

Nomadic Noles

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS
Summer 2014

A magazine written and produced
by students in Florida State University's
Study-Abroad Valencia Program



**Connecting
FSU Valencia's
future with pieces
of the city's past**

PAGE 4



Students in FSU's Valencia program now have a new home, following the purchase of a second building (background photo). The inset image shows the interior before the renovation.



New program, new magazine

The photo that accompanies this introduction is an image that becomes very familiar to students, faculty, and staff who participate in Florida State University’s Study-Abroad Program in Valencia, Spain. The Torres de Serranos, built in 1392 and located in the city’s center, act as a beacon for anyone looking for FSU’s Garnet Study Center. In fact, the center’s front door faces the towers.

Zachary Souza snapped the photo for the first issue of *Nomadic Noles*, a magazine produced by students in the Editing, Writing, and Media Program that FSU’s International Programs now offers for students who want to add an international experience to their time in college. Souza was one of 13 students enrolled in the EWM courses during the summer 2014 session, and they joined a total of 153 students from all over the country who chose Valencia for their study-abroad opportunity.

Throughout this magazine readers will find articles written and designed by the EWM students that describe and relive their experiences in Valencia. Among these articles are profiles of three program staff members—Alicia Martínez, María Sierra, and Belén Gonzalez—who have been invaluable to students and faculty during their time in Valencia.

As instructors in this new study-abroad program, we want to thank the International Programs staff, especially Director of Program Management Ceil Bare, who helped steer the program from the idea phase to actuality. She offered help and encouragement to us every step of the way.

We cannot end this introduction without expressing our appreciation for Program Director Ignacio Messina, whose hard work, enthusiasm, and charismatic personality make FSU Valencia the shining success that it is. Thanks in no small part to Ignacio’s vision, this first issue of *Nomadic Noles* coincides with the dedication of FSU’s new Gold Study Center in Valencia.

— Susan Hellstrom and Jack Clifford

Large front cover photo by Victoria Messina. Inset photo by Juan Salazar. Cover design by Monique Boileau.



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Living in history

By Victoria Messina

An inside look at the past, present, and future of the buildings that make up FSU's study center in Valencia, Spain

Imagine waking up every morning in the epicenter of Spain's third largest city. With Gothic towers right outside your window and ancient artifacts displayed in your apartment building, you're living and breathing the history of a bustling, monumental city.

For hundreds of students, this is a reality when they choose to study abroad in Valencia, Spain. And now, due to the recent addition of another building, even more students have the opportunity to live alongside Spanish natives in the heart of the city's Old Town district.

With one building nestled behind the historical Torres de Serranos and the other located just down the street, both buildings are situated in a vibrant community full of various options for dining, shopping, and sightseeing.

Ignacio Messana, FSU's program director in Valencia, says that the study center's position gives students countless options for exploration.

"Living in the middle of a normal neighborhood is perfect for the students to get immersed in the culture and in Valencia," he says.

Many students, such as FSU communications student Zack Souza, agree with Messana.

Souza, a student who studied abroad in Valencia during the second summer 2014 session, says the center's location couldn't get any better.

"It's not incredibly busy like New York City," he says, "but it still gives you that city feeling without overwhelming you."

"Living in the middle of a normal neighborhood is perfect for the students to get immersed in the culture and in Valencia."

— Program Director
Ignacio Messana

FSU did not always have its sights set on Valencia, however.

The university originally looked at Madrid in 1997 as the potential site for a study center in Spain, Messana says. When the program's original plans did not pan out, the group ended up traveling to Valencia on a whim.

"They arrived here in February and they found paradise," Messana says. "Beautiful weather. Beautiful history. Beautiful beach. Beautiful city. So they realized that this was where they should be."

FSU held its first Valencia-based study abroad program during the summer of 2000, says Messana, a Valencia native who has worked for FSU since August 2000.

After renting dorms, offices, and classrooms from the Polytechnic University of Valencia for the first seven years of the program, FSU opened its study center, called Garnet. This building is located right behind the Torres de Serranos, one of the area's most iconic landmarks, and across the street from the city's famous Turia riverbed park.

Growing interest in the university's study-abroad program in Valencia led to the purchase of another nearby building, named Gold, in order to accommodate more apartments and classrooms for students. The summer 2014 session was Gold's first, and its inauguration ceremony was set for September 2014.



Photo courtesy of Juan Salazar



Photo by Victoria Messina

Architectural excavations in the Gold building, which opened in 2014, revealed ancient arches (at left) that were renovated and incorporated into the classrooms downstairs, (right).

Purchasing these two buildings wasn't an easy act. The properties, both originally family residences, required extensive renovations. But the years of renovation were worthwhile, as the buildings are both beautiful and functional. Moreover, during the process, the crew uncovered countless historical artifacts in the process.

glass floors scattered throughout Garnet.

Juan Salazar, an archaeology professor at FSU's Valencia campus, says that although Gold's excavations did not yield finds as rich as Garnet's, archaeologists were still able to discover items ranging from coins and irons to pottery and bones, from different periods including Islamic and Christian Middle Ages.

Salazar, a Valencia native and professional rescue archaeologist, says he is excited that students get the chance to delve into the history of their surroundings by living in the apartments.

"There's a great opportunity for students living here because you can touch, see, and smell the real thing," Salazar says. "It's not only books or a PowerPoint. That's the big difference between studying on a regular campus in the States and here."

Ashley Hubaykah, a student from Iona College in New Rochelle, NY, says she loves being able to live in a city unlike any other she has lived in.

"We're living in history right now," Hubaykah says. "There's so much going on outside that can easily distract us from the history that's held within the building that you don't want to miss."

Though the artifacts may be old, the facilities are modern, as each apartment includes wireless Internet connection, a TV, a washing and drying machine, a fully furnished kitchen, and air conditioning. Both Garnet, which can house up to 93 students, and Gold, which can hold up to 39 students,



Photo by Victoria Messina

Students living in FSU's Valencia study center have the unique opportunity to study alongside ancient architectural marvels.

Garnet's renovations revealed a 20-meter stretch of the original Arab wall that dates back to the 11th century. Parts of this wall, such as one of the towers, were incorporated into walls of the renovated apartments,

What do students like the most about living in the study center? See page 36.

seamlessly blending old and new. Other remains, such as the 14th century tanning tanks, can be viewed through reinforced

house classrooms, office spaces, and double- or triple-occupancy rooms.

Messana says he does not see further expansion in the near future for FSU in Valencia, but he is pleased at how much the program has grown over the years.

"For now, we are going to focus on growing in quality," he says. "Then we will start allowing the program to develop in quantity while still maintaining those same quality standards."



Photo by Victoria Messina

The Gold building, located on Carrer de Serranos in Valencia's Old Town district, is just steps away from the main study center and offers students the same amenities.

Photo by Victoria Messina

FSU's main study center (right) is situated just behind the historical Torres de Serranos. These guard towers—once the main entrance to the city—offer an expansive view of the heart of Valencia.

In the mix with Alicia Martínez

By Allison Killip

Understandably, emotions are all over the map for students studying abroad for the first time: excitement, nervousness, and anticipation for what awaits them in a foreign country.

Fortunately for students in Florida State University's Study-Abroad Program in Valencia, Spain, Alicia Martínez is there to make them feel comfortable and to help them get the most out of their experience.

"Normally, when students come here for the first time, they find a very different environment from the U.S.," says Martínez, the program's associate director. "We try to give them as much information as possible so that they can adapt and orient in their first three or four days."

When she was 20 years old, Martínez herself spent a year in England to experience a different culture and to learn English.

"That was my first time going abroad from Spain, going away from my family – new country, new culture, new schedules – so I know exactly what you feel when you come here," Martínez says.

The year in England still serves as an inspiration to her.

"I really enjoyed that experience, the good and the bad – I know how much it helps you as a person and as a student," Martínez says. "I think international or global experience is very important and should be mandatory for everybody."

Martínez has an approachable personality, and because of her previous experiences, students find it easy to connect with her. In turn, she encourages them to reach out to her for advice.

"I believe in what I do," Martínez says. "I enjoy it because you are young people with a lot of energy."

Her dedication and passion for her

work does not go unnoticed by her colleagues and students.

"She is incredibly talented, professional, friendly, and intelligent," says Joshua Padilla, a student and program assistant (PA) in Valencia during the summer of 2014. "Her value to the program is immeasurable."

