



SPANISH
STUDIES
ABROAD

Since 1969

The CENTER for CROSS~CULTURAL STUDY

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO STUDENT HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

Mission Statement	2	Travel & Visits from Family & Friend	9
Travel Information	2	Vacation and Long Weekends	
Booking Your Flight		Packing Suggestions	9-10
Arrival		Fashion, Clothing, Other Items	
Orientation		Security and Personal Care	
Getting Ready to Go to San Juan	2-6	Plug-in Appliances	
Online Account		Housing	10
Items You Must Send to the U.S. Office of Spanish Studies Abroad		Housing Norms for Students and Host Families	
Passport and Visa		Special Dietary Needs	10
Budgeting for Your Trip		Public Transportation	10-11
Income Taxes, Power of Attorney		Keeping in Touch with Family & Friends	11
Absentee Voting		Mail, Information on Packages	
Facebook Group, Accepted Students Chat, Departure Newsletter		Telephone, Email and Computers, Video Calls	
Emergencies and Emergency Contact Information	4	Billing Details	11-12
Health Insurance and Medical Care	4-5	Payment of Fees, Financial Aid	
Program Health Insurance		Scholarships	12-13
Prescriptions, Injections		Spanish Studies Abroad Scholarship Program	
Health Information for Travelers to Spain		Videographer Grant	
Academics with Universidad del Sagrado Corazón	5-8	Alumni Scholarship Fund	
Spanish-Only Policy		Possible Additional Fees	13
Puerto Rico Placement Exam		Transcript Fees	
Course Registration		Refunds	
Course Withdrawal Policy, Program		Places to Stay in San Juan	13
Transfer Policy, Academic Honesty, Final Examinations, Transcripts		Academic Pledge, Program Conditions & Release Statement	14-15
Experiential Learning Opportunities	8-9		
Internship and Service Learning			
Course Option, Deadlines			
Volunteer Opportunities			
Group Meetings and Activities			
Speaking Partners Program			

Mission Statement

The mission of Spanish Studies Abroad (The Center for Cross-Cultural Study or CC-CS) is to promote in-depth understanding of Spanish-speaking countries for our students, through specifically designed academically rigorous university-level and cultural travel programs. We consider all of our students to be willing to cross cultural boundaries, to live as members of another culture, and to thus learn about others as they learn about themselves.

In accordance with our mission, Spanish Studies Abroad promotes equal opportunities within our programs and does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, physical ability, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. We believe in educating students on cultural tolerance and sensitivity, acceptance of differences and inclusiveness.

Travel Information

BOOKING YOUR FLIGHT

In order to allow flexibility to our students in making flight arrangements, we do not offer a group flight option. We recommend that you check [Student Universe](#) for student airfare. You may also opt to explore other search engines or contact a local travel agent for flight arrangements. When booking your flight, please refer to your program calendar located in your e-acceptance packet, the link was sent to you in your acceptance email.

Once you have your itinerary, you must submit your arrival information to our U.S. office via your online account. If you have any delays or last-minute changes in your itinerary, please inform our U.S. Office at info@spanishstudies.org and your parents. If you are en route to San Juan, you will need to also inform the San Juan Resident Director, Dr. Gloria Matanzo (see San Juan office contact information below).

Note: Your Spanish Studies Abroad program at Universidad del Sagrado Corazón (USC) is academically rigorous and you will generally have class from Monday to Friday with around three Monday or Friday holidays throughout the semester. Additionally, there is a two-day Thanksgiving Holiday in the fall semester and a weeklong recess during Holy Week in the spring semester. If you intend to do extensive traveling while in Puerto Rico, we encourage you to do so during the holiday breaks or at the end of your program; so plan your return flight home accordingly. Housing through Spanish Studies ends the last day of the program.

ARRIVAL

You will be responsible for making transportation arrangements to your on campus residence hall on your own and for all costs involved. You should plan on arriving at the residence hall no later than 5pm. Spanish Studies Abroad staff will be at the airport on the program start date between typically between 9am and 1pm to pick students up. *Please note the time the staff will be at the airport is subject to change and will be confirmed in your Departure Newsletter that will be sent out a few weeks before the start date of the program. Please look for the Spanish Studies Abroad signs and staff once you get your luggage at the San Juan airport. If you arrive outside the designated time you will be responsible for making transportation arrangements to the dorms and for all costs involved. A taxi from the airport should cost \$20 to \$25 and take about 15 minutes. Tell the taxi driver to take you to **Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, Ave. Ponce de León, Parada 26 ½, Calle Rosales, Esquina San Antonio, Santurce Puerto Rico**. When you arrive at the university, tell the security guard that you are going to *las Residencias Universitarias* so they will let the taxi drive you there. When you arrive at the residence hall, there will be someone at the front desk to receive you.

Getting Ready to Go to San Juan

We are sure you are excited about your experience abroad, but before you depart, there are a few things you need to take care of. Please read through this handbook carefully!

ONLINE ACCOUNT

All students studying with Spanish Studies Abroad have an online account. If you applied with an online application, you did so through your online account. If you applied via paper application, an account was created for you. Please use your online account to complete important pre-departure tasks. To access your account, go to www.spanishstudies.org and click the

“Login” link at the top of the page. You will then be prompted to enter your username and password. If you have forgotten your password, you may request a new one on the login page.

ITEMS YOU MUST SEND TO THE U.S. OFFICE OF SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD

In order to finalize your acceptance in a Spanish Studies program, you must submit the following items via your SpanishStudies.org account as soon as possible. All pre-departure items will be due within two weeks of the application deadline.

