

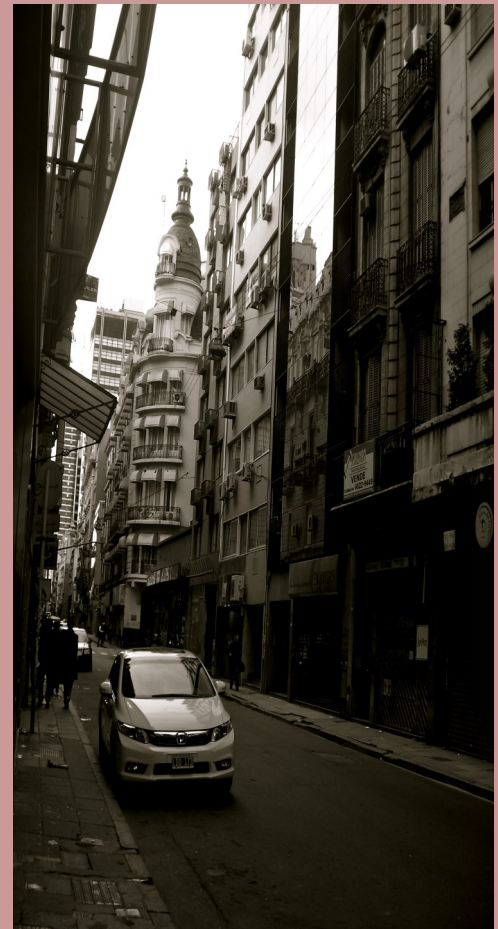
Here's my Study Abroad Story

Jessica Ortiz Garcia CIEE: Buenos Aires Liberal Arts Buenos Aires, Argentina

Major: Government/Spanish Dual

Program: The CIEE Buenos Aires office is located in the center of Buenos Aires, sharing its facilities with Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO). With completed and continuing renovations, the offices provide a space for students to study, classrooms, and a computer lab. There is a staff of twenty people ready to help students from all over the United States make the most of their time in Argentina. Groups of students that average between 50-75 are distributed among three dedicated and approachable student coordinators. The coordinators assist students with everything they might need be it academics, homestays, or general guidance. Beyond the classroom, CIEE provides many opportunities to experience different aspects of Argentine culture. I went to phenomenal small-scale community theatrical productions. I also attended a Pumas rugby game and a futbol game between Argentina and Venezuela, an experience I will never forget. The program includes a trip to the northern province of Jujuy, a completely different cultural experience from Buenos Aires. As a group we also went to a campsite where we got to eat a traditional *asado* and experience a small part of the *gaucho* culture.

Typical Day: My alarm would go off at nine every day and the first thing I would do was put the kettle on the stove for my morning yerba mate. An hour before class started I would head out and catch bus number 29. I would either be heading over to the CIEE office, to study or take one of my CIEE/FLACSO classes, or to the UBA Social Science building for a class. I would get a



bite at one of the many cafes lining the streets of Buenos Aires. Depending on the day I would attend an evening class and then head back home on the 29. At 9:00 PM the family would get together and eat dinner. During my free time I would roam the city with my camera and take pictures of the unexpected, such as a group of Argentine parkour athletes. I also took advantage of all the museums, most of which had no charge or had special days where they charged 2 pesos. I would spend a great deal of time at many of the plazas dispersed around the city.

Highlights: Yerba Mate, a traditional Argentine drink made from the mate bush plant. The dried leaves and sticks of the plant are steeped in warm water and sipped with a metal straw out of a mate; a receptacle made out of wood, metal, blown glass, or a gourd. If you see me around campus I will most likely be carrying my mate, until I run out. I really enjoyed my host family. I had the best host family anyone could ever ask for. My host mom was always very attentive and she treated me like one of her kids. My host brother Axel is one of the coolest and most relaxed 16-year-olds I have ever met. And Vicky, my 14-year-old host sister is überfashionable. I enjoyed living in Buenos Aires. The city is full of history, and you can see its age on the facades of the buildings that line its streets. From colonial to modern, the city is full of great architecture. The café culture was spectacular. And if you ever find yourself in Buenos Aires, go to a Havana Café and ask for a "submarino." It is really great hot chocolate.

Challenges: Spending over six months in any single location, without leaving briefly and returning is hard for me. But to combat this I actually became better acquainted with the city because I spent my time walking anywhere and everywhere. The classes at the University of Buenos Aires were hard. The material was challenging, especially because most of the students in both of my classes had a four-year foundation on the material, and it was my first time studying sociology. But again, the solution was to ask a lot of questions both to the professors and the students.

