

SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD

The Center for Cross-Cultural Study



San Juan, Puerto Rico Student Handbook

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If referencing a paper copy, please refer to the electronic version of this handbook for useful hyperlinks:
<https://www.spanishstudies.org/handbooks-and-guides.html>.

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 their flight arrangements, we do not offer a group flight option. Please note that **when booking your flight, you should always refer to your program calendar** which is located [here](#) or in your acceptance packet link. Please plan on arriving on the start date of the program before 3:00pm.

Note: Students should plan to arrive in Puerto Rico on the start date indicated in your program calendar. Students should make their flight arrangements from their departure city to the city of San Juan and must be sure to check their baggage the whole way through to San Juan. For return flights, students should plan to depart from their housing no later than noon on the last day of the program.

Once you have your flight itinerary, you must submit the information via your online account, or email it to info@spanishstudies.org. If you have any delays or last-minute changes in your flight itinerary, please inform our U.S. and Puerto Rico office at info@spanishstudies.org and your parents or guardians. **If you are en route to San Juan, you will need to also inform the San Juan Resident Director, Dr. Gloria Matanzo: gloria.matanzo@spanishstudies.org.**

ARRIVAL

Spanish Studies Abroad staff will be at the airport on the program start date typically between 12:00pm and 3:00pm* to greet students and transfer them to the student dorms. If you arrive after 3:00pm you will be responsible for making transportation arrangements to the campus residence hall on your own and for all costs involved. You should plan on arriving at the residence hall no later than 5:00pm.

***Please note that the time the staff will be at the airport is subject to change and will be confirmed in the Departure Newsletter that will be sent to you a few weeks before the start date of the program.**

If you arrive after 3:00pm, you will take a taxi. 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

Before you depart, there are a few things you need to take care of. Please read carefully!

ONLINE ACCOUNT

All students studying with Spanish Studies Abroad have an online account. 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 online account as soon as possible. All pre-departure items will be due within two weeks of the application deadline.

- Online Language Placement Exam Results
- Course Selection
- Housing Questionnaire
- Health Statement Form
- Academic Pledge and Program Conditions & Release Statements
- USC Matriculation Form
- USC Residence Application Form
- USC Health Certificate
- USC State Police Record
- Program Deposit (due within 10 days of acceptance)
- Arrival Information
- Speaking Partners Form
- Digital Photo
- Spanish Studies Abroad Website/ Online Application Survey (optional)

PASSPORT

For U.S. citizens, travel to Puerto Rico is easy. You do not need a passport. All you need is a 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 | \$500 | \$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 a U.S. citizen and will be 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 at least two weeks 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. Be sure to also call the local city clerk's office of the city where you are registered to vote.

facebook COMMUNITY 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.

PRE-DEPARTURE WEB CHAT

Students accepted to Spanish Studies Abroad in San Juan are invited to participate in an Accepted Students' Chat before their departure. During this chat, students will be able to ask Spanish Studies staff and Resident Director specific questions about studying abroad in San Juan. Dates and information on how to join the chat will be sent via email closer to the chat date.

DEPARTURE NEWSLETTER

Spanish Studies Abroad students receive a Departure Newsletter by email several weeks prior to the program start date. The newsletter contains important travel and arrival information, such as emergency contact information (also included in this handbook), Spanish Studies Abroad in San Juan address, taxi and baggage tips, and contact information for fellow participants. **Make sure to bring a copy with you during your travels!**

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

After-hours emergency line: (413) 687 7069
info@spanishstudies.org

In San Juan, Puerto Rico

Resident Director: Dra. Gloria Matanzo
Spanish Studies Abroad
Universidad del Sagrado Corazón
San Antonio & Rosales St
Santurce, Puerto Rico 00914-0989

After-hours emergency: (1) (787) 406-6586
tel: (1) (787) 728-1515
fax: (1) (787) 728-1692
gloria.matanzo@spanishstudies.org

Note: For the San Juan numbers given above, the (1) code at the beginning of the number is only necessary to add for making a call from the U.S. to Puerto Rico. If calling within Puerto Rico, you can skip the code and just dial the phone number. **If calling to the U.S. from Puerto Rico, add the code "011-1" before dialing the normal U.S. ten-digit number.**

Should an emergency arise, U.S. family members may call the Resident Director, Gloria Matanzo, at (1) (787) 406-6586 in San Juan, or at our U.S. office telephone, (413) 256-0011. When the office is closed, there is an answering machine connected to these numbers, which will record your messages and give you additional emergency contact numbers. The US office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00am - 5:00pm EST, and Gloria can be reached Monday through Friday.

