

# Study Abroad for Latin American and Iberian Studies Majors

The Department of Latin American and Iberian Studies (LAIS) encourages its students to complete a portion of their undergraduate study through the [UC Education Abroad Program](#). By studying in countries like [Argentina](#), [Brazil](#), [Chile](#), [Mexico](#), and [Spain](#), students can deepen their understanding of this important world region and add an international dimension to their undergraduate education.

## **Why study abroad?**

For students in the Latin American and Iberian Studies Program, the benefits of study abroad are immense. No amount of classroom work can replace living for an extended period of time immersed in the culture of the countries you study. Some students go in order to improve language skills. Others go to gain access to the best libraries, museums, art galleries, and universities of Spain and the Americas. Most find that they have a wider choice of course offerings on Latin America and Spain than at UCSB. Some use the experience to build their résumés in preparation for government service, graduate school applications, or international business. And some go just for the adventures: watching flamenco in a smoky Madrid bar, taking a local bus along hair-raising mountain roads, seeing a Mayan pyramid take shape through a jungle mist, hearing the slang of a group of teenagers in the subway, dancing the samba during Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, sampling roast guinea pig, or shopping for textiles in an open-air market.

Regardless of the reasons for going, nearly all students return with a new perspective not only on the social, cultural, and political context of a foreign country, but a new appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of their own country as well. Many find that the experience of adjusting to a foreign way of living and studying is a time of great personal growth that enhances their confidence and sense of self in ways that translate to many other pursuits. LAIS students already find the world interesting to read about and often have personal or family connections to the region where they study. College is the time to explore it for yourself for about the same cost as staying in Santa Barbara. Don't cheat yourself out of a UCEAP experience!

## **When should I study abroad?**

There are a variety of ways in which LAIS majors can incorporate study abroad into their studies. Most students go abroad their junior or senior year. It's best to begin planning as early as your freshman year. If you want to go abroad during your senior year or even as a 5th year, you should complete all of your major requirements or plan to take courses meeting your remaining requirements while abroad. It is possible to graduate while abroad, but close consultation with your department and college advisors is essential.

## **Where should I study abroad?**

UCEAP offers a variety of short-term and long-term study abroad experiences in multiple locations across Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Spain. There are programs for every level of Spanish, from programs for those who wish to begin study of the language to programs for fluent Spanish speakers. In addition, students interested in Portuguese can study in Brazil. Each location offers particular advantages depending on the student's additional interests. Those interested in ecology or environmental studies, for example, might choose to study in [Costa Rica](#). The rich literary production of Spain makes it an excellent location for language and culture students. Those interested in colonial history might find Mexico or Spain particularly attractive. Students studying the politics or sociology of race and ethnic identity might prefer Argentina, Brazil, or Mexico.

## **What classes should I take?**

All UCEAP students automatically earn UC credit for the work they complete abroad. However, the application of credit to major or minor requirements is subject to the discretion of the department. Plan ahead and consult with your advisors before leaving and while abroad.

The easiest way to figure out if a course is going to count for a particular area requirement is to compare a course description from your host university to that of the general catalog course description of an approved LAIS course at UCSB. If it sounds similar, then it will might count. Art history, music, film, drama, history, literature, linguistics, anthropology, religious studies, and sociology courses focusing on Latin America or Iberia might also count as well. If you are unsure if a course will count while signing up for courses abroad, feel free to email the department advisor.

Use [Gaucho Credit Abroad](#) to search for the types of credit (i.e. major, minor, GE areas, or electives towards graduation) that UCSB students received for courses taken on UCEAP. You can find more UCEAP courses in the [UCEAP Course Catalog](#) and additional course listings on UCEAP partner university/program websites.

## **How do I get started?**

Explore [program options](#)

Attend [info meetings](#)

Contact the [UCSB EAP Office](#)

Contact the [Department of Latin American and Iberian Studies](#)