Instructors
- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?
Professors are somewhat less accessible to students but are usually willing to help or accommodate students who ask for help.

- Could you call them by their first names?
No, instructors used titles such as Mme. or M. and last names.

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
Yes, the student/instructor relationship is generally more formal than at UCSB.

- Were they available for help during office hours?
Office hours are much less frequent if existent at all for professors. Many professors are willing to give extra help, however it is usually necessary to contact the professor in advance and set up a meeting.

Courses
- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
The courses are generally not more difficult when compared to UCSB courses because the professor often takes into consideration the added difficulty of functioning in a foreign language and adjusts the assignments and/or grading policies for UC students accordingly.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
No, the grading system is very different to UCSB. Grading in France is on a scale of 0 to 20, however it is much more difficult to get high grades. A 14 or 15 was considered an excellent grade whereas a 10 was perfectly acceptable. The program takes this grading system into account when converting grades for UCSB.

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
Many courses did not have many, if any, assignments and grades are based almost entirely on finals.

- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
I had both oral and written exams. Whether the exam was oral or written was chosen by the professor and not consistent for all professors.

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
A tutor was available to UC students to help with any homework assignments. Meetings could be set up with her at any time and as frequently as needed.

- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
Yes, I absolutely needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad. French systems tend to be very bureaucratic and it can be very difficult and confusing to get anything done. It is important to ask questions as much as possible and to get help when needed. Students are also expected to be much more independent and do most of their learning outside of the classroom.

- Was classroom participation expected?
Yes, classroom participation is expected in courses taken at the DEFLE and may be required in discussion sections of other courses at the university but is not generally expected during lectures.

- **How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?**
  Courses were different than those at UCSB because students were expected to do most of their learning outside of the classroom.

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**
  Like courses at UCSB, UC students are allowed to choose their own schedule and to arrange their classes as they please as long as they are taking the appropriate number of units.

- **What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?**
  Just like at UCSB, class culture varies by the professor. Most professors highly stress punctuality and eating/drinking in class is generally not acceptable, however this varies from professor to professor.

**Language**

- **In which languages were the courses offered?**
  Courses were offered only in French.

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

- **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 courses in the DEFLE, students take a placement exam to ensure they are at the appropriate level, however if students are not at the appropriate level they may ask to be switched. Courses at the DEFLE are designed to be challenging but not too difficult and are aimed at teaching almost exclusively French courses. Courses outside the DEFLE were generally more challenging and are the same courses taken by French students. Tutoring is provided for UC students if they feel overwhelmed by their course work.

**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 campus is 235 hectares and there were 14,300 students in 2008 at the University of Bordeaux 3. The campus is extremely large and spread out and has buildings clustered based on discipline. (For example Bordeaux 3 is the humanities, Bordeaux 4 is largely economics, and Bordeaux 1 is the sciences.) These form mini campuses within the larger university campus. The tram runs directly through campus and makes it easy to get around.

- **Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**
  Some students live on campus, however many live off campus in apartments or at home if their family does not live far from the campus. Because city center is not far from campus and the tram runs directly through the city center and campus, it makes it very easy for students to live off campus.

- **If not located in the city center,**
  - **How far or close is it to the city?**
    The campus was located about 20 minutes away from the city center using the tramway.
  - **What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**
Trams and buses are public transportation used to get to the campus. Most students opted to get a monthly pass good for unlimited bus and tram rides for 38 Euro per month or 180 for a year-long pass.

- Could students take cabs -cost?
  Cabs are possible but more expensive than the tram which runs frequently and goes directly through the campus. Cabs are the best option late at night when trams and buses no longer run.

- How long would it take to get to the city center?
  It takes about 20 minutes to get to the city center on the tram.

- Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?
  Yes, there are student clubs on campus that UC students are welcome to join.

- Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?
  There is no bookstore on campus however there is a small bookstore walking distance from the campus or bookstores in the city center. Most books are available in the library and is a cheaper and more environmentally friendly option to buying a new book.

- Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?
  Yes, there is a computer lab on campus, however it is not open on weekends and tends to close by about 6 o’clock on weekdays. Most students chose to bring laptops because internet is common in cafes and most host families provide some form of internet.

- What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)
  There are cafes, a small convenience store, a post office, a bank, and a small bookstore in the university’s neighborhood, which are all geared towards university students. Most stores, however, are located in the city center.

**Housing**

- What types of accommodations are available to UC students?
  UC students may ask for a host family or can choose to live in an apartment which they must find themselves. If the student chooses to live in an apartment, they may choose whether they want to live with other American students or with French students or other International students.

- How close are they to campus?
  Host family houses are generally within 30 minutes of campus by public transportation although some may be slightly farther away. Because students wishing to live in an apartment make their own arrangements, they may find an apartment as close or far away from campus as they wish.

- How did you find your housing?
  My host family was set up through the California Center, and I arranged my stay in an apartment through the website www.appartager.fr.

- Where did you live and with whom?
  For the majority of the year I lived with a host family in Pessac, the town immediately next to the university, however I also spent three months living in an apartment in the city center with four French students.

