Major/Minor: Psychology/Communication

Country: Barbados       Program: University of the West Indies   Term & Year Abroad: Fall 2009

Instructors
- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors? They were hard to get in contact with outside of class, but they were very helpful during section.

- Could you call them by their first names?
  o No, that would be considered very disrespectful.

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
  o The relationship was definitely more distant and more formal than at UCSB.

- Were they available for help during office hours?
  o There offices were not very accessible, so it was relatively hard to go to office hours.

Courses
- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
  o The courses were more writing intensive, but you are on a semester system so you have more time to complete assignments.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
  o No, it is fairly hard to receive above an 80 percent, but an A is a 70 percent and above. The standard to get a 90 or an 80 is much higher than at UCSB. A=70% B=60% C=50%

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
  o There were a couple of papers, but the finals are about 60 to 70 percent of your grade.

- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
  o Written exams

- Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?
  o The final exam schedule is very inflexible; it is set by the university, and professors are not allowed to change it.

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
  o You can always ask your professor for help, but you are generally on your own.

- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
I was definitely more independent abroad in completing assignments. If I had questions, I would have to take the initiative to talk to my professors.

- Was classroom participation expected?
  - You usually don’t participate during lecture, but participation is essential to section.

- How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?
  - Upper division courses had lectures and sections, and multiple choice examinations are rarely used.

- Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?
  - Class days and times varied; there were many conflicts in class times if you take courses outside of your major.

- What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?
  - It is a privilege to go to university, and people usually dress very nice for class. Punctuality was not very important for most classes, but some professors saw that as a sign of disrespect and would “call you out”. People ate during large lectures but not during sections.

Language
- In which languages were the courses offered?
  - English

- What language did you take your 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.
  - N/A

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?
  - The university is much smaller than UCSB. There are about 8500 students and one can walk across campus in about five to ten minutes depending on the incline. The campus has a couple of major buildings for each faculty.

- Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?
- Local Bajan students live at home. Local Caribbean students live both on campus and off campus.

- If not located in the city center,
  - How far or close is it to the city?
    - The city center is a few miles away.
  
  - What type of public transportation could you take – cost?
    - You could take a ZR(minibuses)-1.50 Bajan or the bus-1.50
  
  - Could students take cabs -cost?
    - Yes, but the cost varies usually about 10 Bajan dollars during the day, but can get expensive after the buses start running.

  - How long would it take to get to the city center?
    - About ten minutes

- Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?
  - Yes, there are a ton of student clubs for anyone to join ranging from sports, cultural, religious, community service and interest groups.

- Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?
  - Yes, there is a bookstore on campus where I bought all of my books.

- Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?
  - There is a computer lab on campus, but you should bring your laptop because of the amount of papers you will likely have to write.

- What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)
  - There are a couple of small restaurants and convience stores.

**Housing**

- What types of accommodations are available to UC students?
  - UC students can live on campus or off campus

- How close are they to campus?
  - If living on campus, you are about a minute walk to most classes.
  - If living on campus, you are about 20 minute walk to most classes for the furthest houses.
- How did you find your housing?
  o I lived on campus and applied directly through the university.

- Where did you live and with whom?
  o I lived in a single room with a communal area with a full kitchen and lounge and a bathroom to share with two other females.

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

- Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?
  o The rooms were not nicer than UCSB dorms, they were small.

- Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?
  o It was a lot less expensive to live on campus than in I.V. or at the UCSB dorms.
  o It cost about 1000 dollars U.S. for the entire semester.

- How/who did you pay for housing?
  o I paid for housing at the financial aid office at the host university.

**Food**

- What was the food like?
  o The food was very good. There is a lot of meat, fish, and rice dishes.

- Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?
  o I cooked most of my meals. I learned to cook local food from different hallmates. When I did eat out, it was usually from street vendors, small restaurants or local fast food places.

- How much was an average meal?
  o The average meal was about 5 dollars U.S.

- What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?
  o People ate lunch in the afternoon and dinner in the evenings.

- Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?
  o Yes, it would be difficult to be a vegetarian when going to certain restaurants. But, if you cook for yourself then it should be okay.
Travel/Safety
- If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?
  - Minibuses (ZR) are the most used type of public transportation around the local area; it will take you into town and to local grocery stores. The city bus will take you to other cities and main attractions.

- Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?
  - I felt safe at times in my host city but definitely be cautionary about walking around and traveling alone. It is best to travel in numbers as a security measure, especially at night and by the beaches.

- Describe the public transportation in your host country?
  - People use minibuses and city buses during the day and early evening. However, they take a taxi at night or to go to places not very accessible by minibuses and city buses.

- Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?
  - It was easy to travel to neighboring countries. The Caribbean has a lot of tourism, so the internet is very useful in finding flights, hotels, and attractions.

Host City/Country
- What was the weather like?
  - The weather is very hot and humid, 84-88 degrees. However, during the fall there it rains sporadically.

- Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?
  - It is not really similar to any US city. It is a lot smaller and not as accessible as most popular cities.

- What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?
  - Snorkeling, catamaran cruise, visited museums and churches, local attractions, beaches, and clubbing.

- How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?
  - People from Europe typically visit Barbados for tourism, but it is closer to town or by the beaches up the coast.
  - People from the African diaspora of the Caribbean are the majority; however, there is a significant group of Caucasian nationals.
Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.

- Time & punctuality
  - Everything usually runs late.

- Eye contact & staring
  - It is not polite to stare, but if you make eye-contact you should be courteous and say Hello.

- Relationships
  - Heterosexual relationships are the norm; however, homosexuality is still frowned upon.

- More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?
  - People typically wear more formal clothes to school, especially older adults. Women should not show too much skin; however, they definitely dress to impress.
  - If you are walking to the beach by school, you should still be fully covered up and not walk around in your swimsuit.

- Alcohol consumption
  - People drink beer and hard liquor; however, they are very responsible about their alcohol consumption. They typically eat while drinking or alternate drinks with water, and rarely engage in binge-drinking.

- What culture shock did you go through?
  - None really, but it was hard to get used to town closing down around sunset.

- Other?

### Banking

- Were credit cards widely accepted?
  - Yes, most credit cards were accepted.

- Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?
  - No

- 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?
    - It was easy to withdraw money from the ATM, but you need to have a four-digit pin number. However, there were high fees for not having a local bank account.

- Were there ATMs on campus?
  - Yes, there is an ATM on campus, but it was not always reliable.