Instructors
- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?
  I thought they were very accommodating to me as a foreigner. It seemed like they knew I was there
to experience a lot and seemed to keep this in mind when assigning work. Most of them were very
understanding if I missed a class to travel, but at the same time they expected me to respect the
flexibility they gave me by making the most of their classes and completing all of my work.

- Could you call them by their first names?
  Yes, there didn’t seem to be as much of a power difference between me and my professors here.

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
  I had some great relationships with my professors and felt like they saw me as an equal. 3 of the 4 of
my professors really made an effort to get to know me and seemed to appreciate any extra effort I put
into getting to know them.

- Were they available for help during office hours?
  Definitely! They were very reachable though email, which was great if I had questions or concerns
while traveling. I think showing an active interest in your classes while abroad made it easier to form
friendly relationships with my professors.

Courses
- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
  Not the courses I took. Far less reading was expected of me – I spent a total of about $10 on course
material. More emphasis is put on tests and papers, but the professors made this apparent
throughout the course.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
  No- they use a number system (1-10).

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
  Most of my classes just had a final exam or a final paper. The classes I took through EAP were set up
more like UCSB classes where we had a paper, a midterm, and then a final exam.

- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
  For my Spanish grammar class that I took through EAP we had several oral presentations. For the
classes I took through the University of Barcelona I had several take home written exams.

- Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?
  I took my finals on the scheduled dates, however I think if there had been some scheduling conflict
the professors would have been understanding and worked something out.

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
  The professors were willing to work with me if I had any questions. The EAP office was very helpful
when it came to choosing my classes and communicating with UCSB about academic advising.

- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
Yes! I found that I really had to stay on top of ‘taking care of business’ because it was easy for important deadlines to sneak up on me. There were a lot of details I would be held accountable for that I had to make sure I was aware of. The EAP office did a great job of keeping us up to date on what was expected of us, but we had to make sure we were getting done what we needed to.

- **Was classroom participation expected?**
  Yes. Most of my classes were very interactive and expected students to know what was going on.

- **How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?**
  I felt like my courses at the University of Barcelona were less theoretical and based on more general analyses of the area of study. Less memorization was expected and more applied implications of learned material were involved in tests and papers.

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**
  I had a set schedule, just like at UCSB, however several of my classes were cancelled every now and then. We had several breaks and holidays, which was nice to take time to travel.

- **What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?**
  Eating and drinking is not allowed in class. Neither is yawnning. It’s seen as really rude (even if you can’t control it). Less people were on their phones in class than at UCSB, and the professors basically expected you to be paying attention at all times. The professors are very understanding, but at the same time they have different cultural norms when it comes to classroom etiquette, and it is expected that you treat them with the respect they deserve.

**Language**

- **In which languages were the courses offered?**
  Spanish, English & Catalan

- **What language did you take your courses in?**
  Spanish, English & Catalan

- **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 I took in Spanish and Catalan were language courses, so they were set up similarly to UCSB language courses.

**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?**
  There are several campuses (called facultats) around Barcelona and some of them were at the edge of the city and took a while to get to. The main campus is a beautiful building with the most amazing arquitecture ever! There are wonderful gardens to hang out in and courtyards to spend time between classes in. There are lots of cats all over the campus. Another facultat I had class at was more modern and had a nice cafeteria to spend time in. All of the campuses I went to were very unique; they all had space to hang out in between class.

- **Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**
Most of the local students still live with their parents. Many of them commuted from pueblos (towns) outside of the city, which made it difficult to meet up with them. I found that other international students were living in the same situation as me.

- **If not located in the city center,**
  - **How far or close is it to the city?**
    - The different facultats are all over the city. Some are centrally located, while others may take a good 50 minutes to reach via public transportation. (This was something that got to be less of an annoyance as time went on)
  
  - **What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**
    - The metro is great! I suggest buying the t-jove pass. It’s a 3 month pass that has unlimited rides. Other wise you use a lot of swipes getting to and from class.
  