Before leaving to go abroad, be sure to [register online](#) with the government's Smart Traveller Enrollment Program (STEP). It is a free service for U.S. citizens enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad, so that you can receive information about safety conditions and emergencies, and help the Embassy get in touch with you in case of an emergency.

In the unlikely event of an emergency, please be sure to check these web pages. Up-to-date information on Emergency Procedures and Security can be found on our website at www.spanishstudies.org/safety or at the Department of State website <http://studentsabroad.state.gov>.

Health and Wellness

HEALTH INSURANCE

All students attending Spanish Studies Abroad programs are provided with health insurance for the duration of the program through [Panamerican Life Insurance](#); this cost is included in the program fees. **All Spanish Studies students are required to participate in the Spanish Studies Abroad medical insurance program, whether you have insurance at home or not.**

Always carry your insurance card with you.

Although Spanish Studies Abroad provides medical insurance while in Puerto Rico, if you 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, medical attention while traveling outside of Puerto Rico, or if you encounter health issues while traveling outside of the Spanish Studies program dates. **Please note that you are only covered through Spanish Studies Abroad for the dates of the program and within Puerto Rico**, so you should also plan to bring claims forms if you are traveling before or after the program, or to any other country. 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.

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

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.**

EMERGENCY MEDICAL HELP

PRESCRIPTIONS

If you take any prescription medication, be sure to bring enough for your entire stay. Contact your health professional and insurance company several weeks before leaving; some medication requests require several weeks to be fully processed. These should be in their original containers: that is, labeled with your name and the name of the prescription drug. In the case that you are unable to acquire enough for the entire stay, or just in case your medication is lost, you should take a written prescription for replacement of the drugs. 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; though this prescription may not be enough at pharmacies, it will help a doctor make a valid prescription.

If you wear contacts you should bring enough for the entire stay plus extras, and if you wear glasses you should bring an extra pair.

INJECTIONS

If you require regular medical 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 Abroad 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 and any other relevant information for administering the injection
- Any possible side effects
- Any other relevant information for administering the injection

Send a copy of this letter to the U.S. office of Spanish Studies Abroad, and take another copy to San Juan. **Again, you must have a written prescription and/or letter from your doctor to get through airport security with your injection materials.**

HEALTH SERVICES ON CAMPUS

Should a medical emergency arise, students may contact the campus health office directly or ask the Residence Life staff to call for them. The campus health office will determine whether care can be provided on campus or not. The health center at USC is called "Sala de Primeros Auxilios" and is located on the second floor of our Student Center. The direct phone line is 787-728-1515, ext. 6540, and students can visit or call the office themselves for minor health issues. In the case of medical emergencies, the Integrated Security Office provides this service by paramedics who are also Sagrado security guards, 24 hours – 7 days a week. Students can call for emergency assistance by a paramedic at 787-728-1515, ext. 6540/2553/2557 or 939-244-6706.

If the student is over 21 years of age, and the staff of the First Aid Room determines that they can go alone to the ER, the Campus Security Supervisor on duty will transport the student in a university vehicle. The student will be transported to the nearest local hospital (students are required to check which hospitals are in-network for their insurance plans if they do not pay for Sagrado's insurance). If the student requests it, his or her parents/guardians will be notified.

If the resident is under 21 years of age, the Resident Director will communicate with the student's parent/guardian to notify them about the situation, and will travel with the Campus Security Supervisor and student to the ER with the student's signed Authorization for Medical Services form in a sealed envelope. The staff member or companion will remain with the affected student in the Emergency Room until the emergency room medical staff stabilizes the affected student, or the parent/guardian arrives.

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.

The CDC website also has health information available for other countries to which you may choose to travel during your time abroad. A list of countries with available health information can be found [here](#).

FITNESS

All students can use at no extra charge all college sports facilities, including gym, pool, basketball, volleyball, and tennis courts, as well as the baseball and soccer fields and the track for walking or running. All students have access to the university pool but please note that **swim caps must be worn and two piece bathing suits are not allowed.**

Students can also run around the city, but like in every big city there are certain places and certain hours that are better to avoid. You should always run during the day, not at night. You can also run throughout campus.

Academics with Spanish Studies Abroad and
Universidad del Sagrado Corazón

Your Spanish Studies Abroad program at Universidad del Sagrado Corazón (USC) is academically rigorous, and you will generally have class from Monday to Thursday with Fridays off for weekend travel. 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.

Spanish Studies Abroad offers programs in San Juan in cooperation with the Universidad del Sagrado Corazón (USC). Semester and academic-year students participate in the Integrated Studies program. Summer students participate in our 4-week or 8-week program and choose both Spanish language courses and electives taught in Spanish.

All students in both the International and Integrated programs are required to take a 3 credit Spanish language course throughout the duration of the semester. In this language course, you will study (depending on the level of the course) alongside other Puerto Rican students, mostly from the mainland United States, and students coming from Latin America and Europe. This course is required to strengthen your Spanish language skills.

