Country: Argentina  Program: Intensive Spanish  Term & Year Abroad: Winter/Spring 2011  Gender: Female  Major/Minor: Global Studies/ Spanish Minor

Instructors
- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?
  Much more laid back.

- Could you call them by their first names?
  Yes!

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
  The relationship was a lot less formal than UCSB. They felt comfortable trying to really get to know you and were okay talking to you about anything.

- Were they available for help during office hours?
  Yes, during breaks they were thrilled to have you join them for coffee and discuss class or whatever else.

Courses
- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
  The classes were easier than UCSB and there was a much smaller work load.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
  Not really, they graded on a scale from 1-10, but they showed us how it compared to the scale we used, so that helped a lot.

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
  During my classes I always had one midterm, one group project, and one final. We were assigned homework but not anything that the professor would take a grade for.

- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
  Both, the final was both oral and written.

- Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?
  Everything is flexible in Argentina.

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
  The professor was always available to answer questions. Also, the host program there in Buenos Aires had study sessions all the time where you could get help from an Argentinean tutor.

- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
  I definitely had the option to be completely independent, but my host parents and teachers were a great resource when I needed help along the way.

- Was classroom participation expected?
  Yes, much more than at UCSB. The professors always expect you to pay attention and give your input or answer questions. They will always call on you if they see you are not paying attention.

- How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?
  The courses at the host university were much more laid back and the classes were much smaller.
- Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?
  My classes usually started around 10AM, giving you enough time to take transportation to the school. I don’t think 8AMs exist in Buenos Aires. They don’t get up that early.

- What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?
  Being tardy wasn’t okay all the time, but you never lose points in the class for being late. Eating in class is fine, but expect to share with the professor because they will always ask you for some.

Language
- In which languages were the courses offered?
  I was in the Intensive Spanish program so all of my classes were in Spanish.

- What language did you take your courses in?
  Spanish.

- If you took your courses in a foreign language, please provide info about your overall experience, difficulty of courses, language acquisition, placement exams, etc.
  Before I started classes I took a placement exam. The professor understood the level my class was at and completely catered to our Spanish abilities.

Host University
- How large is the university? Student enrollment and approx campus size (smaller than UCSB)? Is it an urban campus with many tall buildings or just a few building?
  University of Belgrano is a large school but the campus consists of one huge high-rise building in the middle of the city. There were floors designated to studying and cafes and everything.

- Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?
  Most everyone lives at home with their parents. There is no campus housing.

- If not located in the city center,
  o How far or close is it to the city?
    The university is in the middle of the city.
  o What type of public transportation could you take – cost?
    I took the bus that costs about 10 cents. The subway is also available and just a little more expensive.
  o Could students take cabs -cost?
    Cabs are always available but more costly and less of an adventure than the bus or subway.
  o How long would it take to get to the city center?
    The downtown area was about 15 minutes away from my home if I took the bus.

- Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?
Yes! Lots of my friends ended up on sports teams with other students.

- **Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**
  There is a small book store on campus. I only needed a reader type thing for each of my classes and I bought them at the bookstore for about 10 dollars.

- **Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**
  There is a computer lab on campus available to students. It’s a popular pastime to study in cafes so if you plan on doing that you might want to bring your laptop. You could definitely get by without one though.

- **What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)**
  There are cafes on every corner. The actual university was in sort of a residential neighborhood but there was a huge shopping center close by.

**Housing**

- **What types of accommodations are available to UC students?**
  The housing options are home stay with a host family or the apartment option with other study abroad students.

- **How close are they to campus?**
  My home was just a bus ride away. Some of my friends were able to walk to the university from their housing.

- **How did you find your housing?**
  EAP set it all up for me; the host program dropped me off at my house and had already arranged everything.

- **Where did you live and with whom?**
  I chose to live in a home with an Argentinean family. I lived with an older couple in an apartment. They were hosting another abroad student at the same time which made it a lot of fun.

- **If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**
  EAP set it all up for me!

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
  Homes in general there are much smaller. Almost everyone in the city lives in an apartment so my home and room were pretty small. I had my own room though, which was a nice change from living with roommates in I.V.