  - **Could students take cabs -cost?**
    - Cabs are not terribly expensive, but the metro is the most cost efficient way of getting around. I found myself taking cabs coming home from discotecas if the metro was closed.
  
  - **How long would it take to get to the city center?**
    - The city center is very accessible using the metro, but certain areas of the city may take a good 30 minutes to reach (taking line transfers and the lack of reliable public transportation schedules that sometimes happened).

- **Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?**
  I did not get involved in any, however there were lots of signs around for ‘intercambios’. These were conversational gatherings that allowed international students to mingle with local and international students; you could use these to practice languages, learn about a culture, or just meet some new people. I wish I had participated in these.

- **Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**
  I got a reader from a copyroom located in the basement of one of my facultats. Another book I had to get was available for purchase at a bookstore just around the corner. The professors were willing and able to explain how to get course material if I was confused at all.

- **Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**
  There were computers in the library. This was the best way to print things! These were way more affordable than internet shops.

- **What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)**
  There was a cafeteria that I spent a lot of time at. It seemed like a lot of local students would do that same. There are all types of restaurants around the facultats.

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**Housing**

- **What types of accommodations are available to UC students?**
I had a homestay for 2 weeks and was expected to find housing in this time. Although it was really stressful to worry about finding a place to live when I first got there, I’m glad I had the final say. I got to choose exactly where I wanted to live, with whom I wanted to live, and how much I wanted to pay. There were lots of options, and I was very happy with my apartment in the end.

- **How close are they to campus?**
  It took me about 30 minutes to get to my facultats.

- **How did you find your housing?**
  I used a site similar to craigslist- I emailed or called people then went to visit the apartments. Other people in my program recommended apartments they had looked at, and this was how I eventually found a good match in the end.

- **Where did you live and with whom?**
  I lived in a neighborhood called ‘Gracia’ with a 40 year old Spanish woman and a 21 year old Italian guy. It was great because they didn’t know English very well so I had no other option than to practice Spanish all day long at home.

- **If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**
  Barcelona seemed to have lots of available rooms for rent. I didn’t have any issue finding somewhere to live.

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
  The rooms are rather small, but it was rare to share a room. It was nice having a single seeing as I have lived in triples in the dorms and apartments at UCSB.

- **Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**
  I paid about 650 US$ for a single with a balcony. There was a large range of prices and accommodations. It’s not uncommon for some people to try to rip you off since you are a foreigner; to avoid this I asked the EAP office there what they thought of the accommodation I found and they gave me an honest response.

- **How/who did you pay for housing?**
  I paid the lady I lived with. I gave her 400 euro in cash on the 1st of every month. I made sure to get a receipt the first time so we had a paper trail of the transaction. Even if I felt like I was being a little over cautious, it was better than potentially being taken advantage of financially.

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**Food**

- **What was the food like?**
  Lots of oil; your stomach may take a week or so to adjust. There are not as many fresh fruits and vegetables; It took a little searching to find the best fruit stands in my neighborhood. There are lots of fresh markets that sell fruit and veggies for better prices than the grocery stores. The little markets on every corner are the most expensive way of buying food; I suggest looking for chain supermarkets. These chains are the most similar to what we are used to here probably.

- **Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?**
  I found a lot of good, affordable restaurants in the neighborhood called Gracia. There are a lot of cheap tapas places all over and its best to try random places and figure out for yourself where the best food is. I highly suggest checking out the big markets with fresh produce and meat. There are several
around the city; it’s a great experience, very fresh, and not much more expensive than a chain grocery store. Lots of the local students would bring food to school with them to eat in between classes, and I quickly picked up this habit. I made food with friends at home a lot. It’s a great and affordable way to eat.

- How much was an average meal?
I spent about 7-12 US$ per meal if I ate out, but of course the cheapest option was the make food at home.

- What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?
Lunch is anywhere from 2pm-4pm and dinner was typically around 9-11pm. You get used to this after a while.

- Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?
While meat is a big part of Spanish cuisine, I feel like there were lots of vegetarian options and a good number of restaurants that specialized in vegetarian and vegan food in the more ‘hippie’ areas of town.

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 very safe in Barcelona- there always seemed to be people around, and as long as you’re smart, you won’t find yourself in dangerous situations. Be VERY cautious of your purse- pickpocketing is very serious there and almost all of my friends were robbed at least once. Try to not carry valuable things with you if you don’t need to- then you have nothing to lose.

- Describe the public transportation in your host country?
The metro was the main way I got around. It’s a really great system – very reliable. There were often interesting people to watch; sometimes I even got into interesting conversations with random people on the metro. If you find yourself taking the metro a lot, I suggest buying the unlimited 3 month pass (t-jove).

- Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?
I ended up flying mostly when I traveled. The trains didn’t seem to be much less expensive, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t a good way of getting places.

Host City/Country
- What was the weather like?
When I first got there in January, everyone was super bundled up and EVERYONE wore boots, but to be honest the weather wasn’t bad at all. It rained a little and was kind of cold, but people there seemed to freak out about the weather. I suggest having a pair of boots and a jacket when you arrive, but know that you may want to buy things that are more along the lines of what people there are wearing (there is lots of shopping there).

Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?
Some parts of Barcelona reminded me a lot of San Francisco, and other parts felt very like a city from an entirely different era. The architecture is AMAZING in Barcelona, and each neighborhood has a very distinct style and feel. I suggest walking around all of the neighborhoods and seeing what each has to offer. Even though Barcelona is a coastal city, most of the city feels very metropolitan and there doesn’t seem to be a very beachy feel.

- **What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?**
  I loved exploring the many parks the city has to offer. There are so many parks with great views and exciting scenes. These parks get super busy once it starts getting warmer and the tourist season picks up. I also spent a lot of time going out to discotecas- there are so many clubs! Check these out if you want to see some wild nightlife.

- **How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**
  I felt like there was a big international scene in Barcelona- there seemed to be people from all over and a lot of people spoke English. There are of course a lot of Catalan people, but there is also a lot of cultural diversity.

**Culture**

- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  - **Time & punctuality** - Spanish people seem to be late for everything (in comparison to our cultural norm for timeliness). I found I was always late for everything there because I tended to underestimate how long it actually took to get places. I must have been enjoying riding the metro or something.

  - **Eye contact & staring** – PEOPLE THERE STARE! They stare like no other, and in the beginning when everything felt foreign this made me a little uneasy, but I quickly got accustomed to this and realized they are just seeing what’s up and nothing more. If a guy is staring at you just use your best judgment. Sometimes giving someone a friendly smile (which is considered polite in the US) may come across as an invitation to start a conversation.

  - **Relationships** - Spanish men are much more forward than men in the US and seemed to be very interested in American girls. They like to take girls on dates and seem genuinely interested in getting to know you.

  - **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?** – Nobody wears workout clothes or sweat pants to class, so if you want to not stand out, I suggest putting on some real clothes before leaving the house.

  - **Alcohol consumption** – Spanish people seemed to drink casually, and drinking during the day is very common. Having a beer or a glass of wine with lunch is normal, even at school. Spanish people like to party and drink a little more wildly for special events – festivals, sporting events, discotecas, etc, but it is completely acceptable to partake in these events without drinking.

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

  - **Other?**
**Banking**

- Were credit cards widely accepted?
  - No, it was best to have cash. Some major stores accepted credit cards, but I was hesitant to take my card with me on a daily basis (pick pocketing was a really common thing).

- 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?
  I opened a Charles Schwab Account before going – they reimburse all foreign transactions, which saved me a lot of money. I highly suggest opening an account that does so or else you have to spend 5$ or so everytime you want money and end up having to withdraw lots of cash at a time.

- Were there ATMs on campus?
  I remember seeing one. There were lots of ATMs around the different campuses.