Instructors

- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?

Professors at the university ranged from all types of characters. Some were boring, but others were understanding and helpful.

- Could you call them by their first names?

I would not call them by their first names. It was comical at first because of the additive last names in Spain, so I never knew which to use if not both. In the end, I used both.

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?

Again, depending on the professor and your involvement with the subject. Office hours were nondescript and difficult to get to because the letters and science campus is located on top of a large hill.

- Were they available for help during office hours?

Yes, but much better to specify that you’re coming beforehand.

Courses

- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?

No. The workload was really intense in the last month and a half of each semester, but before then, almost nothing.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?

Not at all. It was on a number scale from 1-10. Anything below a 5 was not passing, and it was almost impossible to get a 9/10 from any professor – even for the Spaniards.
- **How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?**

A lot of final papers. One that I did was over 50 pages.

- **Did you have oral and/or written exams?**

Yes, lots of oral presentations.

- **Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?**

Inflexible, but they coordinate the exams so none fall at the same time. They’re very spaced out over the course of a month.

- **What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?**

My Spanish friends proofread my papers.

- **Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?**

Definitely. No one was reaching out to help, so I definitely had to seek it out.

- **Was classroom participation expected?**

No. In most classes, it was definitely encouraged, and in the political science classes the students loved to debate.

- **How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?**

The lectures are very traditional. Getting a power point from a professor was a treat, and even getting lectured by the same professor all semester was rare.

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**
The same structure as UCSB, usually a Tues/Thurs or MWF type format and no longer than 2 hours.

- What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?

Punctuality depends on the professor, for the most part they were late if they showed up at all. Definitely no eating or drinking in class except for water. No going to class in sweats or workout clothes. Everyone was very composed.

Language

- In which languages were the courses offered?

Spanish and a few English.

- 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.

At first it was definitely a struggle. I worried about my grades. The difficulty of taking notes while trying to comprehend everything the professor was saying was very prevalent. It’s a much better idea to try to listen and stay focused rather than taking notes. Spanish students take very detailed notes and are more than willing to share them with you.

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?
University of Granada is huge, with students from all over the world participating in “Erasmus”. I think it was around 80,000 including all of the campuses. There is no single campus; it’s an urban setting with its buildings scattered around the city.

- **Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**

The local students usually live in apartments around the city. The idea of the Spanish university is very economical, school is basically free and set up for students to live at home while they attend, but in Granada most lived in apartments to be closer to their perspective campus.

- **If not located in the city center,**
  - **How far or close is it to the city?**

I switched between two campuses, the political sciences and “Cartuja”, the letters and science. Political science was very easy access, about a ten minute walk from the city center and close to lots of cafes and cafeterias for cheap student food. Cartuja is an extreme hike uphill and not near anything. The bus system is efficient and goes to/from basically anywhere in the city, but sometimes it’s difficult because they get so crowded during school hours.

  - **What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**

Granada is very easy to walk, but if you needed to get somewhere quickly, the bus system is nice. It costs about 1.20 euro per ride and even cheaper with a bus pass.

  - **Could students take cabs -cost?**

I only took cabs when my parents were visiting and to cart all of my luggage to the bus stop at the end of the year. 15 euros can get you across the city by cab.

  - **How long would it take to get to the city center?**

From my second apartment, about a 20 minute walk. From my first campus, about 10 minutes. It’s relatively close to everything.
- Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?

Yes, but they’re not very popular. Students mostly do their own thing.

- Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?

I didn’t need to buy books. Professors only used readers, and those were available at the photocopy store on each campus.

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

There are computer labs at every campus, students don’t bring laptops to class.

- What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)

Political sciences was right in the city center, so lots available. Cartuja had one cafeteria on campus and the rest was residential.

**Housing**

- What types of accommodations are available to UC students?

Dorms, host family, apartments

- How close are they to campus?

Everything is relatively close

- How did you find your housing?