Martínez also brings a wealth of information about Spain to her interactions with students. She was born in Tarragona, Spain, but when she was 4 years old, her family moved to Valencia, where she was raised.

Although her home was in the city, she grew up experiencing two different cultures because of where her extended family lived. Her parents would often make the hour-and-a-half drive from Valencia to the countryside area of Motilla del Palancar, where the family worked the land they owned. Now, the family maintains three small vineyards.

"We help with the harvest, which is more of a family reunion where we all help and get together," Martínez says, with a smile.

With her appreciation for what big cities have to offer as well as her traditional ties, she is a great ambassador for Spain. Martínez's background helps students immerse themselves in the multiple cultures of Spain, a priority for study-abroad program officials.

Each session, Martínez helps plan excursions for students to cities in Spain that exemplify the country's rich and diverse cultures. During summer 2014, Martínez accompanied students on a weekend trip that included Madrid, Toledo, and Segovia.

"Every region you go, you always find something different – historically, culturally, [a different] lifestyle" Martínez says.

These trips are possible



Photo courtesy of Milagros Zavalia

"I believe in what I do. I enjoy it because you are young people with a lot of energy."
— Alicia Martínez

due to the hard work put in by Martínez and team in the student services office, where they assist students with housing, academics, and Valencian life.

Martínez and Program Director Ignacio Messana overlook the daily operations at the study center and work out logistics for current and future programs. The pair has worked together since the program first came to Valencia.

Messana recalls a trip to the Pyrenees in September 2013 with students in the program. After an adventurous day trekking in the mountains, Martínez told Messana, "I am tired, but it was a lot of fun."

In Messana's eyes, this explains the effort, style, and work ethic Martínez has in her day-to-day work.

"She works hard but always enjoys what she's doing," Messana says. "During these last 12 years with FSU Valencia, she has proven to be wonderful for the job."

Martínez makes herself available to all incoming students to answer questions and guide them throughout their stay.

As a native Valencian, she is a great resource for students learning their way around town.

In the first few days, it is common for students to have questions about housing issues, schedules, where to eat, and places to visit. In the second week, students usually have adapted and are ready to explore more of Spain and Europe.

Martínez makes sure that students are assisted with their travel as well, and asks every student to send in their travel plans before they depart.

"Valencia's a very well-connected city," Martínez says, "and we try to give information about trips, low fare costs, and where to go."

Occasionally, life in an unfamiliar city and country can be overwhelming to new stu-



Photo courtesy of Alicia Martínez

Alicia Martínez works in one of her family's three vineyards.

dents. Culture shock can occur in the first few days as students experience their new and very different environment.

"This is normal," Martínez says.

Aside from working with students, part of her responsibility is to train the PAs, who serve as peer guides for the students. The PAs encourage students to get out and explore by inviting them to various events and activities.

Melissa Claessens works closely with Martínez in the program office.

"I look up to her," Claessens says. "Without her, the program would not be the same."

Students at FSU Valencia are fortunate to have Martínez on staff. With her background, she offers students a perspective that helps them understand the Spanish cul-

ture and the study-abroad experience.

"I know how much it helps you as a person and as a student," Martínez says. "That's why I do what I do. I want to offer students the same experience."

"She works hard but always enjoys what she's doing. During these last 12 years with FSU Valencia, she has proven to be wonderful for the job."

— Program Director Ignacio Messana



Photo courtesy of FSU Valencia

Left: Martínez with a student, left, and Ignacio Messana, FSU Valencia Program Director, right.

Right: Martínez, center, with students on a trip to Segovia, Spain.



Photo courtesy of Sofia Eraso

Serving the community

By Zachary Souza

Study-abroad students give back to their new Valencian home through volunteer work with locals and their community

The typical itinerary for one of the students lucky enough to spend a summer studying in Valencia might include classes in the morning, paella at Serranos cafe for lunch, and ending the evening with sangria and empanadas at one of the local favorite hangouts, Lavins.

For some of these students, however, simply participating in the Valencian culture is not enough.

“When FSU landed in Valencia, we wanted the students to be an active part of the Valencian community,” Program Director Ignacio Messana says.

“One part is getting immersed in the culture,” he adds. “We try to make them know their neighborhood, the city, the history, and the beautiful and valuable places. The other part is trying to give to the community.”

Messana went on to explain that “about 10% of the students are participating in community service programs, and we would like to maintain that percentage or grow it.”

Currently, the community service program includes helping local youths who have hearing impairments learn English, as well as helping residents of local retirement homes get out of their buildings and get around the city.

“Whether it’s helping around or just tak-

ing them for a walk—some people are in wheelchairs and they cannot walk—it’s a wonderful service,” Messana says.

Andrea Lameris is one of the students who regularly volunteers her time, teaching English to children.

“I was able to experience what it was like

going to meet up with them again, not to volunteer [this time] but to catch up and play in the park.”

The door swings both ways for Lameris, who is still trying to better her own Spanish skills.

“Volunteering there was the first time I was completely immersed in Spanish,” she says. “Every visit I made helped me to practice and improve on my Spanish.”

Lameris and other students are strongly encouraged to participate in these programs for multiple reasons, but the betterment of the students’ second language is one of the core draws.

Maria Sierra, a staff person with the FSU program in Valencia, helps motivate the students.

“The community service program is an important part of the student life while in Spain because they take the time to help others and learn more

about themselves and about the Spanish culture,” she says.

The difficult task, though, is getting this program to grow. Messana has several aspirations, but the hardworking students and staff in Valencia are held in check by Span-



The recession has hit Spain and Valencia hard, and FSU officials hope that students can pitch in to help.

inside a Spanish home and watch how family members here interact with each other, which is what I was most excited to learn about,” Lameris says. “I became very close with them and stayed in touch even when I was studying abroad in Italy. I am actually



Student volunteer Andrea Lameris cooked a Spanish meal with the help of a local child, Nico.

Photo courtesy of Andrea Lameris

ish government rules and regulations.

Since FSU students are not Spanish citizens, they cannot perform many of the tasks that these programs require. The legal paperwork gets in the way, and as a result some of the goals are left unaccomplished.

“Yes, volunteering is wonderful thing to do,” Messana says. “But what if this is someone’s job that is being paid? We cannot take that away from them. That is why it is difficult.”

But these legal boundaries are not going to stop Messana and the program from working to accomplish its goal. The recession in Spain has left many families without jobs and a steady income. As a result, many local youth and adults alike are going to bed at night hungry, he says.

FSU is not alone in wanting to help. City officials put forth an effort to help these people who need it. Messana explains that there are local public schools that are free of cost to families; these schools even have a subsidized meal plan for the kids. The issue comes during summer when there is no school, leaving these kids without food.

For this reason, Messana wants to increase

put into place if not for some of the aforementioned legal boundaries.

“It has been difficult because not everyone can be the ones [handling] food, not everybody can be the one serving the food, and not everyone can be the ones working with kids—you need to have legal paperwork,” Messana says.

“We want to help economically to keep that dining room open, have someone who is authorized to be there, and then have our students assisting them,” he adds.

Even with all of these limitations and issues to resolve, Messana continues to keep his eye on the ultimate goal. The dynamic program director is not one to be easily deterred, and he thinks that FSU can soon put these programs put into place.

“It is difficult,” he says, “but we are proud.”

“The community service program is an important part of the student life while in Spain because they take the time to help others and learn more about themselves and about the Spanish culture.”

— Ignacio Messana, program director



Learning from the past

By Monique Boileau

Art history class gives students a fresh perspective

Belmont student Kes Hall takes notes at La Lonja de la Seda, where Valencia's silk trade once flourished

Photo by Monique Boileau

Eduardo “Lalo” Robles’s Art, Architecture, and Artistic Vision class meets outside the Florida State University study center after a brief Tuesday morning lecture. Professor Robles gathers the coffee-toting caravan and shifts into tour-guide mode.

The excursion starts inside the remnants of Arab walls that once surrounded part of the city. Along the walk from tower to crumbling tower, vibrant street art flirts with the sides of timeworn walls. The artists only spray-paint newer buildings, careful not to disturb any ancient structures.

“Good graffiti artists do it in places that are not of significant historical value. They’re respectful of that,” Robles says. “Valencia is very proud of its artists.”

According to Robles, some businesses hire graffiti artists to paint their facades before any would-be taggers have a chance to make their mark.

