Instructors
- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?
Instructors for language courses expected a lot more, which meant you learnt a lot more. For the other classes I took, classes were extremely small and felt more like a section with a Professor rather than a T.A. In comparison, they were more concerned with your level of effort and what you took from the course rather than the grade you received from completing your assignments.

- Could you call them by their first names?
It all depended on what they preferred. The language instructors went by their first names, but the others did not.

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
I think that the relationships were more open due to the smaller class sizes.

- Were they available for help during office hours?
Office hours did not really apply for this program and the courses offered, but instructors were available if needed.

Courses
- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
Courses and course work for courses in English were definitely less difficult. On the other hand, the language courses were more challenging than the ones you would take at UCSB.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
They use a different grading system (kinda like a reverse GPA Scale), but overall it equates to the same grades once converted into letter grades.

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
Course structure was overall very similar. It all depended on the course but most classes had assignments and tests.

- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
The Language courses had both oral and written exams but none of my other classes had oral exams.

- Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?
I found no reason for it to be flexible. All finals were held during the last week of instruction, just like the quarter system.

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
Instructors were there to help if needed.

- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
No.

- Was classroom participation expected?
Yes, participation played a bigger role than it normally does at UCSB.
- How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?
I did not enroll in any host university courses.

- Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?
Classes were held on certain days and ranged from an hour to three hours in length.

- What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?
Punctuality was important, but once in class light snacking and drinking was usually ok.

**Language**

- In which languages were the courses offered?
English and German

- What language did you take your courses in?
English and German

- If you took your courses in a foreign language, please provide info about your overall experience, difficulty of courses, language acquisition, placement exams, etc.
You’ll be surprised about how much you have understood at the end of class. The instructors are always willing to slow down if needed. They want you to learn both the material and 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?
The university was divided up into three campuses, so I was never able to get a grasp of how large it was. It definitely felt a lot smaller than UCSB

- Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?
Local students live in off-campus dorms, at home, or on their own (off campus).

- If not located in the city center,
  - How far or close is it to the city?
    10 minute bus ride to downtown Potsdam and just over half an hour train ride into Berlin.
  - What type of public transportation could you take – cost?
    Many students biked to campus and you can use your student ID as your bus and train pass.
  - Could students take cabs -cost?
    Cabs were available but I don’t think any one took them to school.
  - How long would it take to get to the city center?
    10 minutes

- Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?
Everyone is Encouraged to join a club or sport.

- Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?
There was a bookstore, however it was not needed. Books and materials were supplied by program.

- Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?
Definitely bring a laptop if you can. There are computer labs on campus, but having a laptop is very convienant.

- What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)
Both a café and dining commons are located on campus. Otherwise there are nearby grocery stores within walking range of both the dorms and campus.

**Housing**
- What types of accommodations are available to UC students?
Most students live in the dorms. It is possible to opt out and find your own housing.

- How close are they to campus?
Dorms are a 10 minute walk or 3 minute bus ride from campus.

- How did you find your housing?
Housing was provided.

- Where did you live and with whom?
I lived in the dorms with 3 other German students. Everybody has their own room.

- 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?
Rooms are plain but pretty big and they come with a wardrobe, desk, drawers and bed.

- Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?
Rent was far cheaper; only 300 US Dollars for a single.

- How/who did you pay for housing?
Rent could be payed up front or monthly. Rent was payed to Studentenwerk located near downtown Potsdam. They accept cash.

**Food**
- What was the food like?
Food was good and cheap. The dining commons on campus gave discount to students, usually around 2.20 euro a meal.

- Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?
My meals were spread out between the dining commons, restaurants or eating out and my own home cooked meals.

- How much was an average meal?
I would say and average meal was around 5 euro, including drinks.
- **What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?**
The same time people would eat in America; whenever they were hungry.

- **Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?**
The dining commons prepared at least one meal a day for vegetarians. Otherwise I would assume it would be just as difficult as it is in America.

**Travel/Safety**
- **If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?**
You will ride the either the bus or train everyday. In general it was very easy to get around unless it was the middle of the night, and if it was the middle of the night you had usually planned that out in advance. The train station to go to Berlin is only a 10 minute walk from both the dorms and campus.

- **Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?**
Yes. Potsdam felt very safe to me. I didn’t feel the need to adjust my style of living at all.

- **Describe the public transportation in your host country?**
100 percent better than the US.

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

**Host City/Country**
- **What was the weather like?**
Initially it will be cold and rainy and then it will get pretty hot; with only a few weeks of temperate weather inbetween. It also seemed to rain whenever it felt like it.

- **Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?**
Picture any decent sized city outside a major urban area.

- **What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?**
Potsdam is tourism central during the summer, so make sure to see the sights before the height of tourist season. Swimming in the local lakes was very popular and also very refreshing (Warning: Nude bathing is very common) If we did not go to Berlin at night we usually went to the local student club (the Nil- located on campus) on Thursdays, or the student pub (Pub a la Pub) any other day of the week.

- **How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**
It seemed to be a perfect combination of German and international. Because it has a lot to offer in terms of tourism you will find most things that you can find in any big city.

**Culture**
- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  - **Time & punctuality**
Be on time.

- **Eye contact & staring**
  People will definitely stare, especially if you are traveling in a big group of Americans. But you will get used to it.

- **Relationships**
  At first people will seem a bit more closed off or shy, but once that intitial meeting is made there is not much diffence between relationships in Germany from relationships in America.

- **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
  Casual attire is perfectly fine.

- **Alcohol consumption**
  Nearly everyone drinks. However, it is not as big of a deal because the drinking age is 18. You can drink on the trains and while you walk around. However, drinking on the buses was usually a no-go.

- **What culture shock did you go through?**
  Honestly the biggest culture shock is not having your normal comfort foods and not speaking English all the time.

- **Other?**

**Banking**

- **Were credit cards widely accepted?**
  Cash is definitely preferred. I don’t remember using my card once; although I,m sure some people did.

- **Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**
  I found having a Bank of America account the easiest. They have a partnership with Deutsche Bank so that you do not incur the same fees you would if you did not have a local bank account or any other American bank.

- **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?**
  See above, I highly recommend opening a Bank of America account

- **Were there ATMs on campus?**
  No, ATMs were located downtown.