International Studies students will take all of their courses in English in the areas of Humanities, International Business and Tropical Biology/Ecosystems.

Integrated Studies students will take all of their courses in Spanish and will choose their remaining courses from a variety of departments at USC. Students in this program are required to take "HIS 212: Desarrollo de la Nación Puertorriqueña" in order to learn more about the history and culture of your host country.

Summer students are enrolled either in language classes alongside other international students at USC or in content courses 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.

Note: *Spanish Studies does not grant refunds for any missed portion of the study trips and/or cultural visits.*

SPANISH-ONLY POLICY

When you submit your Pre-Departure materials, you sign a Spanish-only contract, promising to speak only Spanish while you are on the program. We take our Spanish-Only Policy very seriously and you should, too. 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 on the program. Make an effort, not just in class, but in the street, in your home, in bars and clubs—everywhere you go in Puerto Rico. It's the only way to make your Spanish Studies Abroad program the experience you want it to be. **Incidents of breaching the Spanish-Only Policy may be reported to the student's home campus and may reflect negatively on the student's grades.**

To reference the Spanish-Only Policy as well as the Academic Pledge and the Program Conditions & Release Statement that you signed please refer to the last few 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:

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

Any changes that you would like to make to your course registration, once your Course Selection form has been received must be sent via email to info@spanishstudies.org after you consult with your home university academic advisor. Once in San Juan, there will be a short Add/Drop period during which you may change your schedule on a space-available basis.

COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Students may add or drop integrated courses without penalty (course does not show up on the transcript) during the two-week *Add/Drop* period of the International/Integrated Studies Program only. Students that drop a course after the Add/Drop period will receive a “W” on the host university transcript. Any student who is not present for the final examination and has not previously withdrawn from the course will receive an “F” on his or her transcript from the host university.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Spanish Studies holds 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

Refer to the calendar included in your acceptance packet for the dates of final examination week. You must take your final exams as scheduled, so arrange your flight home after the program end date.

TRANSCRIPTS

The U.S. office of Spanish Studies issues academic transcripts at the end of each program. Your official transcript will be mailed to the address you provided in your application, and a student copy will be emailed to you.

Note: *Transcripts for integrated courses will be delayed due to the USC academic schedule. If you have an outstanding balance on your account, your transcript will be held until the balance is paid.*

Spanish Studies Abroad transcripts show course numbers and titles, the number of contact hours and credits, and the grades for all coursework undertaken on the program, including internships completed through Spanish Studies Abroad, Independent Research Projects (IRPs), and course work completed at the 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 for your Independent Research Project (IRP) 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, internships and outside studies approved for transfer credit by their home institution before the start of a program. This can normally be arranged through your study abroad advisor or registrar at your home institution.

Additional Transcript Requests

Once the program ends, you will receive an official transcript sent to the designated recipient on your Home School Approval Form and you will be emailed a student copy. If you need an official transcript in the future, there is a fee of \$10. If you'd like to order multiple transcripts at once, each additional transcript in the batch will cost an additional \$5. You may either choose to pay by check made payable to The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc., or complete a credit card authorization form that is available on our [website](#). 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 Abroad Transcript Request Form to Spanish Studies Abroad with the following information:

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

Note: If you received a transcript from a U.S. degree-granting institution (Heidelberg University), 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 may contact the Spanish Studies Abroad office in the U.S. at info@spanishstudies.org

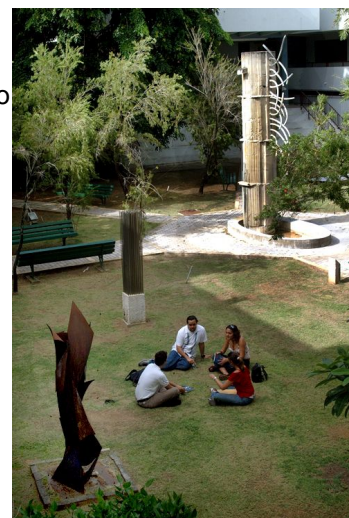
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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 nonprofit 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 Abroad 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 and Friends

Since the Summer Terms are intensive programs, classes are held Monday through Friday. 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.

During the semester, classes are held Monday through Thursday. This means that you have plenty of time to plan trips and weekend outings and will not need to miss any of your scheduled classes, which could affect your final grade.

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 Spanish Studies Abroad 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. Please do not plan trips with your family when classes are in session. Also, be aware that **if you transfer programs 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 regular 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.

Note: 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.

Packing Suggestions

Since 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* ● Swim cap to use the pool

*** Chicas: Swim suits must be one piece; two piece swimsuits are not allowed in the USC swimming pool.**

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.