At first, by pulling phone numbers off of telephone poles, then meeting people.
The first place I lived was in a nice area, a living room converted into a bedroom. It was completely furnished and the rent was about 220 euros a month. The only problem was the psychotic Spanish woman in her 30s who scared me and my roommates out of the apartment. The second place I lived was also nice, not in as great of an area and a bit further from everything.

- If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?
  No, it's a city full of Erasmus exchange students and Spanish students constantly looking for roommates and apartments.

- Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?
  My first room was much nicer and way cheaper. The second place I lived in was much more crammed by UCSB dorm standards but still much cheaper than anything here.

- Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?
  It was much cheaper. You wouldn't pay more than about $300 US for any single room.

- How/who did you pay for housing?
  The first place I had a landlord who also cleaned once a week. The second place, I paid a company with a local office.

Food

- What was the food like?
  I mostly ate tapas, which came with drinks. They were small meals and varied depending on the cool tapas bars you could find. A lot of the cheap food was dense, included a lot of sea food and sauces, but no spices.

- Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?
  The university cafeteria was a good amount of food for cheap during the weekdays, but I felt pretty unhealthy going there often as a lot of it was fried or heavy on the carbohydrates. I started doing a lot of cooking for myself at home during the week and going out for tapas on the weekends.

- How much was an average meal?
  An actual meal could cost anywhere from 10-15 euros. Tapas were about 2 euros each with a drink, about 3 tapas could constitute a meal.

- What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?
  Lunch is at 2 and dinner is around 8 or 9

- Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?
  Yes, a lot of the plates include meat without saying they do. Tapas are often served without the knowledge of which you'll even get. The Spanish pride themselves on their rich ham.
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?
I felt safe for the majority of the time in my city. I walked home alone at night often, although reflecting back I probably shouldn't have in the second neighborhood I lived in. My parents were pretty distraught to see where I lived and how nonchalantly I took walking around at night. I would say to always walk home with someone, make friends with students living with and around you, or even take a cab.

- Describe the public transportation in your host country?

- Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?
Very easy. The buses were cheap and efficient.

Host City/Country
- What was the weather like?
Swelteringly hot in the cities in the summer, all the Spaniards migrate to the coast for the summers and everything shuts down. Definitely colder winters than I expected, I needed to buy a few real winter coats!

- Describe your host city...which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?
Architecturally, I would say it's similar to Santa Barbara.. Or rather, Santa Barbara mirrors Granada! The great thing about Granada is that it isn't like anywhere in the US. It's a decent sized city, it has a city feel, but at the same time it's filled with mostly students from around the world looking to meet people and speak the language.

- What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?
Granada was filled with activities at all hours, day and night. I hiked through the hills that surrounded the city, snowboarded the original Sierra Nevadas, embraced the coffee culture and sat for hours talking about everything from politics to the crazy things that happened to me on a daily basis, went to class sometimes (kidding!), went to a few flamenco shows (mostly for tourists), went to a couple concerts at a cool venue on the outskirts of the city, laid in the grass in the parks, took illegal dips in the river, went to a water park, danced until the sun came up..

- How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?
Extremely diverse and only a place for the travel savvy tourists, as it's not the most well known in Spain. A lot of history buffs come to see the Alhambra. International business is not as much of a factor as it would be in Madrid or Barcelona.
Culture
- Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.
  o Time & punctuality
    Not a factor.
  o Eye contact & staring
    Definitely prevalent.
  o Relationships
    Hard exterior, but once a Spaniard lets you in, you're friends for life.
  o More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?
    Much more formal. Sweat pants are not an option outside the home.
  o Alcohol consumption
    A popular activity
  o What culture shock did you go through?
    Struggling with the way the university system worked, definitely not as straightforward as UCSB. I also missed the ocean a lot.
  o Other?

Banking
- Were credit cards widely accepted?
  Not really, cash was much more widely used.

- Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?
  No.

- 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?
  Not very easy. My bank didn't quite have a partner bank in Granada, but I found one that didn't charge me for withdrawals and there were only 2 in the entire city. Barclay's is it for Bank of America.

- Were there ATMs on campus?

I think so, but they definitely charged.