

EXL 300 Cross Cultural Learning: Theory and Practice

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Quick Flashback: A selection of thought provoking, funny, and insightful posts from Allegheny College students in the Fall 2012 Study Abroad/Study Away programs.

BLOG ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS:

GLOBAL SCAPES: Assigned Reading: Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference" piece

Take a photograph of something that illustrates a mash-up of different cultural influences converging to create the hybridity or mixture that we call "global culture". Use your example to respond to a specific idea in the Appadurai essay.

CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP: Assigned Reading: Andreotti, "'Soft Versus Critical Global Citizenship Education".

Explore how the educational program at your host destination has helped you examine a specific political, social, or environmental issue through the lens of "critical citizenship." Explain how this issue has both local and global implications.

PRODUCTIVE DISLOCATIONS: Assigned Reading: Smith, Liesl. "The Lessons of Dislocation," *The Chronicle Review. The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 27 Feb. 2011

Using a personal experiential anecdote, share with us, what you would regard as a productive dislocation moment – a moment where you felt out of place, uncomfortable, or just wrong – but that produced a learning opportunity for you. And what did you take away, therefore, from that experience?

DECONSTRUCTING PRIVILEGE: Assigned Reading: Please read, Zemach-Bersin, Talya, "American Students Abroad Can't be Global Citizens," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Mar. 7, 2008,

Do you feel that study away/abroad is a particular kind of privilege? Tell us why you agree or disagree with that statement, using examples from your own experiences.

PROFESSOR QUESTIONS CONT'D:

READING DIFFERENCE: Assigned Reading: Byers, Michael. "Are You a 'Global Citizen'?" *The Tyee Online*. 5 Oct. 2005. <http://thetyee.ca/Views/2005/10/05/globalcitizen/>

Identify and tell about the true global citizens you have come to know personally while at your new host destination.

GLOBAL AND LOCAL: Assigned Reading: Jenkins, McKay. "Why I'm Not Preparing My Students to Compete in the Global Marketplace," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 15 Jan. 2012. Lexis-Nexis Academic Online,

What do you feel about the author's argument in this piece? Really think about whether going further away to a different culture teaches you something about global problems that you wouldn't be able to achieve as effectively if you stayed in the U.S.

CULTURAL ICONS: For this entry, please select one photograph that you have taken, that is an interesting aspect of the culture or your host destination (and not a well known tourism artifact).

LESSONS LEARNED: If you had to do this experience all over again, share two points you would pay attention to and why. Also share with us, two really specific take-away lessons you have learned through your study away/abroad experience. We're not talking about academic lessons – this is more about experiential knowledge.

COMING HOME:

(i) For this entry please reflect on your re-entry process – beyond landing back at home, to your first week readjusting to your return. What has it been like?

(ii) If people asked you about the following, what would be a personal story you would tell for each?

- Transformative Experience
- Obstacle you Have Overcome
- Learning to Appreciate Diversity
- Thinking about Problems/Issues in more complicated and global ways

GLOBAL SCAPES:

Prior to the use of advanced transportation and communication, cultural borders were rarely crossed. According to Arjun Appadurai, "For with the advent of the steamship, the automobile, the airplane, the camera, the computer, and the telephone, we have entered into an altogether new condition of neighborliness, even with those most distant from ourselves." He sees the cultures of the world coming together in a way that was not possible before this time. In his viewpoint, the obstacle of physical distance was overcome with the advance of technology. During my first few weeks in Australia, however, I have found that this is not always the case. Foreigners first stepped foot in this country as early as 1606, but it was not thoroughly explored until 1770 with the expedition of Captain James Cook. Although the Aboriginal Australians had occupied

the land for the previous 45,000 years (estimated because nobody knows the exact time period), they were mistreated by the newcomers and were forced to live as outcasts in their homeland. To this day, there are Australians who know little about their native neighbors despite living amongst them. Appadurai discussed how a "global village" was formed in the recent past, yet there are still problems of communication between the cultures living beside one another in this single country. Classes are offered at James Cook University to bridge this gap between western and Aboriginal cultures. I am enrolled in the Linking Indigenousness course, in which we work to



understand the differences and gain a better understanding of the native way of life. An Aboriginal speaker came to our class to present his culture and its history. "Uncle Rusty" told us about his beliefs, his family, and their traditions. He informed us that the main problem between cultures lies in the lack of communication. Each side does not understand how to effectively explain their belief systems, an obstacle that causes many political and social issues. To provide a hands-on experience with his culture, Uncle Rusty showed us how to start a fire without a lighter or matches, how to throw a boomerang, and how to throw a spear. According to him, there are many Australians

who have never tried any of these activities even though they are surrounded by the culture. Our class still has plenty to learn about the Aboriginal culture, but we are working hard at understanding and appreciating it to take steps toward creating a global culture.

