Instructors

- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?
They were much harder to get in contact with outside of class (there are no office hours). They were also more lenient about deadlines, likely because I was a foreign student. Lectures were similar to UCSB style.

- Could you call them by their first names?
You probably could but it was not common.

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
No, it was about the same. My professors were very laid back and willing to help the students with any questions, and they encouraged participatory discussion during class.

- Were they available for help during office hours?
No office hours, but one gave his cell phone number in case we had any questions outside of class.

Courses

- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
No, since Environmental Studies is not its own major, the electives I took were easier than UCSB courses.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
No, instead of letter grades the professor assigns a grade ranging from 1 to 7, with 7 being the best.

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
No homework; I had one final paper and presentation for each class, in addition to a midterm test or paper. There was reading assigned at the beginning of the semester, but it was never necessary to do and there was no measure of comprehension.

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

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
Professors made themselves available before and after class to answer questions, but there were no office hours or sections.

- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
Yes, very much so, especially due to the possible misunderstandings with the language barrier.

- Was classroom participation expected?
Yes but in a very casual way, and students were not graded down for not participating.

- How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?
My courses were electives, so the professors were much more lenient. There were no regular assignments, but students were still expected to attend class; attendance was taken most of the time.
- Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long? 
Classes were at the same time every week. One was one day and week for three hours; the other one was two days a week for an hour and a half each day.

- What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?
Class culture was similar to that of upper division classes at UCSB. Students were expected to be on time and respectful if they arrived late. You could eat or drink but it was not really part of Chilean culture to eat in the classroom. Students were friendly but most did not socialize in the classroom.

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.
For ILP, we were given written and oral evaluations of our Spanish skills in order to place us in the appropriate class. In the University, there was no evaluation and we were allowed to sign up for whatever courses we wanted. It was hard to keep up with the notetaking at first, but with improvements in my language skills I understood most of what professors said. They also spoke in more formal, slower Spanish than the people on the street, and it was easy to ask them to repeat anything.

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 was very large; the largest public university in the nation. Some departments were scattered throughout the city, but there was one main campus that encompassed over half of the majors. The main campus was more spread out, with grassy areas and open space between buildings. Other departments that were more in the heart of the city were much smaller.

- Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?
Most students live at home with their families; there are no dorms

- If not located in the city center,
  o How far or close is it to the city?
    It was in the city, but just right outside the congested center
  o What type of public transportation could you take – cost?
    I took the metro and a bus to get to class
  o Could students take cabs -cost?
    Cabs were unnecessary and expensive compared to public transportation
  o How long would it take to get to the city center?
    About a five minute cab ride, or 10 minutes on public transportation

- Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?
Yes but clubs were ot advertised much
- **Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**
Buying books was uncommon! Most students photocopied their readings from library books. I was not required to purchase any textbooks.

- **Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**
Yes there is a lab with high-speed internet in each department.

- **What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafés, stores, etc)**
It is a typical city setting; the campus was surrounded by grocery stores, restaurants and homes and, to a lesser extent, apartment buildings.

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**Housing**

- **What types of accommodations are available to UC students?**
Students could remain in their homestay or find their own housing wherever they wanted. It was easy to browse online listings to find rooms in apartments in convenient locations with either locals or foreigners.

- **How close are they to campus?**
We had the option to live in whatever part of the city we wanted; it depended on which university the student attended and what kind of neighborhood they wanted to live in.

- **How did you find your housing?**
I used Craigslist and a website called Compartodepto.cl to find my roommates.

- **Where did you live and with whom?**
I lived in the city center in an apartment with one Chilean and three other foreigners. Everyone was between in the age range of 20-30.

- **If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**
It was hard to communicate with locals over the phone so early in the program when my language skills had not developed much. However, getting in contact with people was easy and there was a wide variety of housing options to choose from.

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
My apartment was pretty basic; not quite as nice as the UCSB dorms, but it was an old building. The apartment was much cleaner than many IV houses, however. We had basic appliances and the place was fully furnished.

- **Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**
I had my own room and I paid just one third of what I had been paying in IV to share a room. My rent included all utilities and weekly housekeeping and translated to about $240 US.

- **How/who did you pay for housing?**
I paid for it with my college fund; the money I would have spent on living in IV.

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**Food**

- **What was the food like?**
The food was much more bland and basic than the variety you can find in the US. Chileans eat a lot of bread, cheese and meat. They are not health nuts by any means, but they also cook at home the majority of the time. Going out to eat was not a regular activity in any family. Most people cooked at home, save for businesspeople at lunch time.

- Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?
I ate out at restaurants frequently, but I also cooked a lot in my apartment. If i was running late, i would grab a snack from a street kiosk or vendor.

- How much was an average meal?
It was easy to find food on the street for just a couple of dollars, I would spend about $5-10 on a meal at an average restaurant. Groceries were much cheaper than they are in the US.

- What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?
Chileans eat a large lunch, generally at home or out at a restaurant if they work in the city center, around 1 pm. Lunch is a long, relaxed meal, whereas dinner is much smaller and later, around 9 pm. This is because Chileans have something called “onces” around 5-6 pm; this is like a tea time, where they eat snacks such as fruit or small sandwiches with tea and coffee.

- Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?
No, but vegetarianism was not common, and there was not a lot of variety for them.

Travel/Safety
- If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?
The bus/metro system was able to take me to almost every point the city I wanted to go to, and it was much cheaper than public transportation in the US. Chileans complain a lot that the system is flawed and inefficient, and it did get very crowded around rush hour each day. However, for someone who has never had to rely on public transportation before, I found it very convenient and easy, especially because I lived in the city center and there were always buses passing by.

- Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?
Yes save for a few times when I was by myself late at night, which is probably not smart anywhere. I learned to be very conscious of my surroundings at all times. There was not much threat of violent crime, but I know several people who were pickpocketed on the street or while taking public transportation. I would advise students to keep a low profile and not draw unnecessary attention to themselves, especially by speaking loudly in English, because that only makes someone stand out as a target. For the most part, I also stayed out of the neighborhoods with the worst reputations, and if I did not feel safe I would make sure to hail a taxi or not go out on my own.

- Describe the public transportation in your host country?
Buses run practically the entire length of the country; they are relatively cheap and you can travel from the deserts in the north to the lakes in the south. To get to Patagonia, it is most practical to fly, but flights arranged long enough ahead of time are often reasonably priced; sometimes there are very good deals on domestic flights. Travelling long distances by bus is long, but the services are better than in most other Latin American countries, and I felt very safe taking public transportation in each town I visited. Cabs were very cheap, but more expensive if you were in a tourist town. Bus drivers were helpful but often reckless drivers.

- Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?
It was easy but not cheap. Flights had to be arranged because South America is so large and there are not many international bus lines. However, flying was quick and allowed much more time to sightsee. Some countries required visas, so it would be wise to do your research and plan in advance which countries you might want to research.

**Host City/Country**

- **What was the weather like?**
The weather was very comparable to Californial in the summer the city was hot and dry and in the winter it was cold but not freezing. I did not experience much rain (although I was only there for one semester), and I was able to handle any type of weather situation with the clothes I had brought from home. In the south, it was much cooler, especially down into Patagonia. I was there in the middle of the summer and went backpacking in a thick jacket. Each different region we traveled to seemed to have its own unique climate.

- **Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?**
  Santiago, Chile was a large sprawling metropolis. It was much easier to navigate than Los Angeles, but it did not have a very unified feel to it. Neighborhoods are pretty sharply divided by income level, with the richer people living in the north near the mountains and the lower class expanding more south. However, the citizens have a lot of pride for their city and I could always feel the energy that comes with living in the middle of a big city.

- **What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?**
  Surprisingly, the city is full of parks and green spaces, and I felt as if there were always fun new neighborhoods to explore. I was never bored in Santiago; I went to soccer games, museums, tried a wide range of cuisine (though not all of it was outstanding), yet also spent a lot of time hanging out at friends’ houses and apartments just hanging out and meeting new people. Nothing was ever very far away, especially nightlife—there are bars and clubs open every night of the week. Activities like going to the movies were also a fraction of what they cost in the States.

- **How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**
  Santiago is not a big tourist city, but it is definitely big for business and culture. It is the economic center of the country, and Chile’s economy is one of the strongest in Latin America. This contributed to the vibrant atmosphere of the city; I got the feeling that Chileans were very hard working and open to the international community, especially to the developed world. I met a lot of other foreign students or young adults living in Santiago, but not many who were just there on vacation. There was not a strong minority presence; I saw few Asians of African Americans, and often stood out because of my light skin. Chileans also tend to have a bit of a superiority complex with regards to more indigenous-looking people, such as Peruvians or Bolivians. To make a very broad generalization, the upper class was composed of fairly light-skinned Chileans, while the lower class was darker skinned.

**Culture**

- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  - **Time & punctuality**
    To most people, punctuality is not very important. Formal appointments were regarded differently, but for the most part people were not on time or were subject to changing their plans with no warning. I learned to adapt and not to worry so much about being exactly on time for everything, and came to understand that everything always works out in the end
  - **Eye contact & staring**
People on the street will stare, especially if you are a foreigner, because it is hard to blend in if you are not a native. Eye contact is much less common; people on the street seem to pass each other without making much eye contact or any communication with the strangers around them.

- **Relationships**
  Because most people live at home with their families, there is not a lot of private space. As a result, public displays of affection are common at almost any time of day, in any public space. There is a presence of the “machismo” culture as well and women are not always treated as equals in a relationship. I also saw a lot of infidelity in relationships, but there seems to be an unspoken agreement of “don’t ask, don’t tell.”

- **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
  People did not wear sweatpants and Ugg boots on the street; they dressed slightly more conservatively and often looked more put together than the average American, but that is also probably due to the fact that I was in a large city rather than a small college town. Students wore casual street clothes to school; young people did not dress provocatively but also did not overdress.

- **Alcohol consumption**
  Casual drinking is common and does not discriminate by age group. However, unlike in the US, it was not common for young adults to consume large quantities of alcohol and be noticeable drunk. Partying was more about going out and being social than seeing who could do the most shots, and it was not considered cool to be belligerent and sloppy.

- **What culture shock did you go through?**
  I missed the food variety that I have been spoiled with in California, and it was hard to try and find substitutions for my favorites. However, I believe I adapted pretty well to all of the little cultural nuances of Chile. I did not have to change my lifestyle too much and found the quirks of their culture to be more of an adventure and a new perspective on life.

-o **Other?**

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**Banking**

- **Were credit cards widely accepted?**
  They were widely accepted in Santiago, but it was much more common to use cash. Outside of the big cities, it was hard to tell if people would accept credit cards, so I generally relied on cash just in case.

- **Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**
  No, and I heard that it was nearly impossible to do if you are not a citizen.

- **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 withdrew large amounts of money from ATMs, which were very easy to find, especially in my neighborhood. Because of ATM fees (for Wells Fargo it was $5), I would withdraw enough to last me a few weeks. However, the cost of living in Chile is much less than in California, so it was easy to make my cash last for longer.

- **Were there ATMs on campus?**
  I never noticed an ATM on campus, but I generally did not spend money on campus, except to buy a snack every once in awhile, so it was always much more convenient for me to use the ATMs closer to my apartment.