- If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?
It was somewhat difficult to find an apartment, especially in December, however using the appartager.fr website made the search much easier. Unfortunately, I was only able to find a room for sublease in an apartment for three months.

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
The rooms were generally nicer than those found in I.V. for similar prices with the added benefit of having an individual room rather than sharing.

- **Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**
Rent was about $450 per month for a private room in an apartment. This is comparable to the amount it would cost to share a room in I.V.

- **How/who did you pay for housing?**
While I lived in a home stay, I paid the family directly for the housing, and while I was in the apartment I paid the person I was subleasing from.

**Food**

- **What was the food like?**
The food was wonderful. The French take much more time and care, in general, with the preparation of food and the meal. Family meals are often important. Bread and cheese are important parts of the diet and are incorporated into almost all meals. Wine is also important and usually accompanies dinner. The French enjoy balanced meals and generally believe it is important to have starch, vegetables, and meat with every meal.

- **Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?**
Most of my meals were eaten with my host family although I also ate in the university cafeteria and in restaurants.

- **How much was an average meal?**
An average meal in a restaurant is typically between 8 and 15 euros although cheaper food can be found in sandwich shops and cafes.

- **What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?**
Lunch is typically between 12 and 2 and dinner generally doesn’t start until 8 at the earliest but may begin as late as 10.

- **Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?**
It may be slightly more difficult for vegetarians to find meals, however vegetarianism is becoming much more widely accepted in France. It is certainly possible to find vegetarian meals.

**Travel/Safety**

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

- **Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?**
Yes, I felt very safe in my host city. There is very little crime, however female students may wish to stay clear of Place de la Victoire late at night to avoid being hassled by men coming out of local bars.
- **Describe the public transportation in your host country?**
The trains are very easy to use and are the primary mode of public transportation on a large scale. It is possible to get to almost any destination in France on the train and can be very fast (only three hours on the train from Bordeaux to Paris). Discount cards for students can be purchased and are well worth the value if you plan on doing more than just one or two journeys on the train (look for the 12-25 pass for SNCF). Flying is also an option as trains from East to West in France are not as common (such as from Bordeaux to Lyon).

- **Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?**
Yes, it is easy to travel to neighboring countries with the train or by flying. It is helpful to check online websites for cheap flights and special deals on train tickets and to book in advance.

**Host City/Country**
- **What was the weather like?**
The weather in the fall was very hot and sunny (until late October), and the weather in the winter and spring tended to be very rainy and cool (late October to mid March). After March the weather quickly warmed up and rain was much less frequent.

- **Describe your host city...which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?**
Bordeaux has a relatively small downtown area with a pedestrian-focused shopping district just like that of Santa Barbara, however the climate and culture are vastly different. It is otherwise difficult to draw any parallels to a California/US city.

- **What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?**
Bordeaux is a city known for its wine and thus there are lots of great classes and wine tours. There are also plenty of city tours and day trips available through the tourism center. There is a botanic garden as well as several other large public gardens throughout the city. Bordeaux also boasts the longest pedestrian shopping street and has a variety of lively pubs.

- **How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**
Bordeaux is not nearly as international as Paris in terms of cultural diversity, tourism, and international business, although there is a great tourism office in the city center which welcomes tourists from all over the world. It is easy to arrange cultural activities there.

**Culture**
- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  - **Time & punctuality**
The French are frequently unapologetically late, however it is viewed as the respectful thing to do to be on time for engagements with an agreed-upon time.
  - **Eye contact & staring**
Eye contact is important when speaking with someone.
  - **Relationships**
Kissing is taken relatively seriously. A kiss is seen as a sign that two people are now officially in a relationship rather than casually as it is typically seen in the United States where it may not represent a relationship.
  - **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
Dress in general is not more formal than in the United States, although most French people will put a good amount of thought into what they will wear. It is not acceptable to go out of the class in sweats as it is in the United States. Fashion is important, especially for young people. Outward signs of religion, such as wearing a headscarf or necklace with a cross or other religious symbols, are not allowed at public schools, including universities.

- **Alcohol consumption**
  Wine is very important to the culture in France and especially in Bordeaux. It is something most all families will have with dinner. French students enjoy going out to bars and clubs to socialize and meet new people.

- **What culture shock did you go through?**
  It is astonishing how much time in France is occupied by social necessities such as giving “bisous”, or kisses, to everyone in the room at both arrival and departure. These social niceties are very important to the French.

**Banking**

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

- **Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**
  Yes, I opened a local bank account and it was relatively easy, especially because my host family helped me when I went into the bank. Ask for one year without fees for the debit card which is offered.

- **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 also withdrew money from an account with Bank of America because they are a partner bank of the French bank BNP and do not charge any ATM fees to withdraw money. To my knowledge Bank of America is the only bank with this policy. Because I opened a joint account with my parents, they were able to put money into the account in the United States and I could withdraw it in France with no fees.

- **Were there ATMs on campus?**
  Yes, there were ATMs on campus.