Anna Gongaware –
Australia

In Arjun Appadurai's writings, much is stated about how the world is becoming more and more reachable through the media. Sources such as the Internet have shortened the distances that hindered communication in the past. Appadurai argues that this has its benefits as well as its problems when it comes to long distance communication. On one hand, communication to any part of the world has become increasingly available and on the other hand it leaves behind the closeness and companionship that face-

to-face communication emboldens. "We are now aware that with media, each time we are tempted to speak of the global village, we must be reminded that media creates communities with 'no sense of place'." (48) My experience so far in Germany has led me to believe that person-to-person relationships are still possible despite this new technology. In Germany, I find that the human contact in places such as train stations promotes communication that countries like the U.S. go without.

Tyler Prinkey – Germany

I saw many different situations that illustrates some of the effects of globalization on culture. Speaking to Appadurai's concept of ethnoscapas, a number of the workers at one factory were immigrants from Nicaragua. The growing demand for bananas around the world (primarily in the US, Europe and China) has created jobs in the banana industry. Technoscapes, or the movement of technology, has allowed factory to produce bananas more efficiently. Global investors in Dole has encouraged financescapes, or the flow of global capital. Finally, mediascapes has put Dole and other mass-producing food companies under the microscope. . For marketing reasons, Dole has been forced to practice more



corporate social responsibility. The plantation owner, who also served as our tour guide, made a point of telling us that they recycled the bags that cover the banana trees and they "only take 300 years to biodegrade." He did admit that they still use fungicides and Acephate, both ecologically harmful chemicals. While the operation of this plantation does not reflect the nature of Costa Rican culture as a whole, it is a pretty telling example. While Costa Rica is committed to sustainable development (pledged to be carbon neutral by 2020), globalization has plagued and continues to undermine the country's efforts. Banana plantations like this one are the reason for the massive deforestation of rain forests in the 20th century. The most discouraging thing is the government supports these plantations because the exportation of goods is helping to dissolve foreign debt.

P.A. Nelson – Costa Rica

Arjun Appardurai's *Disjuncture and Difference in Global Cultural Economy* encompasses the idea of global cultures and the vast affect each culture could potentially have on one another. In current society, globalization is more prominent than ever. With the advancement of technology, such as phones, automobiles, and our geographical knowledge of the world, It is easier than ever to connect with different cultures. Appardurai also states that "money, commerce, conquest, and migration began to create durable cross-societal bonds." And now these "durable bonds" have created different global scapes that Appardurai believes keeps people separated into "smaller-scale accretions of intimacy and interest." To some extent I do believe this is true in all societies and is noticeable in



Cologne, Germany where I am currently studying abroad. Later in the chapter Appardurai states that "as rapidly as forces from various metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one or another way." These combined ideas of "durable cross-societal bonds", rapid indigenization, and the actions of individuals to stay in intimate settings has both broadened the cultural societies in neighboring areas and beyond and has also created new sub-cultures within a bigger surrounding culture.

When I first arrived in Cologne, to me, it felt like a gigantic melting pot of nationalities. One can walk down a street in the heart of the city and encounter many different ethnic restaurants ranging from Irish, Chinese, American, and so many more. Not only that, but the diversity of ethnicities one can experience is quite extensive. Being one of the major cities of Germany,

Cologne offers many intimate and comfortable settings for people of all nationalities. But besides from that, I do still believe that even though there are a variety of nationalities and cultural sub-divisions within Cologne, it could be more intertwined than Appadurai had led me to believe. When reading *Disjuncture and Difference in Global Cultural Economy* it seemed to me that the bigger culture (in this case, Cologne) would be losing its' identity; maybe not in its entirety, but that it would no longer have a distinct mark to it. Yes, Cologne is not the picturesque German city with Fachwerkhäuser lining its' streets or has only German food, language, and music in the city. This is exactly what Appadurai was describing in his novel -- people have been influenced by other cultures and over the years it has

become progressively more noticeable. The modernity of the houses and apartments, for instance, were influenced by other cultures and many were built Post-WWII after bombings had occurred. And once travel and immigration became more prominent, other cultures had a greater impact on the setup of society.

