Instructors

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

- Could you call them by their first names?
  No, that’s not common in Chinese culture.

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
  Yes but again, probably because of cultural differences.

- Were they available for help during office hours?
  Yes but you have to e-mail them.

Courses

- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
  Yes. There are no discussions and they just expect you to understand and learn it yourself. Questions aren’t commonly asked in class.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
  I think they expect more from their students than at UCSB.

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
  For the liberal arts classes (humanities, languages etc.) there were many assignments to balance out your grade. However in all major classes (economics, business management, marketing etc.), it’s one midterm and one final.

- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
  For Chinese there was an oral exam because it’s learning a language, for everything else it was written exams.

- Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?
  The final exam schedule is inflexible. I actually skipped one of my finals (I don’t recommend it) because of how far back it was.

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
  The only thing I needed help with was figuring out exactly what to include in my essays but that goes for any writing class. Each professor grades differently and it’s necessary to see what each professor wants to see within your paper.

- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
  Definitely. The CUHK system really does not coddle their students. A typical graduation is within 3 years so of course everything is accelerated. Also, what I found the hardest to deal with was that class only happened once a week. Or at least that was what my classes were like. It’s hard to manage your time when you have class Tuesday – Thursday.
- **Was classroom participation expected?**
  Only in small lectures.

- **How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?**
  They taught the general idea but expected you to know the details. They don’t tell you what will be on the exams. They just tell you to review everything.

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**
  3 hour long classes, typically once a week, sometimes twice.

- **What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?**
  Punctuality is extremely important. It’s uncommon (socially unacceptable) to eat/drink in class. No one wears sweatpants or pajamas to class and the girls are always very dressed up. Many wear heels and dresses and have their hair actually styled for the day.

**Language**

- **In which languages were the courses offered?**
  They were offered in English, Cantonese, as well as Mandarin. For popular classes, the same class was offered in three different languages. For others, most of them are taught in English/Cantonese or English/Mandarin or just the languages by themselves.

- **What language did you take your courses in?**
  I took classes in Mandarin, English, and one class in a English/Mandarin split. Meaning, my lectures were taught in Mandarin (my professor was from mainland China) but I was allowed to write all essays in English. However, participation was typically a mix of English/Chinese.

- **If you took your courses in a foreign language, please provide info about your overall experience, difficulty of courses, language acquisition, placement exams, etc.**
  It was really difficult to express my ideas and thoughts in a grammatically correct way but the students were very supportive and the professor equally so. My Mandarin actually improved while I was in Hong Kong despite their main language being Cantonese. In fact, a third of their school is from Mainland China, which is why each class is offered in so many languages. I did have to take a placement exam the first week I got there and I tested into the same level I was in at UCSB.

**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’s a large university. It’s this huge, gorgeous, sprawling campus with elevators in every building and buildings that have connecting hallways on certain floors. It’s really, really, really cool. There’s an infinity pool on campus!!

- **Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**
  Locals live mostly at home. Some live on campus but most of them go home on the weekends anyways. No one lives off campus.

- **If not located in the city center,**
  - **How far or close is it to the city?**
    It’s about a 45 minute MTR ride to the downtown area of the Hong Kong
- **What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**
The MTR is super cheap. There’s a student Octopus card you can get and it was less than $2 USD to get from University station at the foot of campus to downtown Hong Kong on the island.

- **Could students take cabs -cost?**
Yes cabs are very popular to take especially coming back from a late night out. They cost about $18 USD for a cab ride but you typically split that with 4 other people (it’s 5 to a cab. 6 if you’re good at negotiating!)

- **How long would it take to get to the city center?**
30 minutes or so depending on traffic in a cab.

- **Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?**
Yes! There are many clubs but it’s harder to join if you don’t speak the language. However, for clubs revolving around sports, they are much more encouraging and welcoming.

- **Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**
Yes there is a bookstore on campus and it is easy to buy books.

- **Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**
Yes there is a computer lab on campus, most students bring laptops but there are multiple computer labs located around campus but mainly in the library.

- **What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)**
Tons of cafes and cafeterias that sell delicious Chinese food (and some not so delicious Chinese food) and great American food. Hot dogs. I love hot dogs. They had great hot dogs. The only thing is that you need to bring your own hot sauce. I had my mom mail me Cholula and Tapatio.

**Housing**

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

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

- **How did you find your housing?**
It was given/assigned to me.

- **Where did you live and with whom?**
I lived in I-House (International House) and lived with a few international students, a few Mainland China students, and a few Hong Kong local students.

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

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
There’s more storage in my dorm than at UCSB and the set up is very similar. You get desks and beds and a full size closet and drawers under your bed! AND shelves above your bed. It’s great.
Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?
It was SO MUCH CHEAPER. I can’t remember but it’s about $800 USD but you get a downpayment back…

How/who did you pay for housing?
The campus and you pay at the bank which is also located on campus.

Food
What was the food like?
Some cantines (cafeterias) are really good with normal Chinese food (the kind you order at restaurants) but some were terrible but you’ll quickly learn which ones are good and which ones aren’t.

Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?
Cafeterias and the vendors on campus as well as the on campus restaurant for dim sum!

How much was an average meal?
$2-4 USD

What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?
The normal time.

Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?
YEP. Hong Kong doesn’t understand the concept of vegans or vegetarians.

Travel/Safety
If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?
MTR. It’s the best transportation ever!!

Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?
Perfectly safe. If it looks sketchy, it is sketchy. But Hong Kong is a very safe place.

Describe the public transportation in your host country?
MTR.

Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?
Easy to travel to all neighbouring countries (CHINA) you can take the MTR to the border and cross into Mainland China! It’s so efficient and quick and easy that it’s crazy.

Host City/Country
What was the weather like?
Typically humid and muggy but it’s usually sunny. Very much like Santa Barbara weather. The winters are the same. Never freezing but definitely need a scarf and a hat on some days.

Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?
San Francisco but with more accents.
- **What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?**
Hiking (there are tons of trails in the new territories where CUHK is located in), the Beach, definitely downtown. There’s a section for tourists and expats, and then there’s also the downtown for the locals which is where the real fun is. Also, SHOPPING. Hong Kong is the mecca of shopping. You can buy anything and everything you have ever wanted. They sell every brand since it is an international city.

- **How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**
It was extremely international. You can meet people from all walks of life, from all countries, and they are all doing something different in Hong Kong. There are people in the travel industry and tourism. I met French people living in Hong Kong that mainly deal in textiles for Asia. The beer industry from Denmark is especially large and there is a large market for imported beers in Hong Kong.

**Culture**
- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  - **Time & punctuality**
    Extremely punctual unless you’re dealing with locals then sometimes the timing gets a little off.
  - **Eye contact & staring**
    Inappropriate to stare
  - **Relationships**
    PDA unacceptable. Holding hands is cute. Kissing is not.
  - **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
    Definitely. People like to dress up here. They never look sloppy. Always very put together.
  - **Alcohol consumption**
    Only local HK students who had studied abroad were more likely to imbibe but when I went out with the locals they’re crazy!
  - **What culture shock did you go through?**
    Only thing shocking was the silent animosity of local HK and Mailand Chinese students…
  - **Other?**

**Banking**
- **Were credit cards widely accepted?**
  Yes.

- **Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**
  Yes. It was easy. Bring your passport and student ID.

- **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?**

- **Were there ATMs on campus?**
  Yes there are ATMs on campus. There’s also a bank with 4 tellers always there.