- One digital passport-sized headshot (The photo should be approximately 175x175 pixels and in JPG format and should be emailed to info@spanishstudies.org)
- USC Matriculation Form
- USC Residence Application Form
- USC Health Certificate
- USC State Police Record
- Spanish Studies Health Form
- Arrival Information (Include airline carrier, flight number, date, time, and city of arrival).
- Speaking Partners Form

PASSPORT

For U.S. citizens, travel to Puerto Rico is easy. You do not need a passport. All you need is government issued photo identification. **Please note that although you are not required to bring a passport to Puerto Rico, you should bring one if you intend on traveling to a non-U.S. territory during your stay in San Juan.**

VISA

Non-U.S. citizens may be required to apply for a visa, even for short term programs in Puerto Rico. Consult the American consulate in your home country about visa requirements well in advance of the program start date.

BUDGETING FOR YOUR TRIP

Below you will find a detailed estimate, which explains how to budget for personal expenses and other costs not covered by your Spanish Studies Abroad program fees.

	<u>Semester</u>	<u>Short-Term</u> (per term)
Books and supplies*	\$1,250	\$200
Bus transportation	225	70
Every-day & going out expenses	2,000	500
Food	3,000	750
Weekend trips (on your own)	500	250
Flight	500	500
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>150</u>
Total	\$7,125	\$2,420

*You will not need to purchase books prior to your arrival in Puerto Rico. Your professors will inform you of the materials you will need and where to purchase them.

We figure the average student will spend about \$250 USD per week while in San Juan. Of course, some will spend more and others will spend less. Think about your lifestyle and budget accordingly. A drink and appetizer at a bar or pub costs approximately \$20 USD. You should plan on spending about \$50 per month for ground transportation. If you stay out late at night, you should plan to take a taxi home. The cost is between \$10 and \$20 per ride, depending on the distance.

In total, we recommend that students budget a **minimum** of about \$1,500 per month for expenses in San Juan. Although lodging and study tours are included in the program fees, students will also want to have extra spending money for going out with friends, making a special weekend trip on their own, or buying gifts to take back to friends and family at home. These figures are general guidelines and may be different for each person’s budget and lifestyle in San Juan.

Keep in mind that you will be responsible for all of your meals. You will have access to a full kitchen shared by your floor of the dormitory. There is a 24-hour *Supermercado Pueblo* less than one mile from the USC campus where you can buy groceries and personal items. Additionally, there are two cafeterias on campus open Monday-Saturday.

INCOME TAXES

U.S. residents who are abroad during the Spring Semester will need to make arrangements for filing federal and state income taxes. Individuals who are temporarily living abroad can request an extension on the deadline for filing their federal income tax return. This extension is generally until June 15. Please note that if money is owed to the government and an extension is filed, interest will be charged on the amount, if it is not received by April 15. For more information on federal income tax laws and regulations, please consult the IRS official web page www.irs.gov or call (800) 829-1040. Individuals should contact their state government for regulations information on extending state taxes.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

If your signature will be needed for any official or legal document while in Puerto Rico, you should make the necessary arrangements for a “power of attorney” to be held by parents, guardians, or another appropriate person to act on your behalf. This can be done by writing out in detail the specific duties that this person will have, (i.e. signing a check; corresponding with the school or university about financial or academic matters; or obtaining medical records and information, in case of an emergency). This letter should then be notarized so that it is legal and official. Public notaries are available at many banks, post offices, public libraries, and town halls.

ABSENTEE VOTING

Voting is a privilege and right for all U.S. citizens. If you are abroad during an election, Spanish Studies Abroad urges you to take advantage of this right by voting via absentee ballot. You should apply to do this before you leave home. U.S. citizens can get more information, as well as the forms needed to apply for the absentee ballot, by visiting the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at www.fvap.gov or by calling your local city clerk’s office.

facebook PAGES

While you may have already joined the [Spanish Studies Abroad Facebook page](#), students should also plan to join the location-specific page for [Spanish Studies San Juan](#). This page is for alumni, current students, and prospective students, so it will be a great resource to you as you begin to prepare for your program and meet fellow San Juan students. Prior to the start of the program, the Puerto Ricans who participate in the Speaking Partners Program will also be invited to join the fan page. This will help Spanish Studies students to meet their Speaking Partners before the beginning of the program. For all program-related questions for Spanish Studies staff, please email info@spanishstudies.org.

ACCEPTED STUDENT CHAT

Students accepted into a Spanish Studies San Juan program will be invited to participate in an Accepted Students’ Chat before their departure. During this chat, students will be able to ask Spanish Studies staff, Spanish Studies Abroad Resident Director in San Juan and sometimes alumni, specific questions about study abroad in San Juan. Dates and information on how to log in to the chat will be sent closer to the chat date.

Emergencies and Emergency Contact Information

In the U.S.

Spanish Studies Abroad
446 Main Street
Amherst, Massachusetts 01002-2314
tel (413) 256-0011
fax (413) 256-1968
info@spanishstudies.org

In San Juan

Resident Director: Dra. Gloria Matanzo
Spanish Studies Abroad
Universidad del Sagrado Corazón
San Antonio & Rosales St
Santurce, Puerto Rico 00914-0989
tel (787) 728-1515
fax (787) 728-1692

Health Insurance and Medical Care

PROGRAM HEALTH INSURANCE

We contract a health insurance policy for all students who participate in our programs; this cost is included in the program fees. **All Spanish Studies students are required to participate in the medical insurance program, whether you have insurance at home or not.** Should you need medical attention, contact our San Juan Office and a staff member will help to make an appointment with a physician.