Stephanie Von Ahnen –
Germany

In his piece, *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*, Appadurai talks about the themes of transportation and information, McDonaldization and Americanization of the world, global advertising, and "fetishism of the consumer." He writes that all of these things have attributed to this "global cultural economy" where every nation has been touched by the cultural effects of many others. In this photo,



taken about 50 miles into the Ecuadorian Amazon rain forest, an image of Spiderman can be seen painted on a native instrument. This shows how much, and how fast, information can be transported, how global advertising truly is global, and how the fetishism of the consumer has caused the tribes people to paint this instrument in this way, because they thought that it would be more appealing to the consumer. When I read Appadurai's article and what he is saying about the Americanization or McDonaldization of the world, I can truly understand what he was trying to say. To get to the place, the hut, where I took this picture I had to take a bus 8 hours from Quito, Ecuador to the city of Tena, hike another two

hours from a village to the banks of the Rio Napo, and take a motorized canoe 1 hour upstream until reached an indigenous village. In talking about mediascapes and whether they exist and how much impact they have on societies, I can fully agree with him that global advertising, American/Western culture, and the transportation of information truly are everywhere and affect, at least in this case, places that appear to be highly isolated from normality and society in general.

Joe Lampe – Ecuador

CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP:

I have learned from many of my classes here at Duke Marine Lab that overfishing is the number one threat to marine biodiversity. From a scientific perspective the solution to this problem is easy: stop fishing so much. It's easy to get



caught up in the idea of just imposing global fishing regulations to create sustainable fisheries, but as I have learned the answer is not that easy. For one in five people in the world, fish is their only source of protein. Furthermore over 200 million people rely on fishing not only for food, but also for their livelihoods. Talk of global fishing regulations and marine protected areas (MPAs) persists among first world countries as a solution to this giant problem. While these ideas may sound good in theory, they are hard to implement in real life. In addition, many of these actions would be applied just as heavily to third world countries as they are to first world countries. It's easy to place blame on

others, but the United States, Japan, and Europe are some of the major contributors to the problem. It is not just to make other countries suffer while we are so much to blame. But then again we cannot just implement these rules without thinking of the people in our own country who rely on fishing. I've learned first hand through my Marine Service Learning class that while these issues are a global problem, they also hit close to home. In our Marine Service Learning class we work local classes of 8th graders teaching them about marine science through activities and field trips. As we've gotten to know some of the kids it has become clear that many of these kids parents rely of fishing to support their families. Through the lens of critical global citizenship it becomes clear that the issue of overfishing is multifaceted with no simple solution. Whatever we decide to do about this problem, we need to realize that its

implementation will have far reaching political and ethical consequences no matter how much planning goes into them.

Aaron Goldman – North Carolina

Since I've been in France, all of my classes have had a focus on the language and comprehension. There has been very little formal discussion about politics or specific political events in the classes. Even with my host family, we don't discuss current events or politics. However, our "Civilisation" class gave us a brief overview of the French governmental system and in our regular language class we discussed the French government in comparison to the governments of our native countries. My class was not as diverse as some of the other classes, but we had a mixture of American, South Korean, Ukrainian, Mexican,

and Guatemalan students. Vanessa Andreotti wrote in her article, "Soft Versus Critical Global Citizenship Education," that critical understanding of anything is based on the knowledge we already have that is influenced by "our contexts, cultures, and experiences." (49) Therefore, whatever I thought about anything we discussed in class was not exactly the same for anyone else - even for the other American students. Andreotti continues to add that "we lack the knowledge constructed in other contexts, cultures, and experiences. So we need to engage with our own and other perspectives to learn..." (49) That is exactly what we did in our classes. We would split into groups that had a mix of different nationalities and cultures to work on various activities and while doing so we discussed current French culture and compared it to our own cultures and countries. So although my classes only focus on the French language and culture, by working with other people from different

countries and cultures, I've learned more about the French culture, my culture, and the cultures of everyone I've worked with.

Kate Chambers – France

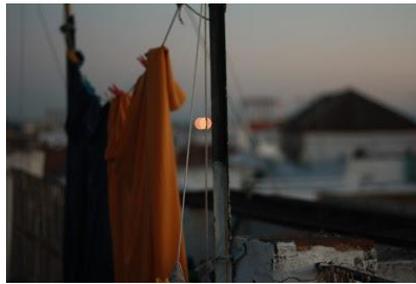
PRODUCTIVE DISLOCATIONS:

Nearly every day I encounter some form of dislocation, in which I feel so distant from the people around me to whom Spanish customs are so natural. But also so often, I experience a moment in which I understand something about Spain, whether it be quite small, that opens my mind and allows me to make connections that were once just questions—or not even thoughts at all— when I arrived here.