The juxtaposition of old and new illustrates a longstanding appreciation for art, something architect and professor Robles believes prospective International Programs students could learn from.

Robles feels that compared to other parts of the world, the United States is ambivalent toward art.

“It’s sad that we don’t value art as much as we should,” Robles says. War and conquest have disparaged



Photo by Monique Boileau

Professor Eduardo Robles, right, points out the Consulado del Mar before giving a tour of the site.

many cultures through the destruction and theft of art. “It’s the first thing stolen. [In many other countries,] it’s the first thing protected.”

To a casual observer, Robles’s extensive knowledge and the ease with which he navigates the winding Valencian streets might paint him as a native, but he grew up in the Straits of Magellan on the Chilean coast.

“It was surrounded by penguins. They raised me . . . that’s why I walk funny,” he jokes. “I never thought of going into architecture. Life changed my mind. I think it’s really what I always wanted to do.”

Robles is a professor at Florida A&M University’s School of Architecture in Tallahassee. He worked with Florida State to develop the ARH 2000 course for the Valencia study center and has taught the course since 2006, when FSU’s program was still at Valencia’s Polytechnic University.

Origins of the course

Initially, the curriculum was focused on local Valencian artists and contemporary Spanish art, but over the years it has been adjusted to fit the city’s architectural and artistic history. The class meets twice a week and starts with a half-hour lecture on the history and significance of the cultural movements in Valencia and Spain. The rest of the class is spent wandering through the alleys and museums of Valencia, where students experience the art firsthand.

On this particular day, Robles leads the class through cobblestone streets to the Museo de la Ciudad, the city museum located in the 17th century Palacio Marqués de Campo. Inside the stately palace are hundreds of Valencian paintings, sculptures, and artifacts

from the 15th century to the present.

Isabella Rodriguez, a transient student from the Rhode Island School of Art and Design, reflects on Spain’s rich cultural history, listing the different kingdoms and tribes the class has learned about.

“If you choose to study abroad, you should learn about where you are,” Rodriguez says, before she stops to sketch in front of an oil painting.

Goals of the course

Sketching is encouraged, but not required for the course; the goal is appreciation rather than application. Students are free to explore the museum at their own pace, and the only requirement is a journal entry on whatever interests them most.

Touring the city as part of the ARH 2000 class has given Florida State senior Jessica Gonzalez a better understanding of the value of art and architecture.

“We get to understand the history and culture of Valencia and Spain, and learn about the cultures that came before, like the Arabs and the Romans,” Gonzalez is excited for future travels with her newfound appreciation for architecture that can’t be found the United States.

On a later excursion, Robles gives a short PowerPoint lecture on Gothic architecture before leading the class to La Lonja de la Seda. Located across from the Central Market, La Lonja is a 15th century Valencian Gothic masterpiece that was once the center for Valencian commerce.

Important exchanges were carried out in the Consulado del Mar, the smaller of the two halls at the site. Students stare openmouthed at the ceiling, where gold-painted

carvings of mythical animals, kings, and important merchants are posed as if they have been tasked to watch over all of the consulate’s official business.

Next to the Consulado is the great hall, where Valencia’s powerful silk trade took place in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Students file in through the arched doorway, their footsteps echoing on the stone and marble floor through the hall.

Massive, twisting columns hold up Gothic vaulted ceilings. The arched windows were originally open so that any breeze from the ocean would ventilate the buzzing trade hive, where only the wealthiest merchants sold their wares.

A few students run their hands over the spiral stone columns before gathering around Robles as he points out the tiny carved creatures that line the arches and edges of the building. The lewd gestures and contorted faces of the figures are typical of Gothic design, and great for getting a laugh out of the students.

The class leaves through the orange garden, where the sweet smell of fallen fruit fills the air. Parrots squawk overhead.

“Let’s take the scenic route,” Robles says, to which one student replies, “Everywhere is scenic!”

Wall-to-wall history

The Valencia program surrounds students with centuries of artistic and architectural change.

“It’s evolution or revolution,” Robles says. “Many architects will try to design traditional architecture with a modern twist. The study

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Chief
Osceola
and
Renegade

FSU file photo

*I am afraid,
dear reader,
that I have
tricked you.
Whatever
your reason,*

*you have decided to read this
article. Seeing as it is printed
in the middle of a Florida
State University publication,
I must confess: I am not an
FSU student. In fact, I was
a transient student from the
University of Central Florida
for the summer of 2014 so
that I could study in Valencia,
Spain. Why would I do that?
My reasons are my own, but you
should know that I was not the
only one.*

**Setting the rivalry aside,
University of Florida
students in the summer
2014 Valencia program
pose while performing
the Gator Chomp.
Clockwise, from top
left: Jay Wilson, Victoria
Messina, Will Sabayrac,
Avalon Goldwasser, and
Carly Oliveri.**



Photo courtesy of Victoria Messina

Gators, Knights, and Bruins . . . oh my!

**Non-FSU students eagerly line up
to participate in FSU's Valencia Program**

By Beth Canova

Transient students from around the country are attracted to Florida State University and its promise of adventure, excitement, and scholastic opportunities abroad.

The program in Valencia, Spain, is among the most popular. According to Meagan Greene, director of recruitment and retention at FSU International Programs, 40 transient students applied and were accepted into the Valencia summer program in 2014 which she says is about average. Of those, a large number came from Belmont University through a partnership program that began in 2010.

Associate Professor Jeff Overby previously taught at FSU and in Valencia as part of the program. When he moved to teach at Belmont, he

wanted to expand and offer the experience to his new students as well.

Beyond Belmont, the Valencia program draws transient students from several other universities.

"Valencia is a location that offers the benefit of studying in a large Spanish city, without the saturation of U.S. study-abroad students," Greene says.

Moreover, the study center itself is in an ideal location, the heart of Valencia, allowing participants to easily slip into the local culture and to immerse themselves in the Spanish atmosphere.

Greene also touches on the specific benefits of being a student. Not only are they able to have cultural experiences, but also they receive university credits that are easily transferable, especially within Florida's public university system.



UCF's Knightro
and Pegasus.

Photo courtesy of
Jacob Langston.

**Students from Belmont University
ham it up while on a day trip to
Peniscola with FSU's summer 2014
program in Valencia. Clockwise,
from bottom left: Amanda Barnett,
Emily Deaton, Kelsey Melin, Ryan
Shannahan, Kesleah Hall, Jordan
Dye, and Nick Estrem.**



Photo courtesy of Amanda Barnett

Hard work by officials in Tallahassee creates smooth sailing for transient students across the Atlantic. Isabella Rodriguez, nicknamed Isa, was a transient student from the Rhode Island School of Design, taking art classes for elective credit in Valencia. Despite applying late and needing a new passport, Rodriguez says the process of applying and the steps afterward were simple.

"You just have to fill out all the applications and make sure you get everything in on time," she says.

The forms she refers to include not just information for FSU, but also transient forms for credits to be accepted by a student's home university.

Another transient student, Victoria Velazquez, an education major from Florida Atlantic University, had a little more trouble when it came to registering for her classes. As a native Spanish speaker, some of the lower-level language courses at Valencia were closed to her, though she was not aware of that while registering. Despite having the class approved by her home school, Velazquez needed to switch classes last minute once she was told she could not be in those classes.

Nonetheless, Velazquez was glad she chose to study abroad with FSU: "I'm still

happy to be here."

Besides the obvious benefits to students, Greene says there are several perks for FSU in accepting students from a range of universities.

"Having more students on programs benefits FSU in giving us the ability to offer a broader range of courses," she says.

Many transient students in Valencia take courses for elective credit, rather than for their majors since it can be trickier to transfer core credits. Velazquez, for example, wishes that FSU offered education courses.

Given that teaching abroad is popular and that education majors "want to go to a school here and see what a normal school day is like . . . having a teaching program here I think would be really cool," she says.

Apart from the academic aspect of the program, social concerns also factor in for transient students looking to study abroad in that they are away from familiar surroundings and away from home-campus friends. Despite this, Rodriguez does not feel as if she was at a disadvantage for being a transient student.

"There are differences when people start to talk about 'Tally' and that, but I can catch up and I'm an easygoing person," she says, as she sits back on the couch, getting comfort-

able with being interviewed.

Rodriguez emphasizes the ease of her transition by dismissing the need for first-day icebreakers with a quick shake of her head.

