



Middlebury

Middlebury Schools Abroad Evaluation for the 2008-2009 Academic Year/Spring Semester

Evaluating your period of study abroad is one of the most valuable services you can render Middlebury College and future students planning to study abroad, and it is one of the most important ways you can help us maintain the highest possible standards. For this reason, until this form is submitted to International Programs and Off Campus Study a hold will be placed on official Middlebury transcript requests for Middlebury College students who studied at Middlebury Schools Abroad. Please note: If you studied abroad for two semesters on two different programs, you must submit two separate evaluations.

The staff of International Programs and Off Campus Study welcomes the opportunity to hear about your experiences abroad; please feel free to stop by or call and talk with us!

This document contains respondents between 1 and 1 inclusive.

Home Institution

Middlebury College

Other Institution

If other than Middlebury, please indicate your home institution:

.....

With which program did you study?

Middlebury School in China

Middlebury School in France

Middlebury School in Germany

Middlebury School in Italy

Middlebury School in Latin America

Middlebury School in Middle East

Middlebury School in Russia

Middlebury School in Spain

At which site did you study?

- Alexandria
- Beijing (not J-term)
- Belo Horizonte
- Berlin
- Bordeaux
- Buenos Aires
- Concepcion
- Cordoba
- Ferrara
- Florence
- Florianopolis
- Getafe
- Guadalajara
- Hangzhou
- Irkutsk
- Kunming
- La Serena
- Logrono
- Madrid
- Mainz
- Montevideo
- Moscow
- Niteroi
- Pairs
- Poitiers
- Santiago
- Temuco
- Tucuman
- Valdivia
- Valparaiso
- Xalapa

At which university did you primarily conduct your studies?

- IN CHINA ---
- Zhejiang University of Technology
- IN FRANCE --
- Universite Bordeaux 3 - Michel de Montaigne
- Universite Bordeaux 4 -Montesquieu
- Sciences Po - Bordeaux
- Universite de Poitiers
- Centre Madeleine
- Universite de Paris 1 - Pantheon Sorbonne
- Universite de Paris 3 - Sorbonne Nouvelle
- Universite de Paris 4 - Sorbonne
- Universite de Paris 5 - Descartes
- Insitut Catholique
- Ecole Normale de Musique Alfred Cortot
- Ecole Speciale d'Architecture
- Sciences Po - Paris
- IN GERMANY ---
- Freie Universitat
- Johannes Guttenberg Universitat
- IN ITALY ---
- Universita degli Studi di Ferrara
- Middlebury College School in Italy - Sede
- Universita degli Studi di Firenze
- IN LATIN AMERICA ---
- ARGENTINA-
- Universidad de Buenos Aires, Ciencias Sociales
- Universidad de Buenos Aires, Filosofia y Letras
- Universidad del Salvador
- Universidad Torcuato di Tella
- Universidad Nacional de Tucuman
- BRAZIL-

Pontifica Universidade Catolica de Minas Gerais

Universidade Federal Fluminense

Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

-CHILE-

Universidad de Chile

Universidad de Concepcion

Universidad de la Serena

Pontifica Universidad Catolica de Chile

Universidad de la Frontera

Universidad Austral de Chile

Universidad de Playa Ancha

Universidad de Valparaiso

Pontifica Universidad Catolica de Valparaiso

-MEXICO-

Universidad de Guadalajara

Universidad Veracruzana

-URUGUAY-

Universidad Catolica del Uruguay

Universidad de la Republica

Universidad ORT

--- IN THE MIDDLE EAST --

Alexandria University

--- IN RUSSIA ---

Irkutsk State University

The Russian State University for the Humanities

Yaroslavl Pedagogical University

--- IN SPAIN ---

Universidad de Cordoba

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

Universidad de la Rioja

Middlebury College School in Spain - Sede Prim

What was the period of your study abroad?

- 2008-2009 Fall Semester
- 2008-2009 - Spring Semester
- 2008-2009 - Academic Year
- 2007-2008-2009 - Spring then Fall Semester

Given that overseas educational systems differ significantly from our own, please reflect on your adjustment to your host country's educational environment. What effects did this different academic environment have on how you learned, both inside and outside the classroom? In what ways did you benefit from being in a different academic environment.