A few weeks ago, early on in my time abroad, I had a class assignment in which fellow students and I had to interview a Sevillano about some aspect of Spanish culture. My group decided to interview my host-father, who is an artist and educator, about art in Sevilla. My friends and I arrived at my homestay and walked up the steps to my floor; I was excited to have this conversation with my señor and more so to introduce my friends to my host family. But when we opened the door and I went to introduce them to my señora, she was frantic! She told us to go upstairs into my room and then eventually to go to the studio to interview her husband, all without saying hello to my classmates. I was very stressed and didn't understand the situation; later that night she told me not to bring people in the house, as I had surprised her and the three children I live with.

It was not until much later that I truly understood this event. I kept thinking about my home, in which



friends would be greeted and talked to and their company welcomed. My friends were just as surprised as I was by the frantic lack of welcome. However, as I continued learning about Spanish culture and reflecting on all the experiences I've had, I realized that the home is something much different than it is in the states. The home is for family, for taking care of, for personal time. It isn't that Sevillanos don't enjoy the company of others—that is certainly not the case. People in Sevilla very much enjoy talking to others, whether they know them or are just in passing. But the home is not the place for it. In Sevilla, there are plazas and gardens everywhere; my professor once joked that there are more bars and cafes than there are people; the streets at night are packed with friends, new and old

talking over tapas or drinks or simply just talking. I learned from this experience that relationships really matter in Spanish culture, but they matter in different ways. The family is greatly important, and the home is a sacred place where family can be together.

Paige Slaughter – Spain

I've been a vegetarian my entire life. My mother is a vegetarian, my aunts are vegetarians, my siblings are vegetarians. I've always taken for granted the ease with which I could access food that suits my diet. I'm also a very picky eater, so I've learned to make the same meals and eat them everyday. Vegetarians are not that uncommon in the United States. . It is estimated that 3.2% of Americans are vegetarians, while 10% of adults follow a "vegetarian-inclined" diet.*

However, vegetarianism is a lot more rare over here in France. Studies have shown that only 2% of the population are vegetarians.

Vegetarianism is viewed with disfavor in France. Often I am unable to go to little restaurants that do not have vegetarian options on their menus. My host mother had to be told in great detail what foods I can and cannot eat. She struggles greatly with the idea that someone would voluntarily choose to abstain from eating meat. Every night at dinner, she questions what I have eaten over the course of the day to ensure that I am getting enough calcium and protein in my diet.

I am the first vegetarian exchange student that my host mother has had, and as such, she has to come up with new and different ways to prepare food for me. I eat a lot of dishes made from vegetables from her garden. Before coming here, I did not eat many types of vegetables. I had my favorites and I

stuck with them. But since my arrival, I have tried all sorts of new vegetable dishes. My culinary tastes have greatly expanded. I will admit, the first few weeks I absolutely hated eating here. I went through food withdrawals and dinner time would always make me absolutely miserable. But now I have a much greater appreciation for the food that my host mother prepares for me. I am learning to like it for its differences and value the hard work and effort my host mother puts into making me something new and exciting everyday. I cannot wait to return home and make many of the new dishes that I have tasted here in France.

Amanda Lee – France

Being in DC, I did not expect dislocation – its my nations capital after all. But the program I am in has thrust me into what I would call dislocation. Not geographically of



course, but mentally – which is what Smith is really discussing in her essay. As an American I am the minority in my class, my upbringing, language, and depth of cultural understanding differ from my classmates – this leads to mental dislocation. Whether it is not being able to engage in a conversation between my Chinese friends or having fundamentally different beliefs and guiding philosophies, I manage to be dislocated in a geographic area that is culturally my own. Cultural dislocation is interesting; it is at an extreme when combined with a language barrier. But culture dislocation can be applied beyond the context Smith wrote about, one can feel culturally dislocated if they find

themselves in a crowd of unfamiliar people or ideologies regardless of how similar their geographical origin, age, race, or religion: (the emo rocker sits alone at high school lunch before joining the football team).