"I always think that forced introductions are more temporary than they are lasting," she says. "You might need that to break the ice a little bit and make some type of a connection, but I wouldn't say they're pivotal to lasting relationships."

What is pivotal, in her opinion, is the free dinners and breakfasts the students receive the first two days of each session, as they were enough to unite any group of college students. The moment she mentions this, Rodriguez's roommate calls from the other room about another possibility of free food that evening. Without hesitation, a chorus of "yes" rings through the apartment from everyone nearby.

Velazquez says that even though she wasn't concerned about how being a non-FSU participant would affect her, the first day abroad was still challenging.

"That first day, I felt kind of lonely and I was immediately homesick because I felt like I couldn't find something in common with a lot of the people here," the South Florida

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Calm and caring

María Sierra helps students and faculty members get past the bumps in the road as they adjust to life in Valencia

By Lina Gwynn

Students and faculty members who take part in Florida State University's Study Abroad Program in Valencia, Spain, use many superlatives to describe the staff members of the study center: dedicated, knowledgeable, hardworking, passionate, to name a few.

But even still, those descriptions fall short.

One staff member in particular, María Sierra, embodies all of these qualities and more. Her nurturing and selfless character makes her a go-to person for students and faculty alike.

In turn, Sierra truly enjoys what she does, and her efforts do not go unnoticed.

Natalie Stanley, an international programs student in summer of 2014, couldn't help but rave about Sierra.

"She's absolutely amazing," Stanley says. "I was sick the first day we got here and had to miss orientation. She came in and checked on me numerous times. She went to the store and bought me Gatorade, and then made me homemade chicken noodle soup."

"It was so sweet. I felt like I had a mom away from home."

Sierra, mother of four, has worked at FSU's Valencia program for almost 11 years. Her husband, American David Nordlund, also works at the Valencia campus, where he teaches humanities and film courses. Sierra

"It's rewarding to be able to help the students settle and enjoy Spain."

— María Sierra

is a Valencian native – in fact, she lives with her family in the same building that she grew up in – but the couple has also lived in the United States.

While in Los Angeles, Sierra worked for six years at the Consulate General of Spain.

"I like working with people that are from the U.S., and I also like to work with students," Sierra says. "They keep me young. It's a good job."

Sierra wears many hats when it comes to her job at the study center. She handles health and medical situations, internships for students, and any passport or visa issues that arise.

Many of the students are first-time travelers when they arrive in Spain.

"It's rewarding to be able to help the students settle and enjoy Spain," Sierra says.

Ignacio Messana, director of FSU's Valen-

cia program, sings her praises.

"She cares for the students," he says. "We see it from the routine day-to-day tasks to the full nights she spends in the hospital taking care of students in emergency situations."

Unfortunately, studying abroad is not always smooth sailing.

"We've had students that are quite sick and had to take them to a hospital," Sierra says. "It's hard to see the students who you know are sick, having a bad time, and who are away from home. You just want to help them."

In addition to her caring for students, Sierra assists faculty members as well. She arranges off-campus housing and troubleshoots any problems that come up.

For example, during the summer of 2014 session, faculty members living in an apartment building not owned by the university had troubles with internet connections and hot water availability. Sierra responded immediately and worked on the issues until they were resolved.

Not only is Sierra passionate about helping others, she is just as passionate about appreciating Valencia, listing several of her favorite parts when the topic arises: "the life, the flowers, the coffee shops, the beach."

"You can walk everywhere,"

Sierra says. "In the summertime the nights are beautiful. It's not too hot. It's perfect."

She talks about her job with FSU in almost the same way— "I wouldn't



Photo by Alicia Martínez

María Sierra helps a student in her office.



Photo courtesy of Natalie Stanley

María Sierra and Natalie Stanley.

change a thing," she says. And her experiences with two cultures suits her well.

"I really enjoy my job very much," Sierra says. "I'm so happy that I get to work with FSU students, and even

though part of me is in the United States, the other part is here in Valencia."

Even when Sierra is answering questions about herself for a profile, her caring nature and focus on students comes through, as she offers advice for any future study-abroad students who are thinking about studying in Valencia.

"Don't be nervous. You need to be brave, and everyone can be brave," she says. "Do it. Don't be shy. Come to Spain, and we will help you. You will be OK."

"She came in and checked on me numerous times. She went to the store and bought me Gatorade and then made me homemade chicken noodle soup. It was so sweet. I felt like I had a mom away from home."

— Natalie Stanley

María Sierra in her hometown of Valencia, Spain, in front of the Torres de Serrano, just outside FSU's Garnet study center.



Photo courtesy of María Sierra

By Paula Nicole Meneses

Bags are packed, passport is in hand, and you're off, catching various connecting flights, waiting in and around the airports during multi-hour layovers, and tirelessly recovering from jet lag once you arrive.

All of this seems justifiably worth it for study-abroad students from Florida State

University who are embarking on the opportunity of a lifetime.

The closer a student gets to his or her final destination—in this case, Valencia, Spain—the more evident language barriers become.

"Certain things in English do not translate over the same way here in Valencia, making the language barrier not the only thing difficult to adjust to, but the social etiquette as well," says Hollie Sterling, an FSU student

Students mingle, becoming bilingual



Photo by Paula N. Meneses

Paige Asker, left, purchases food at a Valencia produce store located across the street from FSU's Gold study center.

enrolled in the summer 2014 study-abroad session.

Entering the program in Valencia without knowing the language has the potential to cause challenges for students, especially when adapting to the everyday life in a Spanish-speaking country. But those challenges come with rewarding highlights, giving each student a special experience.

FSU's International Programs continues to thrive by designing top-ranked academic study-abroad curriculums, offering students across the country the chance to become immersed socially and culturally throughout their stay. In order to take full advantage of what Valencia and other Spanish-speaking cities have to offer, it is necessary to be able to communicate with local people of this region, at least on a basic level.

Students inevitably encounter situations that require socialization with the local residents, especially within the first few days of learning the ropes of the neighborhood. One of the main priorities for program staffers is to provide beneficial tools for students to make day-to-day life easier while they are temporarily living away from a more comfortable environment.

The student population for the Valencia program might fall into three categories: Student A, who is fluent in Spanish or knows the language very well; Student B, who knows basic Spanish; and Student C, who does not know any Spanish. Before traveling to Valencia, a student may realize which category that he or she fits into, but regardless of his or her Spanish fluency level, a study abroad experience should be enriching.

Visitors to Valencia will notice that many locals know little to no English and even fewer know the English language very well. So, a person fitting the mold of Student A might acclimate to Valencia in a natural manner. In contrast, those students in categories B and C may count on guidance from individuals that are comfortable with the Spanish language.

"I am extremely grateful toward the program assistants and Spanish speakers within this program, who helped make my first few days in Valencia much less stressful," says Lina Gwynn, who fits the category of Student C. "Not knowing any Spanish posed some challenges, especially when ordering food, asking for directions, and buying my tickets from the train station. Their ability to understand the language and help me communicate was a humbling experience."

If you are like Student B, someone who knows basic Spanish from taking previous classes in high school or college, you are off to a good start in Valencia. Knowing even basic Spanish phrases and words is an asset when socializing with shop owners, restaurant servers, cab drivers, and other non-English speakers, and that ability makes integrating with locals that much easier.

"I completed my second year of Spanish prior to arriving in Valencia, making me much more comfortable by briefly knowing the language," says Alexia Swanson, an FSU student who took classes in Valencia during the summer 2014 session. "Even though I just know a little bit of Spanish, I was able to understand what local Spanish speakers were saying, also allowing me to comprehend menus and signs throughout the city. Every day I woke up wanting to make progress in my Spanish."

Spending time immersed in the Spanish

"Having students here throughout the year has given me the opportunity to improve my English."

**— Jesús Morenete
owner of Pan de Queso**

culture will naturally cause students to understand the language better than when they first arrived. Whether students choose to study in Valencia for six weeks, 12 weeks, an academic semester, or even an entire year, learning the basics of the language will help them to improve their competence when speaking Spanish.

"Phrases and concepts of communication are said differently in Spanish, which has made it that much more difficult when adapting to the language," says Sterling, who wasn't familiar with the Spanish language prior to her time in Valencia for the summer 2014 session. "For example when you want to take

leftover food to go, you have to say 'take away' or 'para llevar.' There is also a certain 'Valenciano' dialect that is spoken differently here, rather than in other areas within Spain. This has confused me when trying to learn the basic Spanish language."