The academic environment in Uruguay - and in Latin America in general as far as I know - is much less grade oriented. The main goal students have is not a good GPA but rather to pass the courses required for their particular program. The teachers share a somewhat similar view, that grades don't really matter as long as you pass, which made it somewhat unnerving for the first few weeks until I had my first graded assignment. It turned out that I did fine in my classes by American standards (stellar by my classmates standards) and adapted well to the Uruguayan/Latin American educational style. This different academic environment was beneficial in that it allowed me to experience an unfamiliar academic setting and realize that I could still succeed.

AFTER studying abroad, how do you now view the differences/similarities between the culture of your host country and that of your own?

	Identical	Very Similar	Mostly Similar	Somewhat Different	Very Different
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Please Comment:

Uruguayan culture is quite different from that of America. Before going to Uruguay I had heard that Uruguay was the Switzerland of Latin America and very European. It turns out that Uruguay was the Switzerland of Latin America back when it had a thriving economy in the 1920s. Uruguayans themselves will tell you the Switzerland of Latin America aspect of the country is long gone. Modern Uruguay is more of a Europe that had an economic boom almost a century ago and then stagnated. The culture, as a result I assume, is therefore rather pessimistic. Uruguayans have a phrase about this particular attitude: "We complain when we're full and we complain when we're hungry." The gaucho influence is still strongly felt (especially with mate and parilla) and tango is viewed as an important cultural asset, but the culture overall feels somewhat morose. Many of my friends commented that Uruguay shouldn't even be a country but rather a province of Argentina.

Uruguayan culture is very different from that of the USA but seems like a less optimistic version of Argentinean culture.

How has study abroad influenced your understanding of your host culture? In what ways has it influenced your perceptions of American culture?

I feel like I understand Uruguayan culture much better than I did before (as I knew nothing about it). Living in the country for five months obviously gives you many opportunities to learn about its culture and I feel like I gained a strong understanding of how Uruguayans view themselves and what they feel it means to be Uruguayan. My time there influenced my view of American culture in that it made me appreciate it much more. You don't realize how lucky you are until you step away from your situation.

In what ways has study abroad contributed to your personal growth? What personal characteristics did you find most useful during your time abroad?

I would say this particular study abroad experience (compared to my experience in the fall in Japan) contributed to my patience and adaptability. I didn't really like Montevideo but I made the best of it (I think) and survived the five months. I adapted to the situation (which I couldn't change) and didn't give up and come home early. It was a good experience in terms of personal growth but not necessarily and incredibly enjoyable one.

How has study abroad influenced your academic and career goals? How has it influenced your personal goals?

This experience made me realize that I don't really like the Spanish language. I like that it allows me to communicate with people who I wouldn't be able to converse with otherwise but the language itself just doesn't appeal to me as much as it once did. I think a lot of that has to do with how long I've been studying it (almost 12 years) and how much more I like Japanese as a language. As such, this experience helped me decide that I want to pursue a career in relation to Japan and Japanese and only use Spanish as a tool when needed. It also made me decide to drop my Spanish major and just pursue a minor.

What was your housing situation during your study abroad?

- Homestay
- Dormitory/Student Residence/Foyer
- Apartment
- Other (please describe)

Do you feel that your housing situation provided you with an opportunity to integrate into the host culture, and/or provided you a context for gaining insight into the host culture?

					Very helpful in terms of fostering insights and/or my integration
	Not at all - it was isolating	Somewhat helpful, but less than I expected	As helpful as I expected	Somewhat more helpful than I'd expected	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please comment on your response to the question above.