Note: *Psychological conditions and pre-existing conditions are not covered by the Spanish Studies insurance.* For further details regarding health insurance, refer to the copy of the insurance policy (*Panamerican Life Insurance*) included in your acceptance packet.

Although we provide medical insurance while in Puerto Rico, if you also have medical insurance at home, it is a good idea to take along one or two claims forms. These would be used if you need treatment for a pre-existing medical or psychological condition or medical attention while traveling outside of Puerto Rico; or encountered health issues while traveling outside of the program dates. Please note that you are only covered through Spanish Studies for the dates of the program, so you should also plan to bring claims forms if you are traveling before or after the program. If you have dental insurance at home, you should also bring some dental insurance claims forms with you, in case you need dental treatment while you are abroad. Most U.S. insurance should work in Puerto Rico since it is a U.S. commonwealth, but you should confirm that your insurance provider works in Puerto Rico before you start your program.

If you are under medical or psychological treatment at home, you should speak with your doctor about the possible effects of study abroad and cultural change on your condition. If you have any pre-existing medical or psychological conditions, you should bring a copy of your medical records, in case you need treatment in Puerto Rico. It is important to note that eating disorders are considered medical conditions and must be reported on your health statement. **Withholding medical information could result in your dismissal from the program.**

PRESCRIPTIONS

If you take any prescription medication, be sure to bring enough for your entire stay. These should be in their original containers: that is, labeled with your name and the name of the prescription drug. For safety's sake, you should take a written prescription for replacement of the drugs should they be lost. The prescription should bear the generic name (chemical composition) of the drug, NOT the brand name, since medicines purchased in other countries usually have different brand names than the same medicine in Puerto Rico; though this prescription may not be enough at pharmacies, it will help a Spanish doctor make a valid prescription. Also, if you wear glasses, you should take an extra pair.

INJECTIONS

If you require regular injections, you should bring syringes with you from home. The cost of having injections administered by a healthcare professional is not covered by your Spanish Studies insurance so be prepared for that expense. In order to get your injections at a clinic in San Juan, your doctor at home must write you a letter with the following information:

- Directions on how to administer the injection
- How often the medication is administered
- Generic name of the medication
- Components of the medication
- Exact dosage of medication needed
- Any possible side effects
- Any other relevant information for administering the injection

Send a copy of the letter to our US office, and take another copy to Puerto Rico.

HEALTH INFORMATION FOR TRAVELERS TO PUERTO RICO

Please check the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [website](#) for up-to-date information on required vaccinations and tips on staying healthy in Puerto Rico.

Academics with Spanish Studies Abroad and Universidad del Sagrado Corazón

Spanish Studies Abroad offers programs in San Juan in cooperation with the Universidad del Sagrado Corazón (USC). Semester and academic-year students may select from two programs: Spanish Studies and Integrated Studies. Summer

students participate in our 4-week or 8-week program and choose both Spanish language courses and electives taught in Spanish.

All students are required to take a 3 or 6-credit Spanish language courses throughout the duration of the semester. In this intensive language course, you will study alongside other non-Puerto Rican students mostly from the mainland United States, and perhaps Latin America and Europe. This course is required to strengthen your Spanish language skills. Students will also be required to take a course called “Cultural Realities of Puerto Rico” in order to learn more about the culture of your new city culture.

In addition to the Spanish language and “Cultural Realities of Puerto Rico” courses, Spanish Studies students will take “The Political, Economic and Social Reality of Puerto Rico, the Caribbean and Latin America” and/or “Service Learning Seminar”. All courses will be taught in English with the exception of the Spanish language course.

Integrated Studies students will take all of their courses in Spanish and will choose their remaining courses from a variety of departments at USC.

Summer students are enrolled in language classes alongside other international students at USC or electives with Puerto Rican students.

Spanish Studies programming is academically rigorous; you can expect one to two hours of study at home for each hour of class time. This is probably comparable to the amount of work you have at your home college or university. What will be especially challenging, at first, is that some classes are taught in Spanish. The first week or so of those classes will probably be the most frustrating in that respect; just stick with it and remember that your peers and professors will be supportive. Before you know it, you’ll be following your classes taught in Spanish without any trouble at all.



SPANISH-ONLY POLICY

When you submit your application, you sign a Spanish-Only Contract, agreeing to speak Spanish as much as possible while you are on our program. We take our Spanish-Only Policy very seriously and you should as well. Let’s be perfectly honest: it’s a waste of time and money if you go to Puerto Rico and speak English with your friends in the program. Make an effort, not just in class, but in the street, in your residence hall, in bars and clubs—everywhere you go in Puerto Rico. It’s the only way to make your Spanish Studies program the experience you want it to be. To reference the Spanish-Only Policy, as well as the Academic Pledge and Program Conditions and Release Statement, that you signed please refer to the last pages in this handbook.

Note: Spanish is the official language used in all orientations, classes, PowerPoints, discussions, trips and excursions, etc.

PUERTO RICO PLACEMENT EXAM

Students attending programs in San Juan will take a Spanish language placement exam at Universidad del Sagrado Corazón during orientation, before classes start. The university will place students in the appropriate language classes and activities as determined by the placement exam results. For this reason, please note that the courses you choose in your Course Selection form of your online account are simply used for pre-registration and will not be finalized until after the start of the program.