But students aren't the only ones that learn from those who speak a different language as them. Having tourists of different cultures visiting the city helps locals appreciate and learn a different language as well.

"Having students here throughout the year has given me the opportunity to improve my English," says Jesús Morenete, a native of Valencia and owner of Pan de Queso, a neighborhood favorite located

across the street from FSU's Gold study center. "I know a very basic level of the English language but continuing to communicate daily with Florida State students allows me to keep practicing. Not only does it help me learn to speak better but hearing the pronunciation of useful words and phrases gives me a better understanding of English lingo."

Various outcomes are possible for FSU students who take on this socio-cultural experience. Those who familiarized themselves



Photo by Paula N. Meneses

Learn simple Spanish phrases to enhance your experience in Valencia. See page 32.

with the language prior to their trip say it was easier to adapt culturally and verbally to their surroundings.

Whether they fit the category of Student A, Student B or Student C, though, they say studying abroad ultimately becomes a life-changing and learning experience. Learning the language and the differences about the culture can be humbling, they admit, but the feeling once they succeed adds a more memorable and personal impression of their interaction with the locals of Valencia.



Photo by Paula N. Meneses

Second-language Spanish speakers, Hollie Sterling (left) and Alexia Swanson, learn to make purchases at a local restaurant.



FSU's golf management program goes global

By Alexia Swanson

Golf industry changes lead Florida State University to refocus golf management program into internationally inclusive major

For the first time since 1904, golfers in 2016 will get a chance to swing for an Olympic medal. During golf's 112-year absence from the Olympics, it has be-

come more of an international sport, such that men and women from 30 countries are expected to compete in Rio de Janeiro.

With golf's rise in international attention, Florida State University thinks the time is

right for students seeking careers in the golf club and resort industry to add an international perspective to their studies.

That's a major reason why, as of January 2015, FSU is adding a new major called Global Club Management.

"It is the first program of its kind in the world," says Cynthia Johnson, director of internships and an adjunct instructor of golf management studies at FSU.

The new major will provide students with an opportunity to learn about private clubs and golf resorts around the world. Students will be required to complete an international experience, which could be studying abroad, an international internship, or a domestic internship with a multi-national company in the club industry.

The new major, offered through FSU's Dedman School of Hospitality, is expected to attract students from all over the world. Students who graduate from the program will earn a bachelor of science in hospitality management from FSU's College of Business.

Because of the international nature of the major and the hospitality industry, it's important to be aware of cultural differences, Johnson says.

"The biggest difference in the hospitality business in Spain compared to the United States is service—that's the number one," she says.

Study-abroad students can relate to things like dining differences in Europe vs. what it's

"Students who come here and want to study here are open to traveling around the world—they already have global interest ... a tolerance for other cultures ... and they're interested in meeting people from all over the world."

— Cynthia Johnson

like to eat out in the United States. Experiences as small as eating out in foreign countries help students acquire an appreciation of different cultures.

Such an internationally focused program did not emerge overnight.

In 2013 and 2014, Johnson and other FSU officials began paving the way for the new program by teaching courses at some of FSU's study-abroad locations and by meeting with club and golf resort professionals. They also secured internships for students in Spain, Scotland, England, and Panama, as well as in the United States.

In summer 2014, Johnson taught two courses in Valencia: Club Management and Managing Services Organizations. She stresses how studying in Valencia pairs invaluable experiences to the coursework.

"For one thing, we're incorporating a lot of field trips," she says. "When in the pro-

gram in Tallahassee, [students learn] about all these global operations, but watching a PowerPoint is a lot different than actually meeting the management team and being in an international environment."

For example, her summer 2014 students toured an international yacht club and experienced the difference from clubs in the United States.

"It was an incredible experience," Johnson says. "They even took us on the water."

Her class also traveled to Hotel Dénia Marriott La Sella Golf Resort and Spa south of Valencia and to a high-end club south of Valencia Beach called Campo de Golf El Saler.

Stephen Sakmar, who took the club management class in Valencia in summer 2014, says the real-world experiences on field trips helped him visualize what he learned.

"Visiting golf courses, hotels and other types of clubs gave me a perspective of how they are actually run and managed," he says.

Classmate Kelsey Bloomfield also found the field trips helpful.

"I really liked learning the difference between international clubs and domestic clubs," Bloomfield says. "Being able to see it in person and talking to the managers of hotels and clubs makes learning a lot easier."

Bloomfield says she also enjoyed getting to play golf on a course in Valencia.

"Those who knew how to play ... and



Photo courtesy of Cynthia Johnson

Students of the club management class got to try out the boats at the Club Nautico Yacht Club in Valencia for one of their summer field trips.

those who couldn't had a lesson with a pro," she says.

Besides taking students on field trips, Johnson tried to foster a global perspective in her students in Valencia.

"Students who come here and want to study here are open to traveling around the world—they already have global interest ... a tolerance for other cultures ... and they're interested in meeting people from all over the world," Johnson says.

"From the way your shower works to how restaurant servers treat you—it's just different ... And you learn the culture of a group of people who you've never been around before," she adds.

Johnson also impresses upon students the importance of cultural tolerance, not only for students in the major but also for all American students.

"You are going to need to have that open-minded, global perspective," she says. "Understand that there are other ways people do things in the world, not just the American way—which is not necessarily the right way, it's just one way of doing things."



Photo courtesy of Cynthia Johnson

Cynthia Johnson (far right) poses with her club management class and guest speaker Toni Cortes (far left), a Spanish golf professional.



Photo courtesy of Cynthia Johnson

Cynthia Johnson's club management class took a swing at professional golf lessons during a visit to a golf course in Valencia.



Valencia's program assistants visit the Valley of the Fallen in Madrid.

Photo courtesy of Melanie Figueroa

When FSU Valencia students reminisce about their study-abroad experience, highlights will almost certainly include the fun times they shared with their program assistants (PAs).

Valencia's PAs are like resident assistants (RAs), tour guides, and translators all rolled into one. Officially, PAs work with the permanent members of the Valencia center's staff to help keep the program running

smoothly. But that job description could include all sorts of duties.

For example, on any given day – or night – a PA might work the 24-hour front desk at one of the residence halls; give a student directions to an affordable restaurant; organize a sporting event; or provide guidance when a sick student needs to see a doctor. In off hours, they might accompany students during a night on the town.

Alana Majdalawi, a student studying in Valencia during the summer of 2014, says the PAs definitely helped to improve her experience as a study-abroad student.

"The first night we went out I was shocked that they

were coming with us," she says. "I had the mentality that PAs were like camp counselors, and that there were only going to be a few times that we interacted socially. I was pleasantly surprised that they interacted with us because it allowed us to bond with them and helped us feel more comfortable approaching them."

In fact, the PAs in Valencia room with the rest of the students in FSU's residence halls

in Valencia and are encouraged by Program Director Ignacio Messana to interact with the students.

"Being a successful PA is about being good at interacting with students," Messana says. "I think that's a key thing. The program assistants cannot be isolated from the students; they need to be one with the group of students. The more approachable they are, the better the students feel and the better the PAs do their job."

But doesn't that blur the line between authority figure and student?

No, Messana says. "As a PA, you can be a nice person doing well, enjoying a lot of interaction with the students and, at the same time, still have clear lines for responsibilities."

Messana believes that the three most important qualities for a PA are maturity, intelligence, and some proficiency with the Spanish language.

To be hired, PAs must fill out a paper-based application and be selected through the International Programs office at FSU in Tallahassee. In general, most of the PAs have previously studied in FSU's Valencia Program and speak Spanish. Some are recent graduates while others are current students, usually upperclassmen. Not all are FSU students.

One of the six students serving as PAs in the summer of 2014 was Christian Schmidt,

a University of Central Florida student who studied at FSU Valencia in the spring of 2013. Schmidt was happy to talk about why he wanted to become a PA.

"I love Valencia," he says, adding that he felt as though he did not get enough of Valencia in 2013. "I love working with the staff; I wanted to come back and teach students about Valencia."

Yet being a good PA is no walk in the park. "The job is pretty stressful," Schmidt says. "Managing 160 students according to faculty expectations is sometimes hard. Working with six other people who before this trip were strangers also makes it difficult."

But he did his best to help students adjust quickly and to enjoy their surroundings by answering students' questions, translating any Spanish that they might not understand, and by explaining any cultural differences.