My housing situation was by and away the worst part of my experience. A big part of me feels like I would have come away from Uruguay with a much more positive impression had the situation been different. I spent the semester living with a retired Uruguayan woman (in her 50s) and another student from the US. The other student and I got along really well, but that didn't help my integration at all as he was American. The woman, who I would have expected to help me with integration, had a very hands off approach. To be perfectly honest, I'm pretty sure she only hosts students for the money (which by Uruguayan standards is very good). I paid her for housing, breakfast and dinner. She was almost never up when I left for class so I was on my own for breakfast and she would leave dinner in the refrigerator for me and my housemate. The food was perfectly fine but she never ate with us, further distancing me from any sort of interaction and integration with Uruguayan culture. In addition, she had a very controlling and stubborn personality. She took it upon herself to "educate" my housemate and myself on "proper" behavior, insisting that we unplug the router at night, not use lights during the day (even if the room was dark because it was cloudy out), not use any form of heat (even of terribly cold nights), not eat "too much" (a term that seemed poorly applied to my housemate and myself), etc - all delivered with a very belittling demeanor. All in all it was not a very pleasant experience and, like I said, possibly the worst aspect of my stay there. I would have moved out (which you are allowed to do after two months) but Middlebury wouldn't have let me get an apartment with my housemate who I had become very good friends with and who I didn't want to leave. Anyway, I highly caution against living with Ana Delbene if you want any sort of personal freedom while you are in Uruguay.

Did you take courses alongside students from the host country?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the question above, how well do you feel that your mainstream classes helped you to develop relationships with nationals of the host country or integrate into the host culture?

- Poor
- Neutral
- Helpful
- Very Helpful
- Not Applicable

Comments

Did you participate in any extra-curricular activities or internships?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the question above, were your extra-curricular activities helpful in assisting your integration into the host culture?

	Not helpful		Somewhat helpful		Very helpful
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please describe the extra-curricular activities or internship in which you participated, and make any additional comments about these activities that you think would be helpful to Middlebury staff or future students.

I did an internship at INACAL, the Instituto Nacional de Calidad, not because I had any sort of interest in quality practices but because there was a senior Japanese volunteer there from JICA, Takeshi Noda. I acted as his assistant, translating and interpreting between Japanese and Spanish. He, as well as the other members of the Institute, was wonderfully friendly and great to work with. This particular internship, however, is probably only suited to people looking for a translation position between Japanese and Spanish.

What was the language of the host country?

- Arabic
- Chinese
- French
- German
- Italian
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish

What kind of progress did you make in your listening comprehension of the language?

	No improvement	Little improvement	Improved somewhat	Improved	Very much improved
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What kind of progress did you make in your ability to read in the language?

	No improvement	Little improvement	Improved somewhat	Improved	Very much improved
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What kind of progress did you make in your ability to write in the language?

	No improvement	Little improvement	Improved somewhat	Improved	Very much improved
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What kind of progress did you make in your ability to speak in the language?

	No improvement	Little improvement	Improved somewhat	Improved	Very much improved
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please comment on the progress you made in your target language. Was it greater or less than you had expected? What do you think were some of the factors that contributed to your progress (or lack thereof), either on your own part or on the part of the program? Do you have any specific suggestions for the program and/or for future students that pertain to language learning?

My Spanish improved in all areas but not as much as I had hoped it would. I think a lot of that had to do with the fact that it took a long time for me to make Uruguayan friends and the fact that I was living with an American in my homestay. As far as the program is concerned, I enjoyed the blog part of the Cuaderno but felt that the biweekly Spanish classes were superfluous.

Are there any particular academic strengths of your host university/program that you would recommend to other students?

Yes

No

Please explain:

Good Audiovisual communications program

Are there any particular academic weaknesses of which other students should also be aware?

Yes

No

Please explain:

Somewhat unmotivated students

Please tell us about the courses you took, including what level (intro/upper/seminar.) If you did an independent study project or internship, please describe it.

Course Title #1

Linguistics

At which institution/university did you take this course?

Universidad ORT

Means of assessment (e.g., papers, exams, homework, etc.)

2 Papers, 2 exams

Please describe the course content:

Introduction to Linguistics

Please describe the means by which the material/concepts for this course were conveyed, particularly if the teaching style was different from what you are used to.

Photocopies

Other comments about this course:

Good intro to linguistics - especially interesting because the examples were, obviously, in Spanish

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statement:

"This course helped me to improve my knowledge about the subject."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statement:

"The instructor's teaching in this course was effective."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please tell us about the courses you took, including what level (intro/upper/seminar.) If you did an independent study project or internship, please describe it.

Course Title #2

History of Film

At which institution/university did you take this course?

Universidad ORT

Means of assessment (e.g., papers, exams, homework, etc.)

