Instructors
- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?
The instructors in Australia were a lot more laid back and seemed closer to my age. Since the instructors were on the younger side, they seemed a lot more approachable and accessible.

- Could you call them by their first names?
Yes, the instructors preferred to be called by their first names instead of having formal titles such as “professor.”

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
No, the relationship was relatively informal and laid back.

- Were they available for help during office hours?
I never made use of my professor’s office hours but I did use my teaching assistant’s office hours. The teaching assistants were really approachable and were willing to make appointments.

Courses
- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
I took 3 communication courses abroad in addition to 1 fun class that discussed Australian culture. I would say that the courses I took while abroad where pretty comparable to UCSB courses. However, I feel that UCSB has a lot more busy work and reading assignments while Melbourne Uni focused mainly on a few large assignments.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
The grading system in Australia was a bit different than UCSB. Instead of using letter grades, Australian Universities base their grades on percentages with 50% being the average. While abroad, you will receive grades based on your host universities grading scale yet the EAP program will translate your grades back into letter grades.

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
We had very few assignments, our entire grade was based on 2 papers and a final. Additionally, some of my courses had a required tutorial (section) in which we received class participation points.

- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
I didn’t have any written/oral exams while abroad.

- Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?
I didn’t have any final exams while abroad, I only had final papers. I ended up having 3 papers due on the same exact day but the due date for them was inflexible. In Australia you have a week called SWATVAC week which is basically a week of no classes where you’re able to study for finals. Unlike America, finals last for an entire month in Australia. Fortunately/unfortunately my papers were all due in the first week of finals month so I was able to travel for the remaining 3 weeks.

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
I only made use of my teaching assistant’s office hours which were extremely helpful but I never contacted any professors.
- **Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?**
I did find that I needed to be more independent while abroad. Unlike the US, there were a lot less little assignments and not many people showed up to actual lecture. Therefore, much of our grade was based on 2 papers.

- **Was classroom participation expected?**
Classroom participation was expected in section as part of our grade was based on it. Usually the professors just read off their notes and incorporated a lot of media clips into their PowerPoint presentation.

- **How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?**
Unlike UCSB, Melbourne Uni courses required a lot less assignments and our grade was mostly just based on a midterm and a final paper. It was kind of nice having a change of pace from constant multiple choice tests and getting the opportunity to write papers. The classes had a lot less structure and the professor kind of just taught about whatever they were interested in rather than strictly abiding by the syllabus.

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**
The classes were mostly 2 times a week for about an hour and 15 minutes each. However, each class was on “Aussie time” so often times, they started about 15 minutes late and the professor often let us out early. Let’s just say it was quite an adjustment coming back to UCSB!

- **What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?**
I was surprised by the amount of people that dressed up for class, there were almost no students in sweatpants or pj’s (unless they were Americans). Also, the majority of the class was filled up and no one slept or talked in class. Like I said before, everything operated on “Aussie time” so the classes never started on time. People did tend to drink water/coffee in class and eat small snacks but no one ever ate large smelly meals such as sandwiches or pasta.

**Language**

- **In which languages were the courses offered?**
Since Australia is a pretty eclectic country, there may be other languages that courses were offered in but the main language in Australia is English.

- **What language did you take your courses in?**
I only took courses in English.

- **If you took your courses in a foreign language, please provide info about your overall experience, difficulty of courses, language acquisition, placement exams, etc.**

**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?**
Melbourne University was much larger than UCSB as it had a total of 35,000 students. It was really fun to get a different campus feel and attend a University that was older and had larger buildings than UCSB. The average lecture size was about the same as UCSB but the sections were much smaller and more personable which was really nice.
- **Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**
  In Australia most students choose to live at home. However, a lot of out of state Australians often live in the residential colleges (dorms) and apartments so you are still able to meet a lot of locals.