While the job can be stressful, it can also be rewarding.

"Being a PA is great," Schmidt says. "You make a lot of friends, meet a lot of new people, you get to see the city from a different perspective, and of course, you get to practice your Spanish."

Messana agrees that the positives outweigh the negatives for PAs. "It's a wonderful job," he says. "It's obviously not highly paid. At the same time, you are looking for someone that still doesn't have experience or a background – in some cases someone who has not even graduated."

"We've had cases in the past where, for some of them, it was difficult for them to understand, and I can see why because it's not a highly paid job," he adds. "But we expect a lot from them: a lot of being available, a lot of being ready for emergencies, a lot of helping students. But we think that it is a position that is well coordinated."

One student who talks about the extra help she got from PAs is Majdalawi.

From left, Melanie Figueroa, Christian Schmidt, instructor B.J. Biringner, and Cristina Palmer pose for a photo in front of the Garnet Study Center in Valencia.

"It's about being good at interacting with students."
— Ignacio Messana

"From the moment I stepped off the plane, the PAs were tremendously helpful and welcoming," Majdalawi says. "I was one of the people whose luggage did not arrive on time, and the

PAs were so sympathetic. They instantly offered their personal clothes to me. The PAs also helped make the transition into Spanish life so smooth by being super informative."

At the end of the summer of 2014, the PAs also helped students make the transition out of Spanish life by putting together an 18-minute souvenir video featuring highlights of the students' time in Valencia, including activities in some of the classrooms, group field trips to Madrid and Peniscola, and the center's party on the Fourth of July.

As the video played, students clapped and shouted in ap-

preciation when they saw their favorite PA onscreen.

True to form, the PAs worked hard from students' arrival to departure, but their efforts did not go unappreciated.

"They have a wonderful time," Messana says. "They work very hard, so it's very important that they know from the first moment they are considering applying that they will have the time of their life but that they have to work very hard. One doesn't stop the other."



Photo courtesy of Milagros Zavalia

While in Barcelona, the PAs toured a cathedral with students in the program.



Photo courtesy of Milagros Zavalia

Valencia's PAs are A-plus

What does it take to be a top-notch program assistant?

By Katie Feyko and magazine staff



Immerse yourself . . .

By Katherine Cornelison
and magazine staff

Some apprehension about what you will encounter when traveling outside of the United States is normal. People in the United Kingdom (among other places) will drive on the left side of the road. Local people in almost any other country don't speak English, or not enough to engage in full conversations. Getting lost is inevitable, and sometimes becoming scared or feeling isolated happens.

These situations can increase the nervousness some people already experience with

“Being able to know and understand another language and culture is crucial to survival in the 21st century.”

— B.J. Biringer

international travel. And it seems as though there is no remedy for the anxiety—no matter how many guidebooks you flip through or how many foreign phrases you read and repeat while squeezing sweaty palms together during the long plane ride.

Mishaps or misunderstandings will happen, but fear can sometimes hold you back from fully interacting with your environment. And after visiting a place a thousands of miles from

home, it is impossible to go home without being changed, without having learned something. But it's also impossible to know exactly what there is to be learned until you venture out from your comfort zone.

And that's half the fun.

Language instructor B.J. Biringer of Florida State University, who teaches a Regional Cultural Studies course in Valencia for FSU's Study-Abroad Program, urges students to take that leap and to challenge themselves. He has been living in Valencia since 2000, and he earned his Ph.D. in Spanish Literature from FSU in 2005.

His class, which he has been teaching for 10 years, came about because the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics wanted an instructor to focus on the city and region of Valencia. His love for the city and for the culture, he says, guides his lesson plans.

“Each year, semester, session I try to breathe new life into the course by looking to push the boundaries through unique opportunities and activities,” he says.

He advises students studying abroad in Valencia to look at their situations in a broader sense.

Top photo: Roman ruins at the Citadel overlooking Sagunto in the Valencia province. Above photo: Alcázar de Segovia.

“It is important to realize that the United States, though a modern-day Rome, is not the umbilical cord of the world,” he says. “Young Americans need to open their minds and souls beyond the borders of the United States. Being able to know and understand another language and culture is crucial to survival in the 21st century.”

Truly knowing the culture takes time spent in a city or region, of course, but learning to speak a new language can be difficult for anyone, especially for students who are in Valencia for just several weeks during the summer sessions. Sometimes the fast-paced talking and brisk greetings when trying to interact with shopkeepers or restaurant workers can be intimidating, but they are more than willing to help students out or switch languages if they need it.

For some students, like Beth Canova, who studied in Valencia during the summer of

2014, the best way to feel comfortable was to have a safety blanket of going out with at least one person who already knew the language. For others, like Zack Souza, also in Valencia during the summer of 2014, it was best to just talk and pick up what you can as you go.

“I was always able to get my message across eventually, even if it was through hand motions,” he says, proving that body language can go a long way, even for those who are faint of heart when it comes to social interaction.

Valencians know their home is an international travel destination—large enough to be vibrant, but small enough to feel cozy after getting lost a few times and learning the layout. Souza admits that “my goal every day for the first week was to get as lost as possible—that way I would learn the neighborhood, and find the best places to eat.”

He had success, finding two restaurants where he ate several times, and eventually having little trouble navigating his way back to his apartment.

Biringer is far past those initial stages of his experience in Valencia. But his philosophy is similar when he talks about the insights students gain when they get out and do what Souza did.

“I think it's important because it is one of the most powerful arms against ignorance that we have,” Biringer says. “In order to understand a culture is to integrate within it.”

Biringer lives what he talks about. When he told his parents 15 years ago that he was going to stay in Valencia once he finished his Ph.D.—he is now married to a Valencia native, Marian—his father told him, “If you stay, then make sure you make an impact there.”

Beyond any influence he has on his students, Biringer has also been vice-president and librarian of the Falla Barrio San José Association—the first American in the city of Valencia to do so.

For the instructor, Valencia is already home. For study-abroad students, that sense comes in fleeting moments. Canova and Souza both say that, upon returning from a program-sponsored weekend trip to Madrid, Valencia felt like home.

That feeling of immersion—finding a level of comfort in a home away from home—is for many students a goal of studying abroad.

Getting around in Valencia

The riverbed park

The riverbed park is a unique and beautiful place; it is a social and cultural hub and important as far as history goes. Where now there is a park used to be the most important river in Valencia, the River Turia. In Roman times, when the city was first established, the river was split off into eight separate aqueducts in order to channel water to the eight local *huertas*—orchards—in the area. After a flood in the late 1950s, the river was redirected and the old riverbed was turned into this park that is now integral to local celebrations such as the Feria de Julio. (See information about this city-wide festival on page 33.)



La Ciudad de las Artes and Ciencias

La Ciudad de las Artes y Ciencias

At one end of the riverbed is the Ciudad de las Artes y Ciencias, designed by the architects Santiago Calatrava (see information on Calatrava, page 31) and Félix Candela. The space comprises several museums and architectural structures that include a garden area filled with only plants indigenous to the area. While the museums are perfectly impressive on their own, the architecture and careful crafts-

manship put into the entire city structure are a sight to behold, and the structures pay respect to Valencia as a city. By all means, visit the area just to look at the buildings. The aquarium, L'Oceanogràfic, is a must-see since it's the biggest in all of Europe.

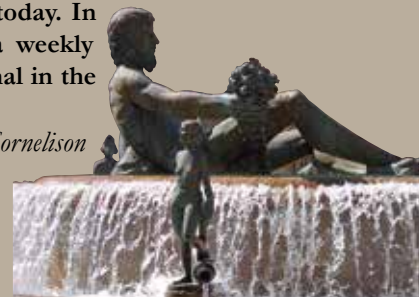
Torres de Serranos

The towers are of particular interest to students since they are directly in front of the program's study center. The towers are considered to be the main entrance to the city. (Read more information on the towers, page 31.) Particularly at the time of their construction in 1392, until they were turned into a prison after a fire in 1586, they were used as the entrance for royals and ambassadors. Not only do they stand an impressive height, the towers are still in good condition and still open to the public.

La Plaza de la Virgen

The plaza used to be the center of the city during the Roman era and it is now the location of the Valencian government. Surrounding the fountain in the center—which signifies the river Turia and the eight *huertas*—are many old Gothic and Renaissance-era basilicas and churches that are still in use today. In addition to being the site for civil protests, a weekly tribunal—*el Tribunal de las Aguas*, the oldest tribunal in the world—meets every Thursday at noon.