Four 8 page essays, one in class exam

Describe course content

History of film from its beginning to the 1950s

Please describe the means by which the material/concepts for this course were conveyed, particularly if the teaching style was different from what you are used to.

Books and films

Other comments about this course:

A very good film history course - well structured and well presented

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statement:

"This course helped me to improve my knowledge about the subject."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statement:

"The instructor's teaching in this course was effective."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please tell us about the courses you took, including what level (intro/upper/seminar.) If you did an independent study project or internship, please describe it.

Course Title #3

Photography

At which institution/university did you take this course?

Universidad ORT

Means of assessment (e.g., papers, exams, homework, etc.)

Photographs

Describe course content

Photo techniques/practice

Please describe the means by which the material/concepts for this course were conveyed, particularly if the teaching style was different from what you are used to.

Powerpoint

Other comments about this course:

This course was somewhat loosely laid out - the majority of the real work for the course was done outside the classroom on assignments

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statement:

"This course helped me to improve my knowledge about the subject."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statement:

"The instructor's teaching in this course was effective."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please tell us about the courses you took, including what level (intro/upper/seminar.) If you did an independent study project or internship, please describe it.

Course Title #4

Internship

At which institution/university did you take this course?

Instituto Nacional de Calidad

Means of assessment (e.g., papers, exams, homework, etc.)

Final paper, Attendance

Describe course content

Translating Spanish/Japanese, helping Mr. Noda with his preparations for presentations

Please describe the means by which the material/concepts for this course were conveyed, particularly if the teaching style was different from what you are used to.

Other comments about this course:

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statement:

"This course helped me to improve my knowledge about the subject."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statement:

"The instructor's teaching in this course was effective."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For the following questions, please rate your experience with Middlebury staff and staff abroad using the five-point scales provided.

Did Middlebury provide you with adequate information prior to departure?

	Poor		Good		Excellent
	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Did Middlebury provide you with an appropriate orientation on arrival?

Poor

Good

Excellent

Did Middlebury provide you with sufficient support while you were abroad?

Poor

Good

Excellent

Were your on-site staff concerned about your general well being and success, and approachable?

- Not concerned or approachable
- Approachable, but not concerned
- Concerned, but not approachable
- Somewhat concerned and approachable
- Very concerned and approachable

Did you see or experience any form of discrimination or harassment in your host country?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the question above, what advice would you give to future students? Likewise, if you have advice for Middlebury staff, please share that as well.

Be careful where and when you identify as Americans as there are some (not many) who have a very strong dislike for us.

Would you recommend that other students attend this program or university? Why or why not?

- Yes
- No

Please explain:

The program and University were fine, it was the city and housing situation that I didn't like.

What advice would you give to other students considering study abroad in general, and this program or university in particular?

Study abroad is difficult, no way around it. It won't be a semester long vacation and it will be hard. That being said, it can also be incredibly fun and rewarding. Uruguay is fine, there are many parts of the country that are very beautiful. Likewise, Montevideo is fine - it's one of the safest cities in Latin American. Neither the country nor the city, however, were for me. I would highly recommend doing some serious thinking and investigation before picking a destination. Even just looking at guide books can give you a good feel for a certain place.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE STUDENTS ONLY: Did you attend Middlebury's on-campus pre-departure orientation meeting(s)?

- Yes
- No

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE STUDENTS ONLY: Did you find the pre-departure meetings and handouts useful?

- Yes
- No
- N/A - Did not attend meetings

ALL STUDENTS: What aspects of the pre-departure process did you find particularly useful (or not), and how would you recommend that we improve the pre-departure meeting or supplemental materials?

The pre-departure meetings and materials were fine but they didn't really answer the questions I wanted answers to. It's been a long time since I went to them so I don't remember what specifically they were missing, just that I left feeling slightly unprepared. Sorry for the vagueness.

ALL STUDENTS: Would you like to make an appointment (in person or phone) with International Programs and Off-Campus Study to discuss your study abroad experience?

- Yes
- No

MIDDLEBURY STUDENTS ONLY: Would you be interested in volunteering your time to help with pre-departure orientations and/or other study abroad meetings or promotional activities?

- Yes
- No

ALL STUDENTS: May we use your comments in future publications?

- Yes
- No