Instructors

- **What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?**
  They weren’t quite as interesting. They seemed to talk at you more than anything and didn’t really care what you thought. When they ask questions they don’t really guide you to the answer as professors at UCSB do but rather expect you to know what they want from you right off the bat.

- **Could you call them by their first names?**
  It completely depends on the teacher, however quite a few of my professors preferred being addressed by their first names.

- **Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?**
  It was very similar.

- **Were they available for help during office hours?**
  They were all available to answer questions and help, but they didn’t seem to be as concerned with fully explaining concepts in as much detail as one would find at UCSB.

Courses

- **Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?**
  Not more difficult in terms of material matter, in fact it was probably easier than courses at UCSB. The only difficult thing was keeping up with the Spanish.

- **Was the grading system similar to UCSB?**
  No. You are graded on a 1-10 scale as opposed to letter grades. 10 being the highest, 5 being pass and anything below is failing.

- **How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?**
  In general there are very few assignments if any and your grade is based primarily on a single final or a midterm and a final.

- **Did you have oral and/or written exams?**
  I never had an oral exam but a few of my finals were written, such as in class essays.

- **Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?**
  Generally speaking the professors would prefer you take exams during the scheduled times but being EAP students they give us much more leeway.

- **What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?**
  There certainly isn’t as much academic support in Spain as there is in the US. There were no TAs, on campus tutors or workshops like we have at UCSB, but the teachers were generally available for whatever questions the students had.

- **Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?**
  Most definitely! The Complutense program in Madrid is not one that coddles you by any means, and although this may have seemed like something to complain about, in the long run you realize how much it helps you grow as a person. Even making conversation with someone takes effort but you have to take the initiative in order to make friends. There are so many things you have to learn to do entirely on your own while abroad such as: finda place to live after the first month in the dorms, sign up for classes, traverse the city, buy a phone, buy a metro
pass and countless others. Although at first it may seem difficult, all of these things eventually help you gain an indespensible sense of self reliance.

- **Was classroom participation expected?**
No. Generally the professors just talked through the whole lecture and rarely asked questions of the students.

- **How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?**
They were more traditional and there were lots of courses that dealt with Spain specifically.

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**
Classes were usually held twice a week on either Monday, Tuesday or Thursday, Friday and most classes were for an hour and a half long.

- **What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?**
It really wasn’t important to be punctual at Complutense, generally I planned on arriving between 5 and 10 minutes late because the professors were never on time. However eating and drinking in class is something the Spanish students do not do and it’s thought to be rude to do in class. That goes along with stretching and yawning which are also seen to be rude.

**Language**

- **In which languages were the courses offered?**
We were allowed to completely create our own schedules and the majority of people take their classes in Spanish, but you can also take courses in English and a few other languages as well such as Italian, Portuguese, French and others, though these are mainly geared towards studies of those cultures. Everything else is offered in Spanish.

- **What language did you take your courses in?**
With the exception of one class in English all of my classes were 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.**
I took all but one of my courses in Spanish and aside for the first month or so it wasn’t very difficult to understand the lectures being that they were in Spanish. It was overall a great experience, being able to take courses in another language and it definitely makes you more confident in the language and your listening skills improve immensely.

**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 is made of two campuses each used for distinct departments. The campuses have buildings the size of UCSB.

- **Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**
The students who are from Madrid live at home with their families. Others usually live off campus in apartments with other students.

- **If not located in the city center,**
  - **How far or close is it to the city?**
    It is located in the city center. I lived farther than most students do and it only took me about 30 minutes to get to campus by metro and walking.
  - **What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**
The most efficient form of public transport was the metro system. For a monthly pass it cost 29.50 euros for someone under the age of 21, and over the age of 21 it cost 46 euros. Other than the metro you could take the buses which are also a great way to get around, just not as fast as the metro. You can ride any bus without extra charge if you have a metro pass.

○ **Could students take cabs -cost?**
  Taking a cab isn’t very cost efficient but if you’re out late at night and need to get home or need to get to the airport early in the morning before the metro reopens it’s a good option. You can get to the airport from the center for about 30 euros.

○ **How long would it take to get to the city center?**
  It entirely depends on where you live. You can live in the center or if you live outside, because of the metro it should never take more than 20 minutes.

- **Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?**
  Not really. I knew of a few while I was there but they’re not as accessible as the groups at UCSB. Students in Madrid generally aren’t as active as students in the US.

- **Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**
  There is a small bookstore on campus but I actually never bought a book. The professors tend to photocopy all of the reading material necessary for the class.

- **Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**
  There is a computer lab on campus as well as free Wi-fi, so either way the internet is accessible.

- **What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)**
  There isn’t much of a university neighborhood. The campus is technically in the center but a little removed from all the shops and restaurants. Of course if you walk for twenty minutes or take a short metro ride you’re right in the center of town with huge stores and tons of bars and restaurants.