—Text and photos by Katherine Cornelison



Statue of the River Turia personified in La Plaza de La Virgen

ABROAD WITH BULLS

BY EMILY BROOKS



Photos by Emily Brooks
Nick Estrem (above) waves a handkerchief to show support for the matador. Kesleah Hall (bottom left) and Kelsey Melin (right) show their reactions to the bull fight.



Determined and poised, they stand staring intently into each other's eyes. Roaring cheers are muffled by the sound of their racing hearts. As bull and man, they share a moment of complete silence before their fates are decided.

Tauromaquia, or bullfighting, is understandably one of the most controversial sports throughout the world. Some people visiting Valencia, however, choose to attend a bullfight during the city's *Feria de Julio* (July festival) or during the *Fallas* festival in the spring.

As in other semesters, Alicia Martínez, associate director of FSU Valencia's study-abroad program, invited students and faculty members to accompany her to a bullfight one weekend evening in July 2014.

"I RECOMMEND TO COME AND SEE IT AT LEAST ONCE—BECAUSE IT CAN OPEN UP A NEW WORLD."

— ALICIA MARTÍNEZ

Bullfighting has been a part of Martínez's life from an early age. With a bullfighting expert as a father, she recognizes that the tradition does not have the importance that it had

many years ago because many people view bullfighting as an act of cruelty. However, according to Martínez, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

"It is a way to understand death, even though many people don't see it that way," Martínez says. "It's something that is done by human beings. Nowadays we criticize it and stop to think about it, but yes, I consider it part of the [Spanish] culture."

It is important for students studying abroad in Spain to try to understand the various aspects of the country's traditions. Understanding the specific concepts of bullfighting can help a person grasp why proponents refer to it as an "art form." In fact, Martínez offers a 45-minute presentation on the night students and faculty members attend an event, discussing facts and explaining in more detail

what is taking place in the ring and in the crowd.

Still, it isn't until you have witnessed a live bullfight

that you will be completely immersed in traditional Spanish culture, some say.

The history of bullfighting in Spain dates back hundreds of years, although the roots

are sometimes traced to the Roman Empire and earlier.

The bullfighting of today is overseen by three important figures: the president, who has the final authority over the prizes awarded; the assessor, who is the counselor and expert in bullfighting; and the veterinarian, who studies the bull to see if it has any physical problems that would cause it to be removed from the ring.

Newcomers to the sport should leave all prejudices behind when they enter the stadium, looking beyond the obvious occurrences and seeing the fight as an art form, Martínez says.

For her, bullfighting awakens a feeling she cannot describe, explaining that she truly sees it as an art.

But she has words of caution for FSU Valencia program participants

about to see their first live bullfight.

"If you are curious or you are interested, you need to be prepared," she says. "You need to think about if you want to come because obviously an animal is killed. But please do it—because this is all an experience. It's once in a lifetime. So I recommend to come and see it at least once—because it can open up a new world."

Many students who attended the summer 2014 event were astounded by the proper etiquette that the audience was expected to uphold. For Lina Gwynn and her friends,

it was interesting to witness it first-hand.

"The man behind us kept telling us we needed to clap because it was disrespectful not to," she says. "It was really interesting to see how that was part of their culture and that they would take offense to us not clapping when the bull was speared."

Reactions from students can vary tremendously when witnessing their first bullfight. While it is universally known to

be a controversial sport, students try to keep an open mind when entering the stadium. For Kelsey Melin, she says it was the best thing she could do for herself.

"At the beginning of the event, I was only looking at the sport from the bull's perspective, but toward the middle I was able to see the different viewpoints," she says. "Between the band that plays at different points in the event, the outfits that the matadors wear, and the movement of the matador, it became very evident that this is not only a sport, but also an art form."

For Melin and other students, keeping an open mind about the difference in tradition allows for complete immersion and helps them to adapt to the various cultural aspects that you cannot find in America.

"When traveling to another country, I believe it is absolutely necessary to take part in their way of life, or the things that play a large role in that country's culture," Melin says.

In the end, officials with FSU's study-abroad program encour-

age students and visiting faculty to step out of their comfort zones and to open their eyes to see something they would not get a chance to see in the United States.

In response, some do attend the event while others choose not to.

"I am not one who believes it is acceptable to state that something or someone is dead wrong when you have never made an effort to see the other side of the story, and I was reminded of this the longer I sat at the bullring," Melin says.



"BETWEEN THE BAND THAT PLAYS AT DIFFERENT POINTS IN THE EVENT, THE OUTFITS THAT THE MATADORS WEAR, AND THE MOVEMENT OF THE MATADOR IT BECAME VERY EVIDENT THAT THIS IS NOT ONLY A SPORT, BUT AN ART FORM."

— KELSEY MELIN

Photo by Emily Brooks

Vegetarians in Valencia

How to find good options in a meat-based culture

By Kerri McCoy

With a surplus of supermarkets, organic grocery stores, and a reliable supply of alternatives to meat, vegetarians in America are spoiled. The products needed for American vegetarians to maintain a healthy diet are inexpensive and readily available.

But what does a vegetarian American do in Valencia, Spain—a land of meat and fish?

When students get the chance to study abroad, usually the last thing on their minds is how they will cope with the traditional foods available in the country they are traveling to. Rather, they are overcome with excitement and are preoccupied with planning their excursions around a different continent.

Vegetarians planning to embark on the Florida State's study-abroad program in Valencia, Spain should prepare themselves for

different experiences with local cuisine. The best ways to cope are to search for vegetarian restaurants, shop the local supermarkets, and cook at home.

Each student during the second summer 2014 session was given a pack of 22 *cheques*—checks for seven euros that could be used around the country at participating restaurants. Each of these restaurants contains at least one vegetarian-friendly meal on their menu. The variety of vegetarian options may not be

as apparent as in American restaurants, but they are still available. For those who are more interested in a traditional U.S. vegetarian dish, there are multiple salad bars in Valencia that accept cheques.

Paella is one of the most popular dishes in Valencia. It is a yellow rice dish typically centered around a meat of the customer's choice. The rabbit and

chicken dish seems to be the most preferred. Several Valencian restaurants offer vegetarian paella, commonly made with corn, tomatoes, broccoli, and onions. Bocadillos—large sandwiches—are also favored dishes in the area, and they often contain meat and cheese.

“I normally order dishes without the meat.”

— Jacqueline Colvett

Photo by Kerri McCoy
Juicy produce on display at Consum supermarket



Photo by Kerri McCoy

Vegetarians can visit Valencia's El Centro Mercado, where they will find vegetable and fruit vendors throughout the building.

Jacqueline Colvett offers an alternative method to cope with the popularity of meat as a main course: “I normally order dishes without the meat.”

Spanish supermarkets may not be as diverse in variety as those in America, but they are still very similar. A few local supermarkets to take advantage of include Consum, Carrefour, Mercadona, and El Corte Ingles.

El Centro Mercado is one of Europe's oldest running markets. Fresh ingredients are put on display every morning by local Valencian farmers, and a lot of local restaurants purchase their ingredients from the market daily.

“I'm really going to miss how fresh and clean the produce is here—it's not the same in America,” student vegetarian Cassandra Derf says, while discussing the market's produce.

Some of the ingredients vegetarians are used to in America are not easy

to find in Spain, however.

It can be difficult to find peanut butter, tofu, certain kinds of canned beans, and kale in Valencia, so alternatives must be sought out. Consider bringing certain foods, such as peanut butter, with you to Europe. Research Mediterranean produce before going abroad, and brainstorm substitutions. It is better to go into the program aware of dietary limitations rather than be blindsided by the lack of familiar ingredients.

Mikaela McShane, a student during the summer 2014 session, suggests dining in and to be prepared when deciding to venture out to eat.

“See what Spanish food is all about.”

— Jacqueline Colvett

“Be ready to adapt, and learn how to say things you don't want in your food,” she says.

In fact, eating in your apartment might be the cheapest and healthiest option for vegetarians in Valencia for an extended stay.

Eggs and mushrooms are some common protein fillers that are inexpensive and easy to find. Go grocery shopping at one of the local markets, and don't be afraid to get creative in the kitchen.

McShane doesn't let her lack of resources affect her diet.

