Double Major: Spanish/Global Studies
Country: Spain        Program: Pre ILP Cádiz and Granada year Immersion
Term & Year Abroad: 2008-2009 Year

Instructors
What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?
The instructors at UGR had very little in common with UCSB instructors, from teaching styles to availability, the UGR professors were generally much less helpful. In many ways the professors are much more formal and they are not very helpful, especially to foreign students. The likelihood of building a relationship with professors in Spain is difficult but not impossible.

Could you call them by their first names?
The Spanish students do a lot of the time; I only did once the professor told me to. Not all my professors allowed it.

Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
In some ways yes, and some ways no. Teachers are very formal during class hours, but after school hours, the relationship is much more personal. It is not unlikely for a teacher to go to a bar with students or have dinner and go for drinks with them. Teachers are much more social with their students and its accepted. Teachers also tend to go by their first names with students.

Were they available for help during office hours?
Sometimes. Most teachers do not show up for office hours or if they do they are not willing to help. There is a lot less support for American students. Not all teachers act this way though; I did have one very helpful professor that showed up for all his office hours.

Courses
Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
It’s difficult to compare the classes at the two universities because they manner in which the classes are run have very little in common. The courses are very easy throughout the semester because you have no form of evaluation or homework. However, the last month of each semester is finals for finals and at that point I studied harder and longer than I have ever studied in my previous years of education. The finals are also difficult because the professors usually pick 1-3 essay questions from all the in class material, outside reading and supplementary readings. You then have to write everything you know on the subject and sometimes these questions can be pretty obscure, there is so much material to know!

Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
No. The grading system is a 1-10 scale. Anything 5 and above is passing, and 9 and 10 grades are fairly uncommon. Spaniards generally are not very competitive in their classes and that makes them really helpful. For this reason, they consider 5 and 6 grades a good grade. Grading in Spain is also based on very few assignments. Generally there is just the final which is based on 2 essay questions and occasionally there is a supplementary 10-25 page extra credit paper, which is worth around .5 if your teacher even reads the paper.
How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
As answered above, I just had finals.

Did you have oral and/or written exams?
Almost all exams were written. I was able to give an oral presentation instead of an essay for one of my classes though.

What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
There is very little. Very rarely do professors give you support, the school has no support system set up either.

Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
Yes, all the time. This doesn’t just apply to school either; I found I had to be assertive to be successful in all aspects of my life in Spain.

Was classroom participation expected?
In some classes no and others yes. Generally in my literature classes expected some discussion. Other classes you just took notes and the professor lectured the entire class.

How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?
Structure, length, how the professors lecture. (There are no PowerPoint presentations or even writing on the board!)

Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?
Classes were always an hour and a half and they aren’t usually on Friday. They also don’t have many classes during the hours of 2-5 because of siesta.

What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?
Students should always be punctual but teachers generally not. Drinking and eating in class is not accepted (you have to hide your water) but some teachers do give breaks to go get coffee or a beer during class. (you would never see that in America!) Computers are also not brought to class, usually only foreign students bring them to class and check with your professor to make sure it is okay before bringing your laptop to class.

Language
In which languages were the courses offered? Spanish only, unless it was a language class, such as French.

What language did you take your courses 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.
The courses are challenging during finals, and it can be difficult to follow all that the teacher is saying. The professors speak fast and do not write anything on the board. By second semester it is a lot easier to keep up in class.

**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 set up like a city school in the America, the buildings are scattered throughout the city and some are clustered in the Cartuja region of Granada. The cartuja buildings look like a cinderblock jail.

**Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**  
Some but not too many of the local students live in dorms called residencias. However most students live in apartments in various places throughout the city.

**If not located in the city center, How far or close is it to the city?**  
Nothing is that far from the city center. You can easily hop on the bus if you don’t feel like walking. If you live in the city center the walk to campus can be a bit inconvenient if you have class in Cartuja because there are multiple hills but you can definitely still walk it.

**What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**  
Relatively cheap. It’s best if you buy the bus card and then fill it with money. That is the least expensive way to go.

**Could students take cabs -cost?**  
Yeah. Whenever I was late I would take a taxi. From the city center to Cartuja it cost around 5 euros.

**How long would it take to get to the city center?**  
From Cartuja, around 10 minutes, give yourself 15-25 minutes if walking.

**Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?**  
Yes, there are sports clubs and I am not sure what else. I do know someone that joined a soccer team.

**Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**  
No, there is no bookstore. Most classes don’t require any books but if you do need a book there are bookstores scattered throughout the city.

**Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**  
Yes there is a lab. It is pretty small at the Cartuja campus and expect to wait some time to sit down at a computer. I don’t recommend bringing a laptop unless you are going to the library. As a warning, there are very few electrical plugs in the library.
What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (Cafes, stores, etc) Cartuja is pretty isolated. There are a few cafeterias on campus though and if you walk down the hill there are fruit stands, a supermarket and café restaurants.

**Housing**

**What types of accommodations are available to UC students?**
The first month or so they have dorms for you to live in. After the dorms, students have to find their own housing arrangements. Most of the students live in apartments.

**How close are they to campus?**
Some students live close to campus near Plaza de Toros, others live in the city center or in Cartuja near campus.

**How did you find your housing?**
I called advertisements off easypiso.com

**Where did you live and with whom?**
I lived in the city center. I had to move multiple times but my last set of roommates was an Italian, a Spaniard and a girl from California. I didn’t plan on living with a girl from California; it was more of a surprise.

**If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**
It’s a little difficult to find an apartment because you are also going to school and it is very time consuming. Most people don’t share rooms though, which makes it easier to just find housemates.

**Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
They are much larger and that is nice.

**Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**
Rent was cheaper than I.V. The typical cost is around 400 dollars but you can find less expensive places.

**How/who did you pay for housing?**
I paid a roommate who paid the landlord.

**Food**

**What was the food like?**
The food was greasy and heavily salted. Most of the food is not very good, especially in the dorms and it is definitely not healthy. Also, watch out for tuna, it’s in everything! Not much is served for breakfast either, usually just toast and coffee.

**Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc.**
I would go to cafés for toast, orange juice and coffee in the morning. I almost always cooked in my house but if I did go out, my friends and I would usually just have tapas.

**How much was an average meal?**
I would spend 2-3 euros for breakfast and then around 6 euros if I went out for tapas.

**What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?**
Lunch is around 2pm and dinner is between 10-12ish at night. Spaniards also eat a snack, which they call a merienda around 7:30 pm.

**Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?**
Yes and no. There are some vegetarian meals, such as tortilla española that don’t involve any meat but some of the other “vegetarian” dishes such as lentil stew will still have pork you have to eat around in it. Spaniards don’t really understand the concept of being vegetarian. Tuna shows up in vegetarian salads and sandwiches.

**Travel/Safety**
If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city? Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?
Yes, I felt safe. It is still a good idea not to walk home by yourself at night though; it gets very dark, especially in all the little alleyways.

Describe the public transportation in your host country?
As I said before, there are taxis and the bus. If you are going long distance there is also a train station or the airport.

Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?
Granada is not in the most ideal location for cheap travel. It is easiest if you first fly to Barcelona or bus to Madrid.

**Host City/Country**
What was the weather like?
Very, very hot in the summer, usually in the 100 ranges or higher, and very cold in the winter, it snows.

Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?
I would maybe say that it is closest to Northern California, just because of the weather.

What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?
I went skiing in the Sierra Nevada, hiked in las alpujarras, sat at mirador San Nicolas and watched the sunset or read.

How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?
There is tourism in the city due to the famous fortress, the Alhambra. Since the Alhambra was the final Moorish capital, there is an evident Arab influence throughout the city. Granada is pretty new to immigration and therefore there isn’t much cultural diversity. Besides Spaniards, there are Senegalese and some Asians. The university is one of the largest international universities in Europe and this brings in some additional cultural diversity.

Culture

Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.

Time & punctuality
It’s almost a joke because Spaniards have their own sense of time and it tends to run around 30 minutes to an hour and a half later than the time given. Our teacher even told us that if someone invites you to dinner around 10 you never show up before 11.

Eye contact & staring
Spaniards are big on eye contact and just close contact in general. They tend to stand very close to you when you talk with them and they are also very touchy. For them, it’s normal. Spaniards also stare a lot and they don’t think it is rude. It is not uncommon to see them staring and pointing at people.

Relationships

More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?
Girls get really dressed up to go to school and on the weekends for church. They also get very dressed up to go to the clubs, depending on what club it is. There are two main sets of people in Granada, the hippie/grunge kids and then the preppy crowd. You will never see a Spaniards leave home in their PJ’s though!

Alcohol consumption
Spaniards drink a lot, but it is much more casual than in the U.S.

What culture shock did you go through?

Other?

Banking

Were credit cards widely accepted?
Not really. Usually they were only accepted at supermarkets and department stores.

Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?
Yes. It was pretty easy to open, however I had to order my ATM card 3 times and I didn’t ever receive it.

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?
There were some pretty bad fees charged but mostly with out our knowledge. I didn’t realize until I got back how inconsistent the charges were and how much money was
being charged per transaction. Some people were able to argue it and get the money back with their bank, but my bank (Citibank) did nothing. It is also good to know that the Citibank in Spain is not directly related to the Citibank in America.

**Were there ATMs on campus?**
Yes.