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 ● Water bottle ● Beach towel ● Camera ● Backpack (or bookbag) ● 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.)

*** If you take any prescription medication or wear contacts, be sure to bring enough for your entire stay. Refer to "Prescriptions" under the "Health Insurance and Medical Care" section of this handbook.**

Note: 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, extra cash, and anything else of value that you don't want to leave lying around. Students should maintain a clean room, as there are periodic inspections by dorm staff.

*** If you do choose to bring your passport, you should not be carrying it around with you in San Juan. You can also bring a photocopy of your passport which you can keep in your wallet just in case you need it.**

You will be able to find a lot of 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. Any electronic devices that you have should work without converters. The outlets are the same.

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 a 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 providing 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 dorm 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: *Spanish Studies does not offer housing in the student residences during the days prior to the start of the program or days beyond the end dates of the program. If you are arriving early in San Juan or plan on staying later, you should book your own hotel or hostel.*

Note to Academic-Year Students and Students Participating in Multiple Programs: *Students enrolled in Academic Year programs or multiple combined programs will not have housing between semesters. Please refer to our website for the start and end dates of each semester. Students participating in an academic year or other programs combining multiple terms of study may choose to travel between terms or stay in the program location in a hotel or hostel. 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, and Puerto Rican cuisine 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 what you are accustomed to. You should be very careful in restaurants and make sure that the bean dishes you are ordering don't have meat in it. 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 become sick at the start of your program. Vegans may find it difficult to eat very well in Puerto Rico, but again, you will have the ability to prepare all of your meals.

You must let Spanish Studies Abroad know about any dietary restrictions or food allergies. You can do so by including this information on your housing and health forms, emailing info@spanishstudies.org, or calling (413) 256-0011.

Public Transportation

USC is a five minute walk from the metro stop Sagrado Corazón. USC also offers a free shuttle service called "El Dolphy" to the metro stop. There are two bus systems to get you around the city. All three public transportation systems cost riders around \$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 10:00pm and the metro runs until 11:30 pm. This means you may 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 prepaid cell phone in San Juan, which you can do for as little as around \$50 per month. These phones work just like a prepaid 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 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 webcam 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 webcam, 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 Abroad is affiliated with over 70 colleges and universities. For most affiliated schools, payment is made to Spanish Studies directly by the school. However, billing arrangements vary between universities, so we ask that you pay close attention to the information received with your acceptance letter and in the View/Pay Bill section of your online account.

PAYMENT OF FEES

The non-refundable deposit is due within 10 days of your acceptance to the program. In cases where the school is sending payment directly to Spanish Studies Abroad, you should ask your college or university to discuss this with Spanish Studies Abroad directly.

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

Payment must be received by the U.S. office of Spanish Studies Abroad no later than the due dates listed in your online account. Any payment submitted after its due date will be subject to late fees. You will not be admitted to Spanish Studies Abroad 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 and program cell phone usage.

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

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 the 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 will be covered by financial aid.

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

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 and five \$500 scholarships for summer programs. 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 <https://www.spanishstudies.org/grants.html>.

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
- 3 1/2 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 [Outside Scholarships & Financing Page](#).

Possible Additional Fees

TRANSCRIPT FEES

Students whose home college or university requires a transcript from a U.S. degree-granting institution for an Independent Research Project (IRP) 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 will be emailed to the student and must be returned to Spanish Studies Abroad before the end 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 Abroad program after you have been accepted, please send us written notification immediately. You can inform us of your decision 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 within 1-29 days before the start of the program has a penalty of 25% of the room and board fee and 100% of the tuition, study tours, 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 that these penalties are in addition to the deposit, which is non-refundable.**

There is no withdrawal from room and board arrangements with Spanish Studies Abroad during the course of a program. Spanish Studies Abroad 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 contact the Spanish Studies staff immediately; Spanish Studies will determine if a housing change is warranted.

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.

| | |
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| <p>Hostería del Mar (bed & breakfast at the beach) 1 Calle Tapia San Juan 787-727-3302</p> | <p>Courtyard by Marriott (10 min from the USC campus) 801 Ponce de León San Juan 1-800-593-8620 (toll free reservation center)</p> |
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|--|--|
| <p>Caribe Hilton Hotel (home of the <i>piña colada</i>, private beach) 1 San Geronimo Street San Juan 787-721-0303</p> | <p>Hotel El Convento (in historic Old San Juan) 100 Calle del Cristo Old San Juan 787-723-9020</p> |
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Academic Pledge and Program Conditions & Release

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

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, Córdoba, San Juan, and/or Havana, 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 U.S. 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 for students in the INTEGRATED STUDIES PROGRAM ONLY:

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.