were expelled from Semester at Sea, a program sponsored by the University of Virginia, for plagiarizing from Wikipedia.

"When we first arrived at the ship, they explained the honor code to everyone," Routman said. "But it is a very complex system, especially for those who don't go to U. Va. and are unfamiliar with how it works."

In Routman's Global Studies class, the first essay asked students to compare a film to lectures in class and port experiences. Routman wrote about the film Europa Europa. After watching the film, she used the Web site Wikipedia to verify historical terminology and an overview of the plot.

Routman's professor suspected widespread plagiarism in the class and offered the entire class the opportunity to make a "conscientious retraction," an admission of plagiarism that results in a zero on the assignment.

"Having not thought that I had done anything wrong, it naturally did not occur to me to make a statement admitting to something I didn't believe I had done," Routman said.

Routman was notified shortly afterward that she was suspected of violating the honor code. According to Routman, the three phrases she had taken verbatim were "when the Germans attacked the Soviet Union during Operation Barbarossa"; "German speaking minority outside of Germany"; and "who had just been released from a concentration camp."

Virginia's student-run honor code has been in effect for over 200 years. The honor code requires that students pledge not to lie, cheat or steal, knowing that being found guilty once will lead to expulsion.

At Virginia, the process is administered entirely by students, but a panel of professors gave Routman her guilty verdict."I did not have a jury of my peers," Routman said. "I did not have
an adviser or lawyer to help me through this process."

A student member of the honor committee who was participating in the program helped Routman put together an appeal that "precisely addressed the issue of an unfair trial because due process was not followed properly," Routman said.

Routman's appeal was denied, and she was dismissed.