Country: Chile  
Program: University of Chile  
Term & Year Abroad: Fall 2010, Spring 2011  
Gender: Female  
Major/Minor: Psychology & Spanish

Instructors
- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?
  As in all universities, every professor was different. That being said, many of the Chilean professors had a more dictating style, and although there was discussion, the professor maintained that their views were correct most of the time. They also taught the material as if it were truth, not just theory that could be debated.

- Could you call them by their first names?
  No. Always “profesor”, or sometimes “profe”.

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
  Depends on the class, but yes. Even though my classes were smaller in Chile, I still felt that the professors were more distant, less willing to have a conversation with you.

- Were they available for help during office hours?
  Yes, but it was iffy. Their schedules were chaotic and they were hard to track down.

Courses
- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
  No, the courses were structured differently, but around the same difficulty level.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
  The grades are on a scale of 1-7, 7 being the best. It was great because in most classes if you got over a 5.5 during the semester, you were excused from the final exam.

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
  There were many more group projects. In some classes there was only a midterm and a final, but the majority had similar structure to most UCSB classes (participation, smaller assignments, essays, exams, etc.)

- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
  Yes, both.

- Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?
  If you spoke with your professors early in the semester (especially if you have a flight home or something), they were usually pretty understanding about giving you the exam early. Also keep in mind that due to protests in Chile, exam dates are subject to change (you also may not know the schedule of exams until a few weeks ahead of time).

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
  The EAP office was very helpful in administrative matters with the university in Chile. I never received any type of tutoring, etc. in order to help me with my assignments; my classmates mostly helped me out with that.

- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
  Yes. The EAP program definitely sets you up with a lot of great resources at your disposal, but it is up to you to be assertive and use them. Nobody is going to coddle you while you’re abroad, and it is very
much a liberating experience knowing you have many different options to choose from in terms of how you want your study abroad experience to be.

- **Was classroom participation expected?**
  No. Sometimes we were asked to work in groups and present our findings afterward, but I very rarely spoke up in class.

- **How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?**
  Smaller classroom sizes, the major students are with one another all day everyday (everyone takes the same courses), in a major your classes will be determined for the first 2 or 3 years of university, then sometimes you get the liberty to chose electives. Also, 3rd year courses in Chile are different from 3rd year courses at UCSB—most of the time they are more advanced because they have been taking ALL their major classes since the beginning (no GE’s).

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**
  Much longer, sometimes 3 hours long but only 1 day a week. This actually came to be beneficial because (for students who live relatively far away) you don’t want to have to go all the way to campus just for one 1 1/2 hour class, and then commute back. There are also breaks every 1 1/2 hour block.

- **What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?**
  The students in the classes all know each other pretty well; they know who likes to talk a lot, who has a certain viewpoint on such and such issue, etc. They will know you are a new addition to the classroom even if you don’t ever say a word. Depending on the class (if there are daily quizzes, for example) it is usually good to be on time, however many students came in late pretty frequently, myself included, and there were no repercussions from the professors. Eating and drinking was permitted in classrooms, but covertly. You would never see someone eating a sandwich or a full meal in class. One time someone did smoke outside the window though.

**Language**
- **In which languages were the courses offered?**
  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.**
  All of my courses were taught in Spanish, which made the course material more difficult to understand than normal UCSB courses. It took me much longer to do the readings, and often had to confirm with the Chilean students in my classes that what I heard the professor say was actually correct. That being said, the course load is much less than typical Chilean students. Taking 4 classes per semester (or 3 classes and an internship) is more than doable. I took all major classes (i.e. no electives) and I was able to get grades similar or better to those at UCSB. In other words, the lighter course load compensates for the difficulties you may experience with the language barrier.

**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?
According to the UChile website, there are around 31,000 students (25,000 undergrad, 6,000 grad). However, there are 14 different campuses spread out across the city, making it feel much smaller (I would have guessed somewhere between 10-15,000 students). Each of the campuses has its own feel, as well as multiple faculties (Faculty of Art, Faculty of Social Sciences, etc.) and you may very well have courses at different campuses. The courses feel a lot smaller and more intimate than most UCSB courses. Having all psychology classes, I got to know the same students everyday, and there were only about 60 psychology students in the whole university.