- **Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**

- **How/who did you pay for housing?**
  All of my housing was set up by EAP so I paid them as a part of my fees.

**Food**
What was the food like?
The pasta and pizza there were incredible. It’s hard to imagine but most of the food there is Italian and there is absolutely nothing spicy. Dessert is a big deal there; expect to have a cake of some sort at least twice a day. I’m a vegetarian but supposedly their beef is amazing.

Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?
The housing program arranged for my host parents to serve me breakfast and dinner. I ate lunch from vendors or at small cafes.

How much was an average meal?
I’d say food cost usually two thirds or half of what it costs in the U.S.

What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?
My 60-year-old host parents served dinner at 10! The other meals are usually served at the same time as the US and most of the time there is a meal (cake and coffee) in between lunch and dinner at around 5PM.

Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?
I was a vegetarian and it wasn’t so hard. You just have to be very clear about what sort of meat you do or do not eat. Most Argentinians do not understand the concept of being vegetarian and think that excludes pork and fish. Just be clear and you’ll end up with good vegetarian meals.

Travel/Safety
- If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?
  Taxis are easy and all over the city. The subway system is fast but usually requires walking a bit to your exact destination because it only stops at certain locations. The bus routes can be a little tricky at first but stick with it because they are very efficient once you get the hang of it and much cheaper than a taxi.

- Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?
The city is very safe but petty theft is a problem there. The most important thing is to just be aware of your belongings at all times.

Describe the public transportation in your host country?
Traveling within Argentina is extremely easy. You can get almost anywhere by bus for very cheap.

Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?
I went to Chile, Uruguay, Peru, and Bolivia and never had any problems. The places I went did not require you to fill out a visa form early, so I just brought my money and got them at the airport.

Host City/Country
- What was the weather like?
The summer season in Buenos Aires is very, very humid. The winter gets really cold but not usually cold enough for snow.

- Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?
I’d say that Buenos Aires is pretty similar to New York city in that it definitely has a big city feel, but its also easy to get anywhere within it. Like in New York there are huge parks everywhere throughout the city, which was one of my favorite parts.

**- What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?**

The art and music scene is very big there. I went to art shows and small concerts all the time. It was a great way to meet new people.

**- How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**

The city was not over run by tourists, which was great. There was a little bit of cultural diversity that was easy to spot as you moved through different areas of the city.

**Culture**

**- Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**

  - **Time & punctuality**
    Meals are always later and everyone is always late.

  - **Eye contact & staring**
    Staring at someone as they walk down the street is completely normal and acceptable; don’t be surprised when people look you up and down.

  - **Relationships**
    Relationships there are definitely a lot less formal. Expect for a person you just met to ask you questions or talk to you like the two of you have been friends for years.

  - **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
    Women are very into fashion there. Shorts are uncommon there and usually mark you as a tourist. It is not expected that you dress up for class, but wearing t-shirts and sweats isn’t normal like it is here. People will think you are in your pajamas.

  - **Alcohol consumption**
    Drinking is a popular pastime but not to the the extent that it is here. When you go out you are expected to have just a couple of drinks. Getting extremely intoxicated is considered rude.

  - **What culture shock did you go through?**
    For me the language was the hardest part. Also, the people are very relaxed there and it was hard for me to get used to the fact that everyone is always late and there is nothing you can do about it.

  - **Other?**

**Banking**

**- Were credit cards widely accepted?**

  No, it was rare to find a restaurant or store that would accept a credit card. There are ATM’s all over the city so cash is a must.

**- Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**

  I kept my bank, Wells Fargo, and took cash out from the local ATM. It was easy but I tried to do it as little as possible to avoid the charges.

**- If you did not open a local bank account, was it easy to withdraw money from the ATM? Which banks were popular & had low ATM fees?**
All the banks had about a two dollar ATM fee. I would always try to take out the maximum amount I could each time and just keep the extra at my house in a safe place.

- **Were there ATMs on campus?**
  There was an ATM less than a block away from the university.