- **If not located in the city center,**
  - **How far or close is it to the city?**
    Melbourne University is about 15 min. from downtown (CBD-central business district). It is relatively easy to get downtown because there are many tram stops near Melbourne Uni that come about every 15 min. or so.
  - **What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**
    Most students choose to use the trams to get around. Since UC students are exchange students and essentially taking the place of Melbourne Uni students, we were able to get good discounts on tram passes. Most of the passes were half priced and extremely affordable.
  - **Could students take cabs - cost?**
    Students could take cabs, the main time students chose to take a cab was on the way back from downtown at night since the trams shut down around 2am. Cabs were pretty affordable if you fill the taxi or take a Maxi Taxi (which fits about 10 people).
  - **How long would it take to get to the city center?**
    It takes about 15 min. to get to the city center.

- **Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?**
  Melbourne University has a lot of clubs to choose from and many international and Australian students get involved in them. The main club on campus for exchange students is Melbourne University Student Exchange program (MUSEX) which puts on a lot of events for international students such as a river cruise on the Yarra river (river that runs through downtown), pub crawls, zoo trips, etc. I’d pretty much just encourage students to join any and every club that looks and sounds interesting. Joining clubs is a great way to meet a lot of people and the clubs put on a lot of events.

- **Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**
  There is a bookstore on campus that sells books, readers, sweatshirts, etc. and it is pretty centrally located.

- **Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**
  There are many libraries scattered throughout campus and they all have computers that are available to students. In addition, most residential colleges have computer labs that students are able to use. With that being said, I would still recommend that students bring their own laptop for ease & convince purposes.

- **What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)**
  There are tons of cafes and restaurants surrounding Melbourne University. They are big on coffee & have great coffee/tea so I’d definitely recommend taking advantage of the cafes!!

**Housing**

- **What types of accommodations are available to UC students?**
  UC students could choose to live in the residential colleges, live in campus owned apartments, or find an apartment on their own.
**How close are they to campus?**
Melbourne University is located about 15 minutes from downtown. Unlike UCSB, the residential colleges are not located on campus. Instead, they are arranged in a semi-circle called the “college crescent” which range from a 5-15 minute walk to campus. The university apartments are within walking distance as well and if you choose to live a bit further away, the Melbourne tram system is readily accessible and easy to use. Also, since UC students are exchange students they get extra discounts on transportation.

**How did you find your housing?**
I found housing by looking on the housing website and talking to my friend that just returned from Australia to get added insights regarding the best place to live.

**Where did you live and with whom?**
I chose to live in one of the 10 residential colleges (dorms) and it turned out to be the best decision ever!! I met so many people from all over the world in addition to other Americans and Australians. In Australia, they don’t really believe in roommates so I got my own room. Unlike UCSB, they are not strict about separating people based on gender so I ended up on an all guys floor and shared the bathroom with all of them, it was interesting to say the least.

**If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**
N/A

**Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
The rooms were much nicer/bigger than UCSB dorms!! Even though I was hardly ever in my room, it was nice to have my own space.

**Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**
Living in the dorms was pretty comparable to living in the dorms here at UCSB.

**How/who did you pay for housing?**
I paid for my housing with a credit card and was able to pay it in segments since I didn’t want my bank at home to freak out.

**Food**

**What was the food like?**
Melbourne is a pretty eclectic place so there was tons of great food from all over the world!! The food was pretty much similar to US food but the food portions were much smaller and not as much was included. For example, if you ordered a burger, you would have to pay extra for fries or a salad.

**Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?**
Since I lived in a dorm, I ate most of my meals there. I did eat once or twice a week when I was downtown and exploring other parts of the city.

**How much was an average meal?**
The average meal was about $12, a bit pricier than the US since it didn’t include as much food.

**What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?**
People eat lunch and dinner at the same time we do here in the US.
Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?
It was definitely not difficult for vegetarians to find meals!! My dorm always had vegetarian options and when they had free barbeques on campus, they always had vegetarian patties.

Travel/Safety
- If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?
The majority of students walk to campus or take the trams to Uni. The trams are very easy to use and relatively inexpensive.

- Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?
I felt super safe in Melbourne and unlike European cities, pick pocketing is not a huge problem. With that being said it’s always important to be aware of your surroundings and travel with groups of people.