Language and guiding philosophical differences magnify this to a point until we feel "home sick." We don't miss home, we miss the idea of home. The concept of "home" meaning as far from dislocation as possible; if dislocation is a place or point in time where you feel you don't belong, home is a place where you do.

klenschz – Washinton DC

DECONSTRUCTING PRIVILEGE:

I have discovered that the concept of privilege is relative and is defined very differently by different people in different places. In the United States I would still say yes, I am

more privileged than most, I have a nice house that I live in with my family, I am able to attend a private university, and do not worry that I won't have food to eat, and so much more. I think that these qualities of privilege however, extend far beyond financial means, I feel lucky to have a family I care dearly about and Allegheny is quite generous with financial aid, still these are things that a lot of people do not have.

In Ecuador my feeling of privilege has certainly grown and I do believe that it is part due to money as Zemach-Bersin describes, but also simply based on the country in which I live. My class was luckily enough to visit the town of Coca in the Amazon region of Ecuador, the main hub of Texaco/Chevron, and we were able to see first hand the immensity of the problems that have been caused by the petroleum exploitation. The problems here have been caused by a company in our nation onto this



developing country that was easy to take advantage of.

This trip was certainly a privilege, had I not been abroad studying here I never would have been able to picture just how grave this problem truly is. Here is a picture of a cornfield growing directly next to/on top of a spillover petroleum pool.

Elisa Wein – Ecuador

Studying abroad is definitely a privilege and is a unique way of learning for so many reasons. I have wanted to study abroad in Germany since high school, when I became good friends with a foreign exchange student. His experience in the US gave me an idea

of what I wanted to experience elsewhere- living with a family, speaking a different language, and overall just trying to assimilate into society. Unlike Talya Zemach-Bersin's experience described in her article "American Students Abroad Can't Be 'Global Citizens,'" I do not feel as though I stand out blatantly as an American. I do however, agree that for the most part I am not a "global citizen," mostly because I haven't experienced such a way of living that enables me to see how immensely monetary differences effect communities as a whole. As far as differences go, much in Germany is both very new and very normal. Having a mixture of things that are familiar and things that are unfamiliar to me has helped me adjust and appreciate all that is new. I didn't travel abroad in hopes to see life from a new point of view, I instead came here for exactly what I am doing- learning and experiencing German culture and lifestyle. I'm able to see how German people and students from

similar demographics interact daily. I am living with an upper-middle class family, much like the one I come from. While staying here I am treated like a part of the family- I walk the dog, run errands, help with dinner, and so on. I am within two years of both of my host siblings' ages, we have similar interests, and a similar sense of humor. I blend in so easily, which is why I'm hesitant to say that I can't be a "global citizen." Although when I travel I instantly become a tourist again, when I'm living in Cologne I feel like I would at home. I think one of the biggest and most surprising differences between here and the US is how obviously wasteful people from home are compared to the people here. My host family takes showers no longer than for 10 minutes.



They do not own a drier for clothes. They don't own a car and go everywhere by train, bike, or bus. They recycle everything, and always compost things that can be composted. They are still using coffee mugs that have significant chips in the top! It's as though they won't put anything to waste if it can be used in some way. Despite my environmental interests, I have found that I consume so much! It is truly wonderful that people in Germany have such good habits, but it can also be stressful, for example when I have to travel in the morning and my clothes are being hung up to dry in cold weather at night. In addition to feeling privileged to have an experience abroad, I am even more privileged to learn what it really means to be environmentally conscious.

Kari Koeberle – Germany

Although I do believe that the ability to be able to have the opportunity to study abroad in Sevilla is such an amazing experience, I do not like to label it as a *privilege*. I know that all of us who are abroad this semester have worked hard and earned the opportunity to be studying where we are. I feel very fortunate that I have had the support of many people to be able to make my dream of studying abroad a reality. Being abroad in Sevilla has taught me so many different things inside and outside the classroom. I have had the opportunity to learn about Spanish culture and completely immerse myself in the language. I have had the opportunity to see ancient Roman ruins and travel to some of the most amazing places such as Morocco, Madrid, Barcelona, Rome, Florence, and tomorrow I am leaving with my friends for Paris and London. I feel very lucky that I am able to have these opportunities, but these opportunities were made possible by putting



in a lot of hard work at Allegheny and that continues here in Sevilla by taking 300 and 400 level classes in Spanish and much more. This experience has allowed me to grow and become more self aware as a global citizen by learning about the many different aspects of not just Spanish life and culture, but of all of the places that I have learned about and visited as a result of studying abroad in Spain.

Sarah Klein - Spain

READING DIFFERENCE:

'Global citizenship' is certainly a phrase getting thrown around these days, as our international relations become more complex, and are borders less rigid, every day.

