Instructors
- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?
  The professors in PUC-Rio were different from UCSB instructors in that they knew their students more than UCSB instructors because of the small class sizes. Therefore, it was really common for most professors to know you by your first name or sometimes make personal appointments with them about any classroom inquiries.

- Could you call them by their first names?
  Yes you can. Actually, it is common in Brazil to address people by their first name. The rosters and attendance sheets are in order by first name.

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

- Were they available for help during office hours?
  My professors did not have office hours, but they were readily available after class and were willing to make appointments.

Courses
- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
  They were about the same difficulty level, if not less difficult. What made the courses challenging was the fact that I had to take them in Portuguese. Though it is challenging in Portuguese, it is very doable. The professors are aware that it is not your first language, and they can help you succeed in the class.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
  The grading system was different. They had a scale from 0-10, 10 being the highest grade, and 5 being the lowest score to pass a class. UCSB has a scale in which they translate the numbers to letter grades.

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
  The course structure was somewhat different, but not entirely different. My courses included a midterm, reading assignments, and a presentation. However, the final was only reserved to people below a certain grade.

- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
  I had written exams. I had presentations in two out of three of my classes.

- Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?
  Final exams are given on a set date and time. You would have to talk to a teacher for rescheduling if they allow it.

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
  The professors were nice and willing to help. Also, the advisor in the UC center of the university can help with many questions about the school and the academic structure, as she is from Brazil.
- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
  Yes definitely. Since the campus is not a residential campus, and most students live with their families, there is not as much group study. However, there are many students who study on campus and are willing to work in groups, just not as much as here at UCSB.

- Was classroom participation expected?
  It depends on the class. Professors do like you to participate, and are happy if you do. In my classes, there wasn’t really a participation grade.

- How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?
  PUC’s courses were much smaller than UCSB courses, and were normally two hours long. Other than that, they were pretty similar to smaller UCSB courses.

- Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?
  Classes are normally scheduled twice a week, and were two-hours long. Some were once a week for four hours. Some classes were late at night, sometimes ending at 11pm. Classes run from 7am-11pm.

- What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?
  The class-structure is like most small classes. The teacher lectures in class, and often engages the class in discussion, as most classes are no more than thirty students.

Language
- In which languages were the courses offered?
  They were offered in Portuguese. There were some courses in the university in English.

- What language did you take your courses in?
  I took all my classes in Portuguese.

- If you took your courses in a foreign language, please provide info about your overall experience, difficulty of courses, language acquisition, placement exams, etc.
  Taking classes in Portuguese really helped me get very good at Portuguese. Though it made classes challenging, teachers are there to help you, and the ILP program before the semester really helps you get used to taking classes in Portuguese. Also, being totally immersed in the language also helps with understanding the language in class and participating. Overall, taking classes in Portuguese was very interesting and really helpful in improving my Portuguese skills.

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 campus is significantly smaller than the UCSB campus; however the population is almost the same. It is located in an urban setting in the Gávea neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro.

- Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?
  Most students live off-campus with their families.

- If not located in the city center,
  o How far or close is it to the city?
In the city of Rio de Janeiro

- **What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**
  Buses, Metro, and Vans

- **Could students take cabs -cost?**
  Yes you can, but they are expensive

- **How long would it take to get to the city center?**
  Depending on traffic, between 20-45 minutes to Downtown Rio.

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- **Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?**
  Yes there are many, especially sports clubs.

- **Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**
  There is a bookstore where books and school supplies are sold. However, reading material for classes are rarely found in the bookstore, and are bought in a different part of campus. They are normally sold as photocopied portions of various books, sold in weekly sets. Some professors have their material online.

- **Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**
  Yes there is a computer lab with many computers. There is also wi-fi if you prefer to use your laptop.

- **What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)**
  There is a place where they sell coffee and some snacks. Also, there are eateries similar to subway and a sushi place on campus. There is also a cafeteria on campus.

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**Housing**

- **What types of accommodations are available to UC students?**
  There are homestays that are mandatory for the first month, organized by the university, which you can stay for the whole semester or year. There are apartments available through the city, and near campus, but I advise you to search thoroughly, as they are not easy to find. There are also many places where students or just residents of Rio live that are willing to share a room in their apartment or house for rent.

