Instructors

- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?
The way the teachers taught was very different from the UCSB instructors. Most instructors only lectured without engaging the class as much.

- Could you call them by their first names?
Most students called them by their last names to be respectful.

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
It depends on each professor, but the majority of my professors were not as formal as the professors here at UCSB. I had two professors who invited the students to have “tapas” at a bar.

- Were they available for help during office hours?
Yes, and it is recommended to go to these office hours to introduce yourself to the professor.

Courses

- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
It is not exactly the level of difficulty that should be compared, but more so the way the courses are taught. Unlike the quarter system here at UCSB that forces students to stay on top of assignments because of the short amount of time it will be due, the semester in Spain allows more time for this. Not only that, but the only evaluation of the class is the final (and possibly attendance). In this case, you are working your hardest towards the end of the semester when you must prepare for finals. In regards to learning in a foreign language, yes the courses may begin to seem more difficult than courses taught at UCSB. However, by continuously speaking and hearing Spanish, this no longer becomes an obstacle.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
Instead of receiving letter grades, you will receive a score from 1-10.

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
No homework, no assignments, only a final.

- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
I did mainly written exams and also did an oral final presentation.

- Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?
You were assigned a date to take the test and had to be there on that day; no exceptions. (Same applies to UCSB)

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
Office hours enabled you to resolve any issues/questions at hand. It is also extremely common to share notes amongst students, so don’t hesitate to ask to “copy” someone’s notes because he or she will gratefully do it.

- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
Yes, all the time and in various situations not solely academically.
- **Was classroom participation expected?**  
  In most classes it was expected. However, I took a class where the teacher simply lectured and did not ask or engage the class.

- **How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?**  
  No sections were given for courses. The professors do not tell you or remind you of what is needed; you are expected to take the initiative.

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**  
  Classes were mainly twice a week (Monday/Wednesday; Tuesday/Thursday) for about 1 hour and 30 minutes.

- **What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?**  
  It is very important to be punctual. It is seen as common courtesy to arrive on time and ready for class. It was never specifically stated if food or drink was allowed in class, however no one ever ate in class.

**Language**

- **In which languages were the courses offered?**  
  Spanish.

- **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.**  
  Although most may visualize learning in a foreign language to be a very stressful and difficult experience, it is not as scary as you may think. If you talk to the professor during the course letting him or her know you are a foreigner, the professor normally will take that into account. However, this does not apply to all professors.

**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 itself is smaller than UCSB but it is spread out throughout the city in different departments.

- **Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**  
  Most local students live off campus and mainly in apartments. Some also live in “residencias” which is similar to the dorms, where it is common to live in these residencias after your first year at the university.

- **If not located in the city center,**  
  - **How far or close is it to the city?**
  - **What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**
  - **Could students take cabs -cost?**
- How long would it take to get to the city center?

- Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join? Yes, there is a wide variety.

- Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books? No there is no bookstore on campus. There are several bookstores scattered throughout the city where you can buy your books. Also, many professors photocopy readings where you can buy each article at an office on campus.

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

- What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (Cafes, stores, etc) It varies within each department of the university, but the main one (Cartuja) it is primarily amongst apartments and a few small stores, cafes and stands.

**Housing**

- What types of accommodations are available to UC students? You have many options: you can stay with a family, live in dorms (“residencias”) or find an apartment to live in (which is what the majority of students tend to do).

- How close are they to campus? If you live in the center of downtown, it is about 30-40 minutes walking uphill or you can take a bus that takes about 15-20 minutes.

- How did you find your housing? By walking around the city looking for advertisements with students seeking one roommate. I called and visited the various places available.

- Where did you live and with whom? I lived in the center of the city with a Spanish roommate and two French roommates.

- If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate? In the beginning it was stressful and difficult finding the apartments throughout the city, but after seeing many apartments and slowly becoming more familiar with the city, it wasn’t too bad.

- Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms? The rooms were much nicer than rooms in Isla Vista. It was also common to have your own room, and it is a lot cheaper than having your own room in I.V.

- Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars? It was a lot cheaper: about 450 dollars.

- How/who did you pay for housing? We had a bank account made special for all of the roommates to put in their own share of the rent, and this bank account would directly send the money to the owner of the apartment.
Food
- What was the food like?
The food is very bland in comparison to many American dishes and is also heavy in olive oil. A lot of the food in Southern Spain is fried, especially in the tapas made.

- Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?
I made most of my meals and also went out to various tapas bars.

- How much was an average meal?
You could easily get a “menu del dia” which is made up of 3 entrees for a reasonable price of about 15-20 dollars.

- What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?
Lunch is normally around 3pm and dinner is around 10 or even later.

- Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?
Eating in restaurants may be difficult because meat is incorporated in several meals, however if he or she eats fish it will be much easier to find accommodating meals.

Travel/Safety
- If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?
Public transportation consists of a city bus that runs throughout the city.

- Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?
Yes, I always felt very safe walking throughout the city. There are certain neighborhoods that are known to be less safe especially at night, but the UC Center instructors will inform you on that. It is always recommended to never walk alone during the night and keep your purse close.

Describe the public transportation in your host country?
The bus system is the cheapest and most efficient way. Trains are another option but are more expensive.

- Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?
From Granada flights were much more expensive than flying from Madrid or Malaga, so traveling to neighboring countries always required an extra 5 hours to get to the airport and then take a flight, making your traveling more difficult and long.

Host City/Country
- What was the weather like?
Very hot in the summer and extremely cold in the winter, and it even snowed a few times.

- Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?
Granada is a small, unique city with a student atmosphere; a city where many individuals come from various parts of Spain or Europe. It is small enough to be able to walk everywhere (the main downtown area and popular neighborhoods), but it is big enough to not become bored.

- What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?
With the beautiful Sierra Nevada Mountains at such a close distance, I frequently went on camping trips and hikes. I also was able to see several, live Flamenco shows and witnessed an intense passion for dance that I had never seen before.

- **How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**

Since Granada houses the Alhambra, the number one most visited monument in Spain, this brings many tourists to the city. There is also a big, college atmosphere, bringing students from all over Europe to study at the University of Granada.

**Culture**

- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  
  - **Time & punctuality**
  
  Spaniards openly state that they are always late and go by a different “clock”.

  - **Eye contact & staring**
  
  Spaniards believe eye contact is important and use it all the time. Staring is used more and openly in Spain than in the US, especially with older males.

  - **Relationships**

  - **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
  
  Dress is definitely more formal in general. Be it for going to class, grabbing a cup of coffee or taking a walk. Spaniards always look presentable and do not show up to class wearing sweats. Women wear heels more frequently than in the US; it is normal to see students wearing heels to class.

  - **Alcohol consumption**

  Alcohol consumption is a normal activity in a Spaniard’s life; they grow up with it. It is common to start drinking wine (or beer) at a young age with your family. Alcohol consumption is also more frequent but is not consumed in vast quantities.

  - **What culture shock did you go through?**

  - **Other?**

**Banking**

- **Were credit cards widely accepted?**

Yes, but not if you are shopping at a local fruit/vegetable stand or market. In that case, only cash is accepted.

- **Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**

No it wasn’t necessary.

- **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 easy to withdraw money from ATMs, however you were always charged for doing so. That’s why I would tend to take out as much as possible at one time.

- **Were there ATMs on campus?**

Yes.