- **Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**
  Almost all of them live at home.

- **If not located in the city center,**
  - **How far or close is it to the city?**
    Each campus has a different location, but they are all in Santiago.
  - **What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**
    Metro, bus (each on costs about $1)
  - **Could students take cabs -cost?**
    Yes, but I wouldn’t recommend it (it can get expensive, should probably only take one in a pinch).
  - **How long would it take to get to the city center?**
    N/A

- **Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?**
  Kind of. There are sport teams at each of the different campuses (soccer, volleyball, etc.) as well as a political body called CONFECH which students can be a part of. As for interest groups, not so much.

- **Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**
  No. All of my “books” were in photocopy form. There were several kiosks on campus where you could make photocopies, simply by asking for whatever course you needed them for. If the photocopies weren’t available, you could also check out a book at the library and make the photocopies yourself.

- **Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**
  There is a computer lab at the Social Sciences campus (Juan Gomez Millas). There is also wifi.

- **What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)**
  Depends on which campus you are at; there are cafes, stores, restaurants, usually everywhere.

**Housing**

- **What types of accommodations are available to UC students?**
  Apartments, boarding houses (with and without meals/laundry), homestay…go on compartodepto.com!

  - **How close are they to campus?**
    As close as you can find.

  - **How did you find your housing?**
    Compartodepto.com
- **Where did you live and with whom?**
I lived in a boarding house-type accommodation with no meals or laundry provided. There was a cleaning service (which was quite irregular) and we had a washer and dryer. I was able to have my own room with a shared bathroom and shared common spaces. There were between 7-10 other people living in the house at any given time (mostly Latino, some foreigners).

- **If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**
No, not at all. There is no need to have a roommate unless your rent is very high, or you are attempting to rent an apartment all on your own.

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
It depends very much on the neighborhood you live in, the landlord and upkeep of the house, as well as how old the house is. The UCSB dorms are by far the nicest, whereas Chilean rooms may be more run-down.

- **Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**
NO! I paid $320/month (utilities included) and that was a rip off for the size of the room, location, etc. I know people who paid $180/month for a very small room. Depending on the facilities you are given (i.e. meals, laundry) I would say anywhere from $200 (without those accommodations) to $600 (with everything included).

- **How/who did you pay for housing?**
I paid in cash directly to my landlady every month, who in turn gave me a receipt for the rent.

**Food**

- **What was the food like?**
Plain. Chileans typically season their food with salt, lemon, or olive oil. Mostly salt though. The food that you can get on the street is similar to fast food (hamburgers, hotdogs, empanadas) and eating out can be fairly expensive, especially if you want some ethnic cuisine like Indian, sushi, etc. The best food you will ever eat will be home-cooked meals. Hands down.

- **Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?**
I cooked most of my food (after moving out of my homestay).

- **How much was an average meal?**
On the street: $3-4
Restaurant: $10-12

- **What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?**
Lunch: 1:30-2:30
Dinner: 8-9pm (sometimes they have “once” a little earlier though).

- **Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?**
Yes. You will be eating a lot of bread and rice. Chileans (and southamericans in general) are not super familiar with the concept.

**Travel/Safety**
- **If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?**

Transantiago is the system of buses/metro that everyone and their brother use to get around. It’s awesome. There are different colors for the different neighborhoods, making it easier to know which buses to take. The only thing I would advise against is taking the metro during rush hours, unless you like the feeling of being crammed in like a sardine.

- **Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?**

I did feel safe most of the time, and lived in a fairly good neighborhood. Like any large city, Santiago has its crime. However, it is very different from say, cities in the US, where you hear about a murder every other day, somebody being held at gunpoint, etc. Things do happen in Chile all the time, and shouldn’t be taken lightly that EAP and other students have been assaulted, mugged, and robbed. Petty theft I believe is the most common occurrence in Santiago, especially on public transportation. The common sense rules are sufficient though: don’t talk on your cell phone while walking, keep your purse close to you at all times, lock your belongings whenever possible, always be aware and alert.