In Michael Byers' article, he breaks down the various definitions that 'global citizenship' can exhibit. In doing so, he demonstrates the many ways in which one can interpret global citizenship and thus how to be a global citizen. In a world driven by economic factors, it is often that corporations (and therefore people) forget what it means to be a citizen of the world. Byers points out that "citizenship is as much about obligations as it is about rights" and gives examples such as "to pay taxes, to serve in the military, to obey laws and respect authority." For me, the obligation of a citizen, local and beyond, is to create a community in which every member has access to well-being, since we all depend on each other no matter our economic position. Byers concludes his article with the notion that we must develop our own ideas about what it means to be a global citizen, in order to converse and debate the meaning of

global citizenship and avoid the ideas put forth by often class-privileged individuals. By partaking in such a discussion, one is already exhibiting characteristics of a global citizen, by considering the implications of the term and the consequences of such implications. In doing so, one communicates with other members of his or her community, or better yet, with people from different cultural backgrounds. During my travels this semester, I am constantly meeting young individuals doing exactly this kind of work on a personal level. Interacting with other travelers from all around the world, these travelers are having conversations in which they would be unable to partake with citizens of their own nations. These conversations are building relationships on a small scale between members of many different communities. By hearing different perspectives, listening to different ideas about our world's experiences, travelers bring home a broader

understanding of what it means to be a member of the global community, and that of many different local communities. This is exactly the kind of personal experience we should embark on in order to develop qualities of a global citizen and thus create a better world.

Paige Slaughter – Spain

There is no one in my life here in Sevilla who I identify as a true “global citizen”. However, the conversations that I have with my classmates in our “Spanish Cultural Realities” course center around themes of global citizenship. As Michael Byers said in his speech entitled “Are you a ‘Global Citizen’?- Really? What does that mean?”, he addresses the kinds of conversations that are fruitful in relation to the end of being a global citizen. Such conversations seek to deconstruct the judgments and superficial generalizations that we make and create more tolerant spaces, and they

surge from conversations about cultures.

In this course that I am in, we talk every week about some differences that we've noticed and what it is that we think about it. The class always begins with general observations and we express our personal hesitations in front of whatever aspect of Spanish culture we're considering. However, with the help of our teacher, a native of Seville, Spain, we always break down our first reactions and develop more amplified and accepting ideas. These types of conversations are essential for the development and understanding of what global citizenship is. They inspire my classmates and I to stop making commonplace tourist observations, and start making real connections with our host country.

Kait Torres – Spain

GLOBAL AND LOCAL:

As an environmental major myself, I agree with Jenkins' students that the multitude of environmental problems across the world is daunting. I also agree that it is more encouraging and effective to start to tackle our environmental crisis on a local level. No matter what country one lives in, living in the midst of environmental issues - be it fracking in Pennsylvania or deforestation in Indonesia - predisposes one to feel more urgently about such local issues, as one experiences the effects first-hand. Even if students observe the environmental issues of other countries through study abroad experiences, the effect is not quite the same, since these students are only temporary residents of their host countries. Perhaps after a longer time spent abroad students could develop the same sense of

urgency and engagement in the environmental problems of their host country, but in my opinion, the time we are given abroad isn't quite enough time to accomplish that. (Sidenote, I am speaking from personal experience only; because of the way my program is set up, I haven't found myself personally engaged in the environmental issues of Germany. Those who disagree, please tell me about your experiences!) Jenkins argues that it is more important and effective to study and attempt to solve the issues of our own country, as "there is no end to the fieldwork we can do in our own backyard." This being the case, Jenkins also asserts that trying to solve the world's environmental issues from afar is ineffective. I agree with both of these points, but I don't think that environmentalists should abandon the global marketplace altogether. Jenkins says that their work in the States could provide for global models - is that not a two way street? Jenkins only mentions the "global marketplace" in regards to looking for issues, not



solutions. Sure, not every environmental issue lends itself to a global truth or solution, but there are certainly many that do. Take for instance my host country, Germany. Since 2000, 25% of Germany's power comes from renewable sources, compared to the USA's 2011 statistic of 14%. There are numerous articles and reports of Germany's advances in technology and their concentrated sustainability efforts; one doesn't need to be in Germany to see that environmentalism is an important part of Germany's society. What one does see here - can't avoid seeing, really - are the normalcy of environmentally-conscious efforts in German life: turbines decorate the countryside,



solar panels can be found on the roofs of many houses, and there's a strong incentive for recycling (for every bottle or can you recycle at a major grocery store, you get some money back, depending on the size. Individually, it's not a lot of money, but bottles can add up quickly, therefore your incentive does, too). The United States could take note.