COURSE REGISTRATION

The preliminary Course Selection form you submit with your Pre-Departure materials will be the first step in selecting your classes for the program. A few factors may change your original course selection:

1. If you have not met the prerequisites for a class you have chosen
2. If the class you want is already full
3. If you have too many or too few credits and need to alter your schedule accordingly
4. If a particular course is canceled due to under-enrollment
5. If your performance on the placement exam in San Juan indicates a need for a change

The Pre-Registration Form you submitted with your application was the first step in selecting your classes for the program. Please consult the course catalog for descriptions and other instructions. A few factors may change your original course selection:

1. If you have not met the prerequisites for a class you have chosen;
2. If the class you want is already full;
3. If you have too many or too few credits and need to alter your schedule accordingly;
4. If a particular course is canceled due to under-enrollment
5. If your performance on the placement exam in San Juan indicates a need for a change.
6. If the class you want doesn't suit your schedule.

Any changes that you would like to make to your course registration once your Pre-Registration Form has been submitted must be sent via email to info@spanishstudies.org, after consulting with your Academic Advisor. Your course registration will be finalized once you arrive in San Juan.

COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Students may add or drop courses without penalty only during the Add/Drop Period of the program. The Add/Drop Period is one week long. If you think you would like to make changes to your schedule please speak with the Resident Director or professor of the course right away. Once the Add/Drop Period is over, students that drop a course will receive a "W" for "Withdrawal" on their Spanish Studies Abroad and USC transcripts. Any student who is not present for the final examination and has not previously withdrawn from the course will receive a grade of "F" on his or her transcript

PROGRAM TRANSFER POLICY

Please be aware that students who transfer programs (e.g. Integrated Studies to Spanish Studies) for any reason, must follow the calendar of their new program. Regardless of the original program that a student chose, housing through Spanish Studies expires on the date of the new program. Students will be responsible for adjusting travel arrangements and paying any associated fees that may arise due to the program transfer. This policy applies to students transferring programs either before or after their departure date.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

We hold students to the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating. Any student who is academically dishonest will face disciplinary sanctions, which may range from a failing grade on the assignment to dismissal from the program. **Incidents of academic dishonesty may be reported to the student's home campus.**

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

For the dates of final examination week, refer to the calendar included in your acceptance packet. You must take your final exams as scheduled, so your flight should depart on or after the program end date.

TRANSCRIPTS

Universidad del Sagrado Corazón (USC) processes grades at the end of each program. The U.S. office of Spanish Studies will mail your official USC transcript accompanied by a Spanish Studies transcript to the address provided in your application and a student copy will be mailed to your home address. **Note: Transcripts for integrated courses may be delayed due to the USC academic schedule.** If there is an outstanding balance on your account, your transcript will be held until the balance is paid.

Spanish Studies transcripts show course numbers and titles, the number of contact hours and credits, and the grades for all coursework undertaken on a Spanish Studies program, including Independent Research Projects (IRPs) and coursework completed at USC. Grades and credits are reported according to the semester-hour system. Universidad del Sagrado Corazón is an accredited U.S. degree-granting institution so you will most likely not need to request any additional transcripts (unless you need an IRP on a transcript from a U.S. degree-granting institution). If your school requires that your grades be reported on a transcript from a U.S. degree-granting institution, you may receive a transcript from our School of Record, Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio. Additional fees are charged by Heidelberg University for this service. Please contact our U.S. office for more information about this transcript option.

As a general rule, students should have all courses and co-curricular studies approved for transfer credit by their home institution before the start of a program. This can normally be arranged through a study abroad advisor or registrar.

If you need an official transcript in the future, we charge a fee of \$10 for the initial transcript and \$5 for each additional transcript per batch. If the receiving institution requires a copy of the USC transcript from Puerto Rico, the student is responsible for postage. You should submit the Spanish Studies Transcript Request Form to our U.S. office with the following information:

- Your name and the program you attended
- Your birth date
- Your current contact information, including e-mail address and phone number
- The name and address of the person/institution to whom/where you would like the transcript sent

You may either choose to pay by **check made payable to: The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc.** or fill out a credit card authorization form that is available on our website

This form is available on our website at www.spanishstudies.org/transcripts.

Note: If you received a transcript from a U.S. degree-granting institution, you will need to contact Heidelberg University to request an additional transcript. Please visit the university's [website](#) for a transcript request form and information about associated fees.

Experiential Learning Opportunities

Spanish Studies Abroad semester or academic year students with an advanced level of Spanish are strongly encouraged to pursue one of our Experiential Learning opportunities. These include completing an internship, a service learning project, volunteering, or conducting an independent research study. In some cases, students who are participating in both summer terms may also have time to take advantage of one of these opportunities, such as volunteering. If you have any questions, you can find more information [here](#) or you may contact the Spanish Studies Abroad office in the U.S.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer opportunities give students a chance to get to know the local community and improve their Spanish in the process. Past volunteer projects have been available in schools and non-profit organizations. While a volunteer opportunity is more flexible, since it is not-for-credit, students are still expected to make a solid commitment and to maintain a set schedule. Interested students may inquire about this opportunity during their first week of the program.

GROUP MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

The Resident Director periodically holds group meetings with students. These meetings give you the opportunity to discuss any questions you may have, as well as to share experiences and information. Meetings are also held before all Spanish Studies-sponsored trips for pre-trip orientation.