- **Describe the public transportation in your host country?**

There are many different bus companies that will take you up and down the length of the country. There are a few different bus terminals, and some of the companies have websites up (how reliable they are, I don’t know). Talking to Chileans about the buses is a good way to figure things out, as well as going to the bus terminal.

- **Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?**

So easy! Traveling is one of the best parts about going to Chile, and everyone who goes should take advantage of its prime location in South America. Not only is Chile amazing, but Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Uruguay, Ecuador…so many options! I recommend going to them all.

**Host City/Country**

- **What was the weather like?**

There are a few weeks in summer when it gets really hot. I enjoyed the fall and spring months, even though those seasons weren’t as clearly defined. Winter is cold. Very cold. Bring at least one heavy jacket and also prepare for rain. Santiago is at the foot of the Andes, so you can expect a decent amount of smog on any given day.

- **Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?**

None that I can think of, although the landscape of Chile as a whole is similar to that of California.

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

There are many things to do in Santiago that would be considered “touristy”; pretty much any travel book or website will tell you the top places, restaurants, activities, but some of my favorite were: climbing Cerro San Cristobal, la feria Santa Lucia, el Mercado “La Vega”, Patronato (shopping), el Parque Forestal (during the day…), and hanging out in Bellavista.

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

Pretty international. Santiago is a huge city and a hub for most of the international relations that go on between Chile and other nations. However, culturally it still seems very homogenous. There are plenty of sites for tourism/tourist activities and many worldwide businesses have locations in Santiago.

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

- **Time & punctuality**
  Most Chileans are late for everything (unless it is a very important appointment).

- **Eye contact & staring**
  If you look different (which you probably will) don’t be alarmed if people stare. Eye contact is about the same as the US.

- **Relationships**
  Romantic relationships tend to be more intense than the ones here (where both people are able to maintain their individuality). Chilean relationships become a world of their own.

- **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
  Chilean dress is more formal in the sense that they do not walk around in sweatpants or pij’s EVER. Or short shorts. Chileans like to maintain their image of being composed, put-together, and never a sloppy mess.

- **Alcohol consumption**
  Chileans drink.

- **What culture shock did you go through?**
  From my experience, Chileans tend to be more diplomatic and passive than Americans. For example, in a situation where an American would be very direct about what they want, a Chilean might beat around the bush before finally getting to the point. Also, Chileans are very attached to their families. It is more than likely that all of your school companions will live with their families still, up until they graduate from college (sometimes beyond that too).

- **Other?**
  They are interested in why a person would choose Chile for their study abroad experience (what’s so special about their country? Did you know anything about it ahead of time?). They will probably have many questions about what life is like in the US and it is very fun to compare cultures, find out the differences/similarities, etc. That was one of my favorite parts—the exchange of cultures.

### Banking

- **Were credit cards widely accepted?**
  In Santiago, yes. In more rural parts of Chile only cash is accepted.

- **Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**
  No, I believe you have to have a permanent job (income) in order to open a bank account there.

- **If you did not open a local bank account, was it easy to withdraw money from the ATM?**
  Get Charles Schwab. Our advisor at the time told us to open up an account with them in order to avoid ATM fees altogether. I didn’t do this and I got hit with a fee every single time I took out money. I had Citibank and there were a decent amount of ATMs available. There is no Wells Fargo (that I’m aware of). And make sure you contact your bank(s) not only before you leave for Chile (letting them know the duration of your stay there) as well as every time you travel to a new country. That way you won’t be stuck with a blocked credit/debit card. Be aware if any of your cards are going to expire during the time you are abroad. If so, be prepared to have a family member/friend mail you the new one, and make sure you are able to activate it abroad (i.e. via Skype, etc.)

- **Were there ATMs on campus?**
  No. But there were ATMs all over the city, and they were not hard to find (in grocery stores, etc.)