- **How close are they to campus?**
  The homestays are relatively close to campus. However due to traffic, some commutes might take up to an hour, even though the distance is short from campus.

- **How did you find your housing?**
  I was first in the homestay organized by PUC-Rio, but I found my second place through one of my EAP friends who was able to find an apartment available that housed 5 people. He notified me of the availability, and I moved in with them.

- **Where did you live and with whom?**
  I lived in the neighborhood of Leblon, about a 15 minute walk from campus. I lived with a UCSB EAP student, another American student, an international student, and another Brazilian student.

- **If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**
It was not too difficult for me, as my friend was able to find something quick. It does take some searching to find an apartment, but it is definitely not hard. The homestays are guaranteed housing in Rio that is prepared by the host university.

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
  They were different, as the homestays. Some are nicer than IV housing.

- **Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**
  It was cheaper living in Brazil, as the cost of the homestay was about 700 USD/month. I moved out of the homestay, and was paying about 350 USD/month for a shared room in an apartment.

- **How/who did you pay for housing?**
  I paid the homestay

**Food**

- **What was the food like?**
  There was a diverse array of foods. The typical meal consisted of rice, beans, and chicken or beef. There is a different array of juices and fruits as well.

- **Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?**
  I ate in various places. There is a cafeteria on campus, many restaurants throughout Rio, and tons of street vendors with cheaper foods.

- **How much was an average meal?**
  An average meal at a restaurant Brazil probably cost like $9-15 USD, depending on the restaurant. Some street vendors and less formal restaurants/fast food places were cheaper. The food generally costs about the same as in the United States.

- **What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?**
  Meal times are pretty standard. I would say that dinner is eaten a little later than in the USA.

- **Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?**
  It is not too difficult. There are many places that serve meals with no meat.

**Travel/Safety**

- **If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?**
  Buses are pretty efficient and tend to run 24/7, all over the city. The Metro is also good if you want to get to more remote areas.

- **Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?**
  I felt safe. Rio, like any big city, has some violence and theft. It is not as bad as people make it out to be. It is pretty safe, especially the areas around campus.

- **Describe the public transportation in your host country?**
  Buses and planes go to every single major city within Brazil. I went to São Paulo by bus and to Salvador by plane. They are really efficient and run on time, and are fairly cheap.
- **Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?**
  It is easy. I did not travel to a foreign country outside of Brazil, but others found it easy going to Uruguay, Argentina, Peru, and Chile.

**Host City/Country**

- **What was the weather like?**
  The weather was fairly hot, with quite a few rainy days. It gets humid during the summer, which is December to March.

- **Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?**
  Rio de Janeiro is unique, but it had to be compared to any California/US city, it would be a hybrid of Los Angeles and Miami.

- **What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?**
  There are many cultural areas and many music clubs where you can listen and dance to various types of Brazilian music, like samba, forró, and bossa nova.

- **How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**
  Rio de Janeiro has many tourists and many foreign residents, and is one of the largest cities in South America to do business. It is the cultural center of Brazil, and the second largest city in Brazil, as well as South America.

**Culture**

- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  - **Time & punctuality**
    Punctuality is not observed much in informal settings. With arrangements between friends and acquaintances, it is normal to show up late. However in formal business/school setting, time punctuality it usually observed.
  
  - **Eye contact & staring**
    It is common and normal for people to stare longer than usual at someone, especially someone or something he or she is not used to seeing.
  
  - **Relationships**
    Relationships between friends are more personal and close than here in the USA.
  
  - **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
    Women tend to dress more formal than many here in the USA, especially for school. Outside of school, dress is fairly informal.
  
  - **Alcohol consumption**
    Alcohol is consumed, yet binge drinking is not as common as it is here in the USA.
  
  - **What culture shock did you go through?**
    I was prepared with what to expect, but I guess I did not expect the punctuality difference.
  
  - **Other?**
    The culture is rich and exciting, so take advantage learning and experiencing it first hand!

**Banking**

- **Were credit cards widely accepted?**
  Credit cards are widely accepted.
- Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?
  I opened a Citibank account in the US, because they also have branches in Brazil.

- 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?
  N/A

- Were there ATMs on campus?
  Yes there were, but most international students cannot access them because they are specific to bank account holders in Brazilian banks. There are some ATMs really close to campus that international students can use.