In addition to group meetings, Spanish Studies sponsors a number of activities throughout the program, including Speaking Partners with Puerto Ricans; participation in sports at the USC facilities; international festivals; round tables; and various workshops. There are also opportunities for cultural visits in San Juan, excursions to other sites in Puerto Rico, and more. More information will be made available at orientation and throughout the course of the program. Some activities may entail an additional cost.

Note: Due to insurance regulations, it is not possible to bring guests, including visiting family members and friends, on official Spanish Studies program excursions and visits.

SPEAKING PARTNERS PROGRAM

In order to provide a deeper immersion experience and connect students with locals, Spanish Studies has developed The Speaking Partners Program. This is a mandatory conversation exchange program, where students learn and practice Spanish with a native speaker, in turn helping him or her to learn and practice English. Our goal is to encourage cultural exchange and promote long-lasting friendly and cordial relations between the Speaking Partners.

Speaking Partners should plan to meet at least once a week (more for short-term programs) and speak one of the languages (Spanish or English) alternately at each meeting. In addition to these regular meetings, which students and Speaking Partners are responsible for coordinating independently, Spanish Studies will also host group activities throughout the program.

Spanish Studies staff will be available for students whenever they need advice and, if requested, will assign new or multiple Speaking Partners.

Travel and Visits from Family & Friends

Since the Summer Terms are intensive programs, classes are held Monday through Friday. During the Semester, classes are held Monday through Thursday. Cultural visits in the afternoons and weekend travel will provide plenty of opportunities to get to know Puerto Rico outside the classroom. There are plenty of towns near San Juan that make for great day trips during the weekend.

You received a program calendar in your acceptance packet to which you can refer for academic dates, holidays, vacation dates. Though most of these dates are firm, some of the holiday dates are subject to change by the Puerto Rican civil authorities, which may force us to change some of the vacation dates. Therefore, you and your family should make only tentative plans for independent travel until you arrive in San Juan. At the beginning of the program, you will be given a more definitive calendar. We request that you not plan trips with your family when classes are in session. Please be aware that if you transfer programs (e.g. Integrated to Spanish Studies) for any reason, you must follow the calendar of the new program, adjusting travel arrangements accordingly.



Note: Travel and excursions that are included in the program are mandatory for all students.

VACATIONS AND LONG WEEKENDS

These vacations are a great chance to travel to places that may be hard to get to on a weekend. You may want to take this opportunity to travel around Puerto Rico and become acquainted with other regions of the country. You may prefer to travel to other countries if time permits.

Packing Suggestions

Puerto Rico has a Caribbean climate with an average 85% humidity rate. You should dress accordingly. Very little cooler weather items are needed. Keep in mind that most places are air conditioned and you should pack a **light sweater or long sleeve shirt** for these situations.

CLOTHING

- Casual pants (jeans are okay)
- Several shirts, long- and short-sleeved (mostly short-sleeved)
- Plenty of socks and underwear
- Lightweight pajamas for warm weather
- Slippers to wear around the dorms
- Shower sandals for the bathroom
- Comfortable shoes for walking
- One pair of sneakers, just in case
- One or two dressy outfits
- Bathing suit
- Shorts, capri pants, and/or skirts*

Pack as lightly as possible, since you'll have to carry everything. Keep in mind that you'll probably buy some clothing in San Juan, as well, and you'll have a laundry facility in your residence hall.

*Don't bring very short skirts unless you are prepared to deal with the attention they might draw.

Other items

- This Handbook and the San Juan Cultural Guide
- Spanish Studies Departure Newsletter (sent via email a few weeks prior to departure)
- Travel books (try Lonely Planet or Fodor's)
- Spanish-English dictionary and grammar book
- Bedding (for a twin bed)
- Bath towel and washcloth
- Alarm clock
- Waterbottle
- Beach towel
- Camera
- Backpack (or book bag)
- Any cosmetics/products you use
- Medicines for cold and upset stomach
- Vitamins
- Pictures of family, friends, and home
- Prescription medications, if needed
- Sunscreen
- Umbrella
- Watch
- Your favorite music (iPod, etc.)

* Many of these items are for your room in the residence hall and can be bought when you arrive in Puerto Rico.

SECURITY AND PERSONAL CARE

We suggest taking a suitcase that locks so you can keep valuable items secure at all times. This would be the place to keep your passport, airline tickets, traveler's checks, extra cash, and anything else of value that you don't want to leave lying around.

You will be able to find a lot of the everyday products you need in San Juan, so there is no need to stock up on shampoo or feminine hygiene products. Take just enough for the first part of the trip so you'll be able to get settled in, but don't over pack this kind of thing. You can get medicines at pharmacies in San Juan which are the same as in the mainland US (Walgreens, CVS, etc). However, if you are trying to save room in your suitcase these products can be left out.

PLUG-IN APPLIANCES

The electrical current in Puerto Rico is 110V which is exactly the same as in North America so any electronic devices that you have should work without converters.

Housing

Students will be housed in single-sex, on-campus dorms. The dormitories will be double-occupancy, with air conditioning, telephone to receive calls, desk and chair, closet, and kitchen with refrigerator, stove, and microwave. Students will also have access to washer and dryer, game room, infirmary, study room, TV room, computer rooms with internet access, and access to the gym, pool, and other sports facilities on campus. You will be responsible for bringing your own sheets, pillows, towels, etc. You may bring these items from home or can purchase them in San Juan.