Students might be actively solving environmental issues at home, but that is no excuse to not be prepared to operate on the global level. The global marketplace may be a discouraging place environmentally, but it is also a place filled with and new and diverse ideas and solutions. We might be engaged in our local environmental issues, but it is important to look to the global

scene for inspiration for solutions that we can implement on the home-front. Environmental problems are both local and global issues, and should be treated as such.

Emily Herwerden –
Germany

In Jenkins' article, she explains why she isn't teaching her students about the global market. She provides many examples of why not being involved in the local communities is more efficient than trying to learn issues. The abstract is a great representation of her opinion, "environmental degradation isn't just a problem in foreign countries, and that's why some students at the University of Delaware are concentrating their efforts closer to home." This sentence kind of seems like a snobby thing to say. I remember when I was younger when I wouldn't clean up the house because I didn't make the mess. This situation of environmental degradation



is a similar problem. Climate change is global problem, and even if your community doesn't have major issues, being concerned about everywhere else is important to help contribute to the global community. I think we are all individually responsible for each other, if everyone was just concerned about themselves, the world would eventually fall apart. I think that studying abroad has taught me about many global issues that I most likely wouldn't have learned effectively in the US. I was totally unaware of Costa Rica's position in anything. I had no prior opinions of this country. If I was at Allegheny this past semester I wouldn't have studied the same issues or felt as connected to this country as I do now. I do think that Allegheny does a great job in being as

locally involved at possible, but some universities do not have a local community influence upon their mission at all. Luckily, we all go to such a great school that promotes local involvement as well as international studies. I think that study abroad or any program for that matter that allows students to experience a different culture in ways that cannot be down in the classroom.

Anna Koebley – Costa Rica

CULTURAL ICONS:

One interesting aspect of my host country that I really have come to appreciate is the argentine fervor to stand up for everything they believe in. The political culture in Argentina is deeply charged and there are more political parties and ideologies than one can really keep track of. What I find interesting is that usually, political

acts in the United States are confined to those passionate enough to dedicate their whole lives to one cause and seem to be something extraordinary. Here in Buenos Aires, expressing your dislike of political and social policies is the norm. Thus, I'd like to present my cultural artifact of Argentina- the paro (or strike). As I write this, I am watching the news that is announcing the paro nacional that is happening tomorrow, on November 20th. At this point in our semester, there have been two other paros, the first one happening in the first weeks we were in Buenos Aires. What makes Argentine paros special to me is how they are something that so many people participate in because they truly want to have their voice heard.



Tomorrow, the paro is looking to improve worker's rights and flights in and out of the city are shut down, a bus line will not be operating, and 8-9 major streets and gateways expect to be cut off, diverting all traffic. In two hours, this paro will go into effect nationally, not only affecting the capital city and ways to get in and out but also all important transport routes in the country. I'm thinking about my day tomorrow and how I need to look into planning a new route to get to class, because tomorrow sure looks like it will be an interesting day. From my experience, it seems like a good ol' paro sure does make the point.

Kassandra Martinchek – Argentina

One of the most important cultural icons in Seville is the street life. However strange it may seem, the life of a Spaniard is spent socializing on the street. In Spanish culture, it is not customary to visit other people's houses and for this reason, spending time outside is essential. Whether it is taking a walk or going to a bar for a drink, Spaniards spend their time away from work outside, enjoying the city. While walking through any neighborhood, it is common to see children playing in the street while their parents spend time together or a group of friends getting a drink at a bar before heading home for the day. One takes this time to catch up with their friends and family before going home for dinner. Aside from the time spent during the day, a large part of Spanish night life is spent on the street during the "botellon". In Spanish, botellon refers to the act of drinking outside with a group of people. In recent years, this event has become a major part



youth culture all across Spain.

There truly is no way to understand the Sevillian way of life without spending a little time outside in the street.