**Housing**

- **What types of accommodations are available to UC students?**
  You have the choice of doing a staying with a host family or finding your own accommodations in an apartment. The majority of the EAP students in the Complutense program while I was there stayed in apartments with other international students.

- **How close are they to campus?**
  It completely depends on where you decide to live. You can be a ten minute walk or a half hour metro ride depending on your preference.

- **How did you find your housing?**
  There are flyers all over town and especially around campus with advertisements for rooms for rent but most people found their housing from online ads. There are websites similar to our craigslist where you can find housing, two of the major ones are idealista.com and segundamano.es

- **Where did you live and with whom?**
  I lived about a 30 minute metro ride from campus on the eastern side of the center with five other international students.

- **If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**
Finding a place to live is a difficult process but you rarely have to find a roommate because you generally rent a room from a group of people who are already living together.

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
  Again, it completely depends. But in general I preferred the rooms in Spain; even the older houses had a lot of charm about them. And most of the rooms are singles, from my experience most people in Europe don’t share their rooms.

- **Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**
  It was slightly cheaper for me than in living in I.V. My rent was 425 euros which is about 600 dollars and that includes utilities. However this number varies and can be more or less depending on what you want/need out of a house.

- **How/who did you pay for housing?**
  I payed my landlord in cash every month. She lived in the building and would come to our apartment when it was time to pay her.

**Food**

- **What was the food like?**
  There is a lot of olive oil in everything and ham is a staple. Nothing is very spicy and deep frying is very common. You can find lots of fruits and vegetables in the supermarkets but not so much when you go out to eat in restaurants.

- **Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?**
  I ate most meals at home.

- **How much was an average meal?**
  You could get a complete menu (a 3 course meal) for 10-12 euros on average. It’s so much food though and if you want something less it’s not hard to get. Food in Madrid overall wasn’t that expensive.

- **What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?**
  Lunch was generally eaten between 2 and 4 in the afternoon and dinner was any time after 9pm.

- **Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?**
  It certainly isn’t as easy as it is in the states but it’s not too hard. It’s becoming a lot more popular to be a vegetarian and there are even some really good vegetarian restaurants in Madrid.

**Travel/Safety**

- **If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?**
  The metro is the best way to get around and the Madrid metro is incredibly efficient and clean.

- **Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?**
  I really did feel safe and the only thing I can say is to be smart. Keep your bags closed and always have an eye out for pickpocketers, even though I felt safe it’s a big city and you need to be aware.

- **Describe the public transportation in your host country?**
  Same as above.
• Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?
Not at all. Madrid has an airport in the city and it has some of the cheapest flights in the country.

Host City/Country
• What was the weather like?
Throughout the whole year the weather is really dry. In the summer it’s extremely hot and in the winter it gets pretty cold. It snowed a handful of times in the winter while I was there but only stuck to the ground 3 or 4 times.

• Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?
It’s a really big city I might liken it to New York.

• What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?
There are lots of really cool parks to go walking or running in. I used to walk to El Retiro which is a park that was right by my house and my roommates and I would just sit in the sun and read books or go walk by the rose garden.

• How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?
It’s very international and there is a lot of tourism especially in the very center of the city. But for such an international city the majority of the people you come across don’t speak much English so there isn’t an issue with practicing Spanish.

Culture
• Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.
  ○ Time & punctuality
  Spaniards are almost always late, and time is a lose term. I purposely showed up to class late because I knew the teacher wouldn’t come until at least 10 minutes after class was supposed to start.
  ○ Eye contact & staring
  The Spaniards tend to stare at you a lot, especially because they can tell that you’re foreign. If you smile at them they won’t smile back though, as is typical in the states and sometimes guys will think you’re coming on to them. But generally they don’t mean anything by it and you shouldn’t feel too unnerved when they stare at you.
  ○ Relationships
  ○ More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?
  They definitely dress more formal in Madrid than I was used to. Even going to school students are somewhat dressed up. You would never see someone go to class in sweats. Never. But parachute pants is typical.
  ○ Alcohol consumption
  They drink much more casually than we do in the states. You always see students drinking beers in the cafeteria during lunch. When they go out to clubs they don’t take shots like most Americans do, they drink slowly throughout the night.
  ○ What culture shock did you go through?
  There wasn’t any one thing that was overly shocking about Madrid but just getting used to a new culture and language was difficult at times.

Banking
- **Were credit cards widely accepted?**
  Yes, you can use your credit card most places, but remember that you lose money in the exchange.

- **Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**
  I did but I didn’t really use it. I think the smartest thing would be to get an account with Bank of America in the states before going and then use Barclays once you’re in Spain. Barclays is a sister bank of B of A so you can take money out without getting charge extra.

- **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?**
  It was really easy and I did it pretty frequently. Popular banks are Santander, CajaMadrid, Barclays and others.

- **Were there ATMs on campus?**
  No.