If you ever have a problem with your housing assignment, tell the Resident Director right away, so that she may help you to resolve the difficulty. The Resident Director will assist you in working out whatever problems come up, and if things don't get resolved, help you to decide if you would like to move to another room.

Note to all students: We do not offer housing in the dormitories during the days prior to the start of the program. If you are arriving early to San Juan, you will have to make your own hotel arrangements.

Note to Academic-Year Students and Students Participating in Multiple Programs: Students participating in an academic year or other programs combining two or more terms of study may choose to travel between terms or stay in the program location. **Please note that the USC dorms are closed between semesters and students will have to arrange their own accommodations for this period of time.**

Special Dietary Needs: Vegetarians, Vegans, and Gluten-Free

There are very few vegetarians in Puerto Rico. As you will notice from the descriptions of Puerto Rican food in our *Know before You Go* guide, Puerto Rican culture is not particularly vegetarian-friendly. It is possible, however, to be a vegetarian in Puerto Rico. You will have a fully equipped kitchen in your dormitory therefore you can buy groceries that suit your needs and prepare your own meals. Keep in mind, the selection may be somewhat different than you are accustomed. You should be very careful in restaurants and make sure that the bean dish you are ordering doesn't have meat in it anywhere, and lard is commonly used to prepare food. Many vegetarians will opt to eat fish while in Puerto Rico; this will give you more options and probably allow you to eat more healthily while abroad.

If you plan to change your diet and begin eating fish, meat, or even dairy, you should start incorporating these foods into your diet before you leave, so that you will not be sick at the start of your program in San Juan. Vegans will be hard pressed to eat very well in Puerto Rico, but again, you will have the ability to prepare all of your meals.

Public Transportation

USC is a 5 minute walk from the metro stop Sagrado Corazón. USC also offers a free shuttle service called "El Dolphy" to the metro stop. There 2 bus systems to get you around the city. All 3 public transportation systems cost riders \$0.75 and they are able to transfer for free between the three systems using a stored-value card, similar to the Metrocard system used in

New York City. During orientation at the start of the program, you will learn the details of the buses and metros available at various times. This will help you organize your route and any transfers you might wish to make.

BUS AND METRO

The closest metro stop to USC is Sagrado Corazón. Both the metro and buses service this station. For more information on the bus and metro lines in San Juan, visit <http://www.dtop.gov.pr>. Keep in mind that most buses only run until 10 pm and the metro runs until 11:30 pm. This means you will have to plan accordingly to catch the last bus/metro, or find other means of transportation.

TAXIS

Taxis are available, but are more expensive than taking the bus or metro. Taxis can be hailed on the street or you can call them to pick you up. Within the tourist zones (closer to the airport) there are flat rates. A meter is used outside of the tourist areas (USC is outside of the tourist zones, for your reference, a cab from USC to Old San Juan should cost between \$15 and \$20 including tip). Please be advised that cab drivers are sometimes allowed to charge extra fees for luggage and it is customary to tip them 10% to 15%.

Keeping in Touch with Family and Friends

TELEPHONE

Cell phone use is just as widespread in Puerto Rico as it is in the United States; virtually everyone you meet will have a *celular*. Many cell phones that work in the US will also work in Puerto Rico. It is important to contact your cell phone provider to make sure that you understand what you will be charged for using your cell phone in Puerto Rico. In addition to calling charges, it is important to ask about data charges if you will be taking a smartphone with you.

Another option is to purchase a pre-paid cell phone in San Juan, which you can do for as little as \$50 per month. These phones work just like a pre-paid calling card; when your minutes run out, you can purchase more. People who wish to call you frequently might want to ask their telephone company about any special international rates that might help make those calls less expensive, or explore phone card options with international rates. Internet phone connections, such as Vonage, are also affordable options for calling from the United States to a Puerto Rican cell phone.

On each floor of the dormitories, you will have access to a public telephone. If you wish to use the public phone, you may want to purchase an international phone card.

EMAIL AND COMPUTERS

Each dormitory has a computer lab with internet access. Since you will be a part of the USC community, you will have access to the computer facilities and campus-wide wifi.

You must be a student enrolled at the USC in order to use the USC's computers. As a student on the Spanish Studies program you will have the identification required for access

VIDEO CALLS

One of the cheapest and most popular ways to keep in touch with family and friends is through video chat. Many servers such as Skype or Google Talk allow users to communicate face-to-face over the internet. FaceTime (between iPhones only) is another way to make audio and video calls for free over wifi. These servers are usually free, even over long distances and international borders. Users will need a web-cam and an internet connection, and will need to set up an account with the server prior to use. If the user does not have a web-cam, they can still voice chat just as if they were talking on the phone. Video calls are an easy and secure way to communicate with friends and family abroad.

Billing Details

Spanish Studies is affiliated with over 60 colleges and universities. For most affiliated schools, payment is made to us directly by the school. However, billing arrangements vary between universities, so we ask that you pay close attention to the information received in the acceptance packet.

PAYMENT OF FEES

The non-refundable deposit is due within three weeks of your acceptance to the program. In cases where the school is sending payment directly to Spanish Studies, you should ask your college or university to discuss this with us directly.

Note: The due date for the non-refundable deposit may not be deferred.

Payment must be received by our U.S. office no later than the due dates given in your statement of account. You will not be admitted to housing or classes until all payments have been received. Special arrangements are made only in exceptional cases and may include interest rates and service charges. Your transcript will not be released until all financial obligations you incurred during the school term have been satisfied, including payment for unreturned library books.