Sarah Fiore – Spain

LESSONS LEARNED:

In retrospect, I wish I had outlined a game plan for my semester abroad at the beginning of the trip. I would have liked to have researched more places in the country (besides the city I was living in), sat down with previous study abroad students to hear their suggestions, and scheduled out trips to nearby locations. While I managed to visit many places and have some truly incredible

experiences, those who had planned ahead more thoroughly were able to squeeze more into their six months abroad. I had taken classes focused on Latin America, and therefore had a relatively firm grasp on the historical, economic, and societal aspects of Argentina, but I wish I had gone beyond that in preparing for my arrival. My second take away lesson concerns expectations. In high school a Polish girl lived with my family for a year. She was completely integrated into the family, her English fluency increased dramatically, and I saw her as my own sister. Additionally I have spent lots of time with the international students on Allegheny's campus, learning about their experiences in a foreign country. Therefore I had expectations that my experience abroad would be very similar. In some ways it was but in other ways it was very different. I have lived with two young women, but feel very little personal connection with

them. As for the lack of dorms and college campuses in Argentina, it has been difficult to socialize and befriend the people in my university. And generally I was on my own in many ways that I had not anticipated. These differences do not by any means signify that I had a lesser study abroad experience, just a different one. I had more opportunities to take initiative and work things out on my own. More simply put, I believe students should not rely on expectations and build an image of what they think will happen. This will just lead to disappointments at some point. Instead it is better to be as well informed and prepared as possible, and then just go with the flow.

Dominique Billingslea –
Argentina

Because I am a history major, when researching Sevilla before going abroad, I looked up and researched the history of the city

not about the current state of the country. In retrospect I think that researching more about the current affairs of the country would have been very useful. Although Sevilla is really rooted deep in their past, their present political and especially economic state lead to protests and strikes throughout the semester that hindered daily life. Secondly while abroad, I think that getting to know more Spanish people would have been fun. Although I interacted daily with Spanish people such as business owners, professors and faculty from my school and my host family, I think it would have been a different experience to hang out with people from Sevilla. The first important lesson that I took away from this experience is the importance of integrating yourself in the culture that you are in. While you may miss home, studying abroad is a once in a life time experience that you should take full advantage of. Living with a host family made this very evident to me.

Living with my host family, I learned how to cook Spanish food, adjust to a Spanish schedule and most importantly learn things about Sevilla, and Spain in general, that I didn't learn in my classes. The second important thing that I learned while studying abroad is the important balance between traveling to other places and staying in your city. Because of its European location, traveling from Spain to other countries such as England, Paris and even Morocco was very easy. Being able to go to so many amazing places added so much depth to my experience abroad, but for me, I got the most enjoyment staying in Sevilla for the weekend and experiencing the different fairs, museums, and culture of Sevilla.

Sarah Klein – Spain

COMING HOME:

The process of reentering the USA reconfirmed many of the revelations and insights I experienced while studying abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Additionally it was obvious that my habits had changed as I adapted to a new lifestyle. I found myself preparing to ask questions in Spanish, missing the ability to walk everywhere, and forgetting I had to be home for dinner. I was unaccustomed to being able to text my friends. It was all very disorienting, on top of a huge dietary and schedule changes. Having this secondary comparison of the cultures was as enlightening as the first when I originally entered Argentina. I was able to better appreciate the amenities of a fully developed country, enjoy the familiar rules of my native social environment, and fulfill the voracious cravings I had for my mother's cooking. Sitting on my couch with my dogs in my house I was able to reflect on

various experiences from my semester abroad. One obstacle during my stay in Argentina was overcoming the changes in communication technology. My generation does not know how to make plans in advance and follow through with them, because we have the capacity to call and text each other at any given moment. While my friends and I mostly still had cell phones in Argentina, they were far less reliable. We would not have credit or service or they phones would simply stop working. Overcoming this dilemma involved developing some more flexibility and using web based communication. I had never been a real fan of Facebook, but I embraced the way it allowed me to communicate.

Dominique Billingslea -
Argentina

I have become more confident in my ability to travel by myself and be more self-sufficient; my language skills have

improved, and I had the opportunity to mingle with people of countries that I have never visited or fully understood culturally. Having met so many people, one of the worst experiences was having to say goodbye. There were numerous students in my classes, people I met through travel, host families, and distant relatives that I was saddened to part with. The process of moving forward and at the same time reflecting on all that I had experienced, helped me to come to terms with leaving; and also to get excited to share all of my experiences with family and friends. I have also been often asked what the biggest obstacle I faced was. Simply put, it was getting over being shy and putting myself out there. In the U.S., I am very reserved and not talkative without provoking. While in Germany, I had to open up more and talk to a wide variety of people despite my bashfulness. This obstacle proved not only to help me get over my shyness but

also helped me improve my German. With the German language, one cannot simply sit and listen and learn the language. There is more to learning a language than being able to understand what you hear. Going to Germany helped me take the necessary step of understanding German to speaking German in a practical way. I have much to learn still, but I feel that because of the need for me to leave my bashfulness behind I improved majorly in communication.

Tyler Prinkey – Germany



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