Major/Minor  Polisci  and French Minor
Country: France  Program: Language and Culture  Term & Year Abroad: Fall 2010

Instructors
- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?

The atmosphere of the Language & Culture program was more personal. Because we were seeing the professors more often and for longer periods of time, it turned out to be a very interesting and fun relationship.
- Could you call them by their first names?
Yes
- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
No
- Were they available for help during office hours?
Yes

Courses
- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
No, although the amount of class hours was more than UCSB
- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
I suppose, grades weren’t as important even though we were graded on many assignments
- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
We had many assignments and exercises and a lot of in-class work. It was important to keep practicing for language acquisition.
- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
Oral, listening, written
- Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?
inflexible
- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
The teachers were very available, also Christine and Study Center Director in the Lyon EAP center also really tried to make themselves available.
- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
no
- Was classroom participation expected?
Yes, there were only 13 of us UC students in the classroom so it was expected
- How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?
I did not take host university courses, only specific courses targeted at a small group of EAP students for language acquisition.

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**
There was on average 2-4.5 hours of class a day. They switched the schedule around 3 times during the semester which was nice because it broke up the rhythm, but it also sometimes caused confusion.

- **What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?**
Because we were a small group with the same teachers each week, it was a very comfortable and personal classroom culture. While it was important to be punctual, it often wasn’t the case. We could eat and drink in class but I’m pretty sure this would have been frowned upon for actual host university classes.

**Language**

- In which languages were the courses offered?

French

- What language did you take your courses 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.

I’m not going to say we didn’t struggle, but it was a great way to learn language really fast. I had the minimum amount of experience possible but still managed to do alright. The teachers were really good at their job, and it was clear they knew some of the best techniques like repetition and incorporating outside material to make it more interesting. They also were very forgiving of mistakes and didn’t treat grades or tests as important as actually learning the language.

**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?

It was an urban campus that was smaller than UCSB, it wasn’t a very big campus at all and it had limited facilities and extra-curricular opportunities. There were other campuses that I did not go to as I was in the Language and Culture program. It was in the center of the city which was pretty amazing to experience.

- Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?

Off campus, many live in student residences or in low cost apartments.

- If not located in the city center,
  - How far or close is it to the city?

Because Language and Culture students stayed with a host family, some of the kids in the program had a far commute (30 min-1 hour). But it wasn’t awful because public transit was so amazing.

- What type of public transportation could you take – cost?
It was 25€/month for unlimited bus, metro, tram, which was very efficient. I usually took a bus into the city and tram/metro once I was there.

- Could students take cabs -cost?
I’d only take cabs after going out at night when public transit shut down (12-1 depending on the day). To my house, it was under 20 euros for a cab so it wasn’t too bad if I could find someone who lived next to me.

- **How long would it take to get to the city center?**

It took me 20-30 minutes but every student lived with a different host family

- **Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?**

There were some opportunities, but nowhere near as much as I’ve found at UCSB or the U.S. in general

- **Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**

There was no bookstore, my books were provided and there was a library across the street as well as bookstores in the city

- **Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**

There was a small computer lab for exchange students but I would highly advise bringing a laptop.

- **What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)**

Cafes, restaurants, bars, markets, etc. It really was in the city center so you could get to the main shopping drag in 5-10 minutes walking; Excellent location.

**Housing**

- **What types of accommodations are available to UC students?**

We were required to live in homestays which turned out to be awesome. I know some of the immersion kids lived in their own apartments.

- **How close are they to campus?**

It varied depending on student

- **How did you find your housing?**

provided

- **Where did you live and with whom?**

I lived with an amazing family in a suburb about 20-30 mins from the city by bus (including the walks). I really enjoyed them and I ate some of the most amazing food ever.

- **If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**

n/a

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**

It was nicer than my room in IV, or my room at Trop. It was a family’s house.

- **Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**

It was factored into the program so I’m not really sure. It was actually a pretty good deal because food was included and the food was amazing.

- **How/who did you pay for housing?**
I had financial aid as well as help from my grandfather. I also saved money from working before I left.

Food
- What was the food like?

AMAZING, this was my favorite part and it is the thing I miss most.
- Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?

With my family, I only went out for inexpensive lunches sometimes and often I would just grab a picnic from a market or grocery store.
- How much was an average meal?
A 3-plate set course dinner would be about 13 euros on the modest side and 20 for a really nice meal. (Of course, you could end up spending a lot). Also, it was about 5 euros for a filling lunch like a kebab or pizza or something.

- What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?

My dinner was always late, around 8:30pm and it wasn’t uncommon for us to start eating at 9 or even 10. I would usually eat lunch at 1-2pm but I also usually eat 4 or 5 meals a day. I love food.
- Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?
It would be harder than California, but still do-able.

Travel/Safety
- If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?
Transit was great, it’s Europe, and France, and even though there were always strikes, the transit was great.

- Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?
Almost always, just don’t wander off alone after going out late at night and you would be fine. Really, just use common sense and there would be no trouble.
- Describe the public transportation in your host country?
The regional trains in France were awesome, I traveled all around the country. Also, low budget European airlines work pretty well for traveling to different countries. Just make sure to watch their check-in times and the airport you’re leaving from. Also, they often charge for checked baggage.

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

Host City/Country
- What was the weather like?

It did have an actual climate, so it started out really nice during summer and fall, but by the end it was really cold. I mean really cold.
- Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?
I don’t know of any cities here it is similar too. It is the 2nd biggest in France, but still retains some of a smaller town feel. I really enjoyed living there. It had all the amenities I could want, was 2-3 hours from the mountains and the beach by train and had access to a big train station and airport.

- **What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?**
I don’t know where to start! There were churches everywhere, and museums, and Vieux Lyon which was the old district with really cool architecture. To be honest, some of the best memories were just having a picnic with friends on the river with good weather.

- **How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**
It was fairly busy with tourism, but not overrun like Paris and parts of southern France. There was a good amount of cultural diversity, but it definitely retained its French atmosphere. While many people in the city might speak English, it isn’t like Paris or Barcelona or Rome were everyone’s speaking English.

**Culture**

- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  - **Time & punctuality**
    Often late even though we were told it is rude. Many places would close early or open late or simply not follow their posted hours.
  - **Eye contact & staring**
    Not nearly as prevalent. Especially if you don’t know the person.
  - **Relationships**
    A little more formal until you break the ice and become closer.
  - **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
    Definitely more formal dress for women and school. People would wear nice shoes and slacks and nice dress-up shirts for any occasion.
  - **Alcohol consumption**
    I want to say people drink more often with meals but drink a smaller amount at a time. It was very common to have wine with dinner or lunch, or sometimes even brunch, but it wasn’t nearly as much as one would expect to see out in IV. The youth is slowly progressing into the Anglo style of heavy drinking like British or Germans or Americans, but I still would say it is a much more casual and social style than college over here.

- **What culture shock did you go through?**
I’m pretty adaptable so it wasn’t nearly as bad for me. Perhaps the hardest stuff was just trying blend in and not be so loud and friendly with everyone I met.

- **Other?**

**Banking**

- **Were credit cards widely accepted?**
Accepted but make sure to have cash (especially coins) Many smaller business and lots of terminals for transport don’t accept American credit cards. Also, it is more uncommon for someone to use their credit cards all the time, people stick to cash more often.

- **Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**
Yes, and yes, it was (and still is) closing it that is turning out to be difficult.

- **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’d recommend signing up for BofA over here, they have a global alliance with 6-7 banks and won’t charge you any ATM fee from these banks. BNP Paribas which is all over France happens to be one of them.

- **Were there ATMs on campus?**

  Not a chance.