Note: All checks should be made payable to The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc

FINANCIAL AID

You must speak with the financial aid office at your home university regarding the school's policies for the transfer of financial aid for study abroad. If financial aid will transfer, there are some forms that must be completed in order to coordinate transfer of funds and the deferment of the final payment due date if aid will be disbursed after that time. The non-refundable deposit due date may not be deferred, even if the amount is covered by financial aid.

The Spanish Studies Financial Aid Deferment Form, included in your acceptance packet, should be submitted to your home university's financial aid office to be completed and returned to the Amherst office of Spanish Studies. You will also need to make sure that the financial office is able to coordinate with Spanish Studies regarding any forms that they need completed by Spanish Studies to transfer financial aid, such as a Consortium Agreement.

If you anticipate that you will have financial aid to use toward your program payment, please contact the U.S. office regarding the necessary paperwork to defer your final program payment due date.

Scholarships

SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Spanish Studies Abroad Scholarship Program is open to all students enrolled in all of our San Juan programs. We offer four \$1500 scholarships for semester programs, five \$500 scholarships for summer programs, and one \$500 scholarship for the January Term. Students may apply for only one of the two scholarship options: the Merit-Based Scholarship or the Diversity Scholarship.

Award recipients are chosen based on the submission of one original essay in English. For more information about the scholarship program and to download the application, visit www.spanishstudies.org/scholarships.

While all eligible students are encouraged to apply, the Spanish Studies Abroad Scholarship Program is very competitive and only a handful of awards are made per term. Students will be notified before leaving for Puerto Rico if they will receive a scholarship. A check is sent to the student's permanent home address after arrival in San Juan and is not used toward payment of program fees.

VIDEOGRAPHER GRANT

Spanish Studies Abroad will award a \$50 grant to ten semester and summer students who are willing to create a brief video sharing their enthusiasm about study abroad prior to their program start date, as well as a second video upon return from their study abroad program. For more information about this opportunity, visit www.spanishstudies.org/scholarships.

SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Spanish Studies Abroad Alumni Scholar Fund was developed in 2004 and designed to benefit returning students wishing to embark on an additional cross-cultural adventure with Spanish Studies Abroad. Spanish Studies now offers all alumni students a stipend to apply towards another Spanish Studies Abroad experience in Spain, Argentina, Puerto Rico, or Cuba. Please note that all Spanish Studies Alumni who choose to attend an additional program with Spanish Studies Abroad will automatically receive the Alumni Scholarship. Alumni who receive an Alumni Scholarship are also eligible to apply for the Spanish Studies Abroad Scholarship Program. Alumni scholarships are as follows:

- Academic Year: \$1,000
- Semester: \$500
- 7 Week Summer Term: \$200

- 31/2 Week Summer or January Terms: \$100
- May Term: \$50

OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

For a list of other study abroad scholarship opportunities not offered through Spanish Studies Abroad, please refer to our [Scholarships Page](#).

Possible Additional Fees

TRANSCRIPT FEES

Students whose home college or university requires a transcript from a U.S. degree-granting institution may obtain academic credit and a transcript from our School of Record, Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio. An additional fee of \$250 is charged by Heidelberg for this service. If the student has requested this transcript service due to a home institution requirement, a request form is included with the Spanish Studies Abroad acceptance packet and must be returned to Spanish Studies Abroad before the start of the program. In order to facilitate the issuing of the transcript the student may be billed by Spanish Studies Abroad on behalf of Heidelberg University for the additional fee. Spanish Studies Abroad will then pay Heidelberg University for issuing the transcript.

Note: All checks should be made payable to The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc.

REFUNDS

If you decide not to attend a Spanish Studies program after you have been accepted, please send us a written notification immediately. Inform us of your decision not to attend via email at info@spanishstudies.org.

Withdrawal from the program between the final payment due date and 30 days before the start of the program has a penalty of 25% of the program fee. Withdrawal from the program between 29 days before the start of the program and 1 day before the start of the program has a penalty of 25% of the room and board fee and 100% of the tuition, study tours and orientation, and general education fees. There is no refund for any portion of the program fees on or after the program start date. Please note, these penalties are in addition to the deposit, which is non-refundable.

There is no withdrawal from room and board arrangements with Spanish Studies during the course of a program. Spanish Studies will change unsatisfactory lodgings but will not refund any portion of room and board fees after a student's arrival at a home. If the student finds his or her housing to be unsatisfactory, he or she should notify Spanish Studies immediately; Spanish Studies will determine whether or not a change is warranted.

Students that switch from the Integrated Program to the Spanish Studies Program as a consequence of dropping their university course will receive reimbursement for the housing portion only if such changes occur during the established add/drop period. If the change occurs once the add/drop period finalizes, students will not receive reimbursement for the housing portion. There will be no refunds for the tuition portion of the Integrated Studies Program at any given point of the semester. Students must also depart on the established end date of their program calendar.

Places to Stay in San Juan

The following accommodations come recommended by our staff. Prices can be found on each property's website or online search engines.