“At home I make homemade vegetarian chili from lentils, beans, broccoli—pretty much anything I can throw into a big pot,” she says. “I make black bean burgers, and I dry roast edamame sometimes.”

Being a vegetarian abroad can seem difficult at first, but it is manageable as long as you have an open mind to taste new foods and are willing to adapt. There are still plenty of delicious options for vegetarians at local restaurants.

Although Valencian food may be meat-based, Jacqueline Colvett insists, “Try to work around it, and see what Spanish food is all about.”

Derf was initially hesitant to eat some of the unfamiliar dishes in Valencia, but she encourages future IP Valencia vegetarians to “be adventurous, try something you normally wouldn't, and learn new recipes.”

The phrases to the right will get you started as you look for a nice vegetarian meal. In addition, the local people are helpful and considerate, and they will be sure to provide you with a positive dining experience. There are Spanish vegetarians too, after all.

“Be ready to adapt, and learn how to say things you don't want in your food.”

— Mikaela McShane



Spinach quiche is always a healthy and delicious meal option.

Photo by Monique Boileau

What is a cheque?

Each IP Valencia student receives a pack of cheques—a check worth seven euro that may be used at participating restaurants around Spain. There are no restrictions on what you may order with a cheque, and you can use multiple cheques to cover a bill. The best part for students is that they are included with your program fees, so look at them as pre-budgeted meals for your time abroad. See page 30 for more about cheques.

Helpful Spanish words and phrases for vegetarians

Verduras — *vegetables*

Pescado — *fish*

Carne — *meat*

Vegano — *Vegan*

“Soy un vegetariano/a.”

I am a vegetarian.

“Tienes opciones vegetarianas?”

Do you have vegetarian options?

“...sin carne, por favor.”

... without meat, please.

Language & life lessons

Instructor Belén Gonzalez gives students a full picture of Spanish culture

By Caitlin Lang and magazine staff



Photos by Caitlin Lang

Belén Gonzalez, an instructor of Spanish with Florida State University's Valencia Program, found her calling at the age of 18, when she began giving private lessons teaching Spanish to foreigners to earn some extra money.

Not only did she find that she was good at what she was doing, she enjoyed it. So, the following year, she enrolled in the University of Valencia to continue her studies.

Gonzalez has been teaching since 1999, and she has been with FSU for 12 years.

"Time goes by so quickly," she says, with a wide smile.

Teaching with the FSU program has allowed her to introduce young students to a new culture, which makes her happy. Gonzalez speaks in rapid and lyrical Spanish, flavored with the local Valencian dialect, a reflection of her upbringing in Benicàssim, a small coastal town about 90 kilometers north of Valencia.

"Students tell me at the end of the semesters that Belén's classes were the most fun they have ever had," Program Director Ignacio Messana says, "and they learned more than they could ever imagine."

Gonzalez's bright green eyes light up as she speaks about her passion for teaching and her devotion to her students. She also strives to incorporate local literature about Valencia into her classes, so that her students can learn about local culture and history as well as learn the language in an effective manner.

In summer 2014, Gonzalez taught Conversational Spanish for Hospitality Management, and preparing her twice-a-week, three-and-a-half hour classes required not only patience, but creativity, which did not deter Gonzalez.

Instead, she arrived early each morning to prepare course materials and to make photocopies of local texts, making sure that each class was carefully structured, with an equal balance of grammar, conversational Spanish, and literature.

Belén Gonzalez leads her class in a lesson during the summer 2014 study-abroad session in Valencia.

"I want all of my students to participate and feel engaged," she says.

The importance of learning Spanish is keenly felt by many of Gonzalez's students, most of whom are hospitality majors. Students appreciate her efforts to make class activities relevant.

"It surprises me how well I'm able to communicate after one of her classes," says Ashley Morgan, one of Gonzalez's students during the summer 2014 session.

Study-abroad students wanting to learn Spanish would have to look far and wide to find a better place to practice their Spanish than in Valencia.

The city, situated on the Mediterranean, is a popular destination for travelers, having hosted such events in the past as the America's Cup in 2007 and the Formula One European Grand Prix from 2008 to 2012. In addition, the city center is brimming with cafes, nightclubs, and hotels.

"I think it's a good idea to learn Spanish in an environment where it is spoken natively, because when you leave class, you can practice what you've learned," Gonzalez says.

On the topic of the importance of learning a second language, Gonzalez sits up a little straighter, as if to convey the importance of her words with her body language.

"It's fundamental," she says. "It's fundamental to learn a second language, and I think Spanish is a great option."

Gonzalez is not alone in thinking that Spanish is a great option, especially when you consider the fact that Spanish is spoken as a primary language by about 400 million people in 25 countries.

Outside of her class time, Gonzalez makes a point to participate in the FSU Valencia Program's broader activities, such as scavenger hunts and day trips, so that she can help her students make cultural connections. Because three and a half hours is a long time to sit in a classroom, she takes her students on excursions around town. One day, for instance, she took her students to the National Ceramics Museum.

"If any of us feel tired, she takes us to a café, and continues our lesson there," says Mikaela McShane, another of Gonzalez's students.

In fact, Gonzalez doesn't mind going out of her way for her students, doing anything she can to help them learn.

Paint the town

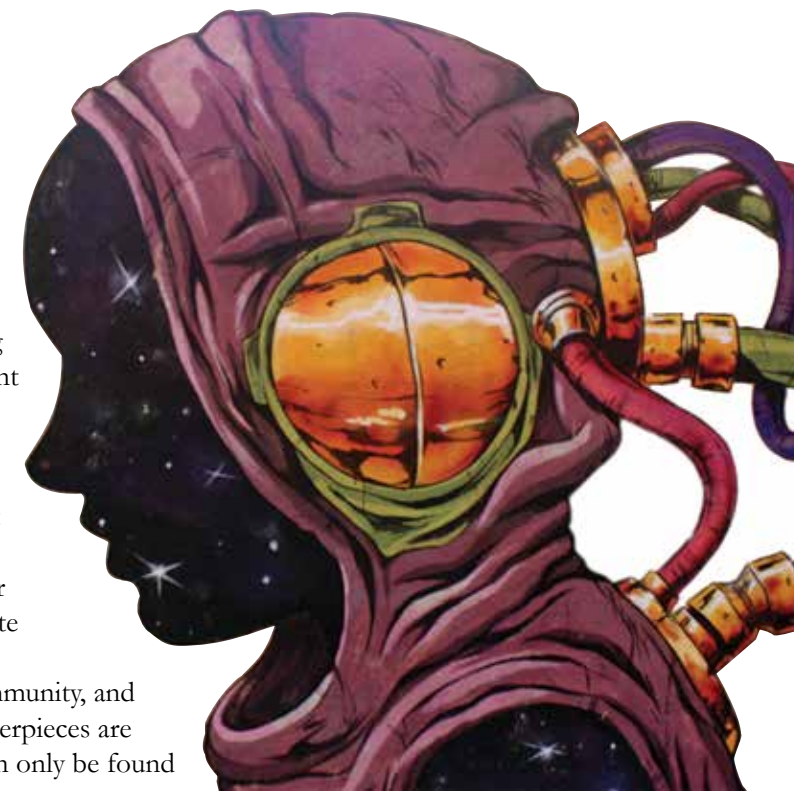
Article, page design, and photos by Monique Boileau

Valencia's graffiti takes art out of the museums and into the streets, where it can be a part of civilian life and can express current ideas, goals, and frustrations. A stroll behind the study center will put students smack in the middle of swirling colors and bold lines that create striking contrast to the ancient walls of the city.

Valencia's rich artistic history has created the perfect environment for a thriving street art scene. Although there is plenty of senseless tagging, the true artists create work that respects historic buildings.

Valencia and many other European cities are proud of their artists, publishing books and hosting graffiti events to promote creativity and cultural celebration.

The art constantly changes to reflect the energy of the community, and new artists are always looking to make their mark. Small masterpieces are tucked away in dead-end alleys, and many towering murals can only be found by getting lost in the city.



Carrer de Sant Ramon

Street art near the study center



Carrer del Pintor Domingo



Carrer del Pintor Domingo



Carrer del Pare Tosca



Carrer de Belluga



Carrer de la Sabateria dels Xiquets



Cheque gourmet: a love story

By Kerri McCoy

Student favorites—¡Buen provecho!

In a poll conducted