- Describe the public transportation in your host country?
Since Australia is as big as the US, airplane is probably the fastest way to get around. However, using the trains can also be extremely efficient and cut down the costs of having to find a hostel to stay in for the night. I would definitely recommend getting an ISIC (international student identity card) as it offers many great discounts and helps cut down on the costs of traveling. It may also be beneficial to invest in a hostel member card.

- Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?
The closest country to Australia is New Zealand and it is relatively easy to travel there. There are many cheap flights through New Zealand air and they offer direct service to and from many places in Australia/New Zealand. I would recommend renting a car in New Zealand because it is a bit more spread out and not as connected as Australia. Asia is also relatively close however, the flights are a bit more expensive. I would definitely recommend taking advantage of the fact that you’re studying abroad and over in that half of the world!!

Host City/Country
- What was the weather like?
The seasons are reversed in Australia yet it doesn’t get too cold over there. Melbourne is known to have 4 seasons in one day. You can literally look outside while getting dressed in the morning and it will be sunny but then you go to class for 1.5 hours and it can be pouring.

- Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?
Melbourne is most similar to San Francisco as it is a larger city and public transportation is very accessible and efficient.

- What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?
In comparison to UCSB, Melbourne is a huge city and I absolutely loved the amount of activities there were to do there. Australian footy is the main sport in Australia and it was tons fun going and watching a couple of games, the Australians really get into it. Melbourne is very close to the Great Ocean Road (which is pretty much like the Pacific Coast Highway of Australia) and it is so beautiful there!! I would also recommend going to the Melbourne Zoo where you can view a lot of native Australian animals. The Eureka sky tower is also pretty cool because it allows you to overlook the
entire city. Overall, I would say that Melbourne is an awesome city to explore and definitely take advantage of all the wonderful things it has to offer.

- How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?
I was surprised by the amount of international students there were in Melbourne. Australia is one of the most eclectic nations in the world so there were tons of people from all over the world, even from countries I had never heard of!

Culture
- Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.
  - Time & punctuality
    Everything operates on “Australian time” so everything starts about 10 to 15 minutes late.
  - Eye contact & staring
    In pretty much any culture, staring is considered rude and eye contact is encouraged.
  - Relationships
    I was surprised how similar Australia was to UCSB, not many people were in actual relationships. I would say that the people who mostly seemed to be in relationships were the exchange students who were dating Australians.
  - More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?
    Everyone dressed up so much over in Australia, no one was ever seeing in sweats or sweatshirts even when lounging around the dorms. Unlike the US, I would say that the women over there dressed a lot classier when going out.
  - Alcohol consumption
    The legal drinking age over in Australia is 18 years old but many kids start drinking around age 14. Unlike American college culture, that consumes hard alcohol, Australians are more into drinking socially. They are really into beer over there and have very high alcohol tolerances. You will become very accustomed to drinking lots of cheap boxed called “goon” as hard alcohol is very expensive.
  - What culture shock did you go through?
    I would say that I never really experienced any culture shock. Australian’s are some of the friendliest and most welcoming people in the world.
  - Other?

Banking
- Were credit cards widely accepted?
  Credit cards were pretty widely accepted but it can be extremely expensive to use American credit cards abroad. International transaction fees can be up to $2-3 per transaction which definitely adds up quickly over time.

- Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?
  I did open a local bank account through Westpac as it had an alliance with Bank of America. I kind of feel that opening a bank account was kind of bittersweet. At times, I felt it was kind of a hassle trying to keep track out my American account in addition to my Australian account but then at the same time,
it was helpful to have an Australian debit card when re-charging my phone minutes each month and paying for flights online.

- **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?**
I know a lot of my friends didn’t open an Australian bank account and survived just fine. I found it easiest to pay for things in cash so I usually withdrew a large amount of money at one time (probably not the safest decision but definitely the easiest).

- **Were there ATMs on campus?**
Yes, there were about 2-3 ATMs on campus however, Westpac, the largest bank is Australia (and the bank I used) was located about 10 minutes walk from campus.