[Hostería del Mar](#) (bed & breakfast at the beach)

1 Calle Tapia
San Juan
787-727-3302

[Courtyard by Marriott](#) (10 min from the USC campus)

801 Ponce de León
San, Juan
1-800-593-8620 (toll free reservation center)

[Caribe Hilton Hotel](#) (home of the *piña colada*, has a private beach)

1 San Jeronimo Street
San Juan
787-721-0303

[Hotel El Convento](#) (in historic Old San Juan)

100 Calle del Cristo
Old San Juan
787-723-9020

Academic Pledge & Program Conditions and Release

In the following pages, please find a copy for your records of the documents you signed as part of the application Spanish Studies Abroad.

ACADEMIC PLEDGE

Spanish Studies Abroad Code of Conduct

Studying abroad requires a significant commitment to personal responsibility. While on a Spanish Studies Abroad program, you are, in effect, a cultural ambassador for your home country, a representative of your home institution, and a member of your adoptive community.

In addition to the Program Conditions and Release Statement that all students sign as part of the application process to Spanish Studies Abroad, you also agree to apply the same standards of conduct and academic integrity while abroad as you would at your home institution. These standards include, but are not limited to:

1. following honest academic standards and maintaining your commitment to academic growth.
2. strict adherence to host country laws and customs.
3. respect for your host families and fellow program participants.
4. respect for Spanish Studies Abroad property, professors and staff.
5. general personal and academic practices in line with those outlined by your home institution.

Spanish-Only Policy

The Spanish-Only Language Policy is fundamental to the educational philosophy of Spanish Studies Abroad. It is a tool that promotes cultural integration and active learning, where students put into practice what they are learning. This is the best way to develop both fluency in Spanish and a deeper understanding of the Spanish culture. The benefits of adhering to the Spanish-Only Policy, no matter your initial language level, are great:

- You will improve your ability to understand and express yourself in Spanish.
- As fluency increases, you will gain a greater awareness of the local culture as you develop relationships with your host family, professors, and friends.
- You will experience a greater feeling of accomplishment in your integration, while demonstrating a higher level of respect towards the local culture.

Living abroad provides an opportunity for total immersion in the language and culture -- but only if each and every student actively seeks out this experience. The immersion experience begins NOW, as you get to know your fellow students on the Spanish Studies Abroad program. You may find that living only in Spanish is awkward and even somewhat isolating at first, but years of experience have proven that it is the best way to improve your language ability. While each student makes an individual commitment to using only Spanish, this is also a collective effort that contributes to the progress of every student. To help you get the most out of your experience in Seville, Alicante, Barcelona, San Juan and/or Córdoba, you and all of your fellow students attending programs with Spanish Studies Abroad are required to adhere to the Spanish-Only Policy.

Students are expected to use Spanish in all written and verbal communications while abroad. Students are NOT expected to speak in Spanish when they are faced with an emergency, when speaking with family members, and on occasions when it is absolutely necessary to use English. However, speaking English in the presence of other Spanish Studies students is considered a violation of the policy and must be avoided at all times – for example, if you receive a call from your parents when you are near fellow students, you should lower your voice and step out of earshot.

Academic Pledge

1. In signing this Language Pledge, I agree to use Spanish as my sole language of communication while participating in Spanish Studies Abroad programs. I understand that failure to comply with this Pledge will result in a 5 point deduction from the final grade of the mandatory course required of that program and may also result in expulsion from the program without receiving a refund or academic credit.
2. I have read and understood the Language Pledge and Contract, and agree to the conditions.

Student's name: _____

Student's signature: _____ Date _____

PROGRAM CONDITIONS AND RELEASE STATEMENT

I hereby release and discharge The Center for Cross-Cultural Study Inc. and its agents, employees, and representatives from all suits, claims, or liability of any nature arising out of or related to my participation in a CC-CS/Spanish Studies Abroad program including, without limitation, claims for personal injury or property damage.

As a program participant, I authorize CC-CS to share details of my program with my family, my home institution in the U.S., and my host institution, as needed. I also authorize CC-CS to share details of my academic record, such as my home university transcript, with my host institution abroad. Furthermore, I authorize CC-CS to provide my home institution with a transcript of the coursework I complete as a CC-CS participant. I understand that if I am rendered ineligible for a program after my initial acceptance, I am not entitled to any refund from CC-CS. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to maintain the minimum eligibility requirements from the point of my acceptance until the commencement of my program.

I release all materials from my experience abroad to be used by CC-CS and its affiliates exclusively for promotional reasons. This includes, but is not limited to, photo, print, video, digital mediums and social media posts or pictures. I understand that I can be removed or dismissed from the CC-CS programs at any time, either prior to or after departure, for violating Code of Conduct and other published CC-CS policies.

In the event that a program participant becomes incompetent for any reason, including (but not limited to) injury, accident, mental illness, disease, or loss of consciousness, he/she appoints CC-CS as his/her guardian, and authorizes CC-CS to take any action which it deems appropriate under the circumstances, including (but not limited to) arranging for medical or psychiatric treatment, administering prescription drugs, or transporting him/her to the United States.

[Note: If applicant is under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian must sign the following declaration and RELEASE]

I, the undersigned [father] [mother] [guardian] of

_____ ,
a minor, do hereby consent to [his] [her] participation in the CC-CS program and do forever RELEASE, acquit, discharge, and covenant to hold harmless The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc. and The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, S.L. and its officers, agents and employees from any and all actions,

causes of action, and claims on account of, or in any way growing out of, directly or indirectly, all known and unknown personal injuries or property damage which I may now or hereafter have as the parent or guardian of said minor, and also all claims or right of action for damages which said minor has or hereafter may acquire, either before or after [he] [she] has reached [his] [her] majority resulting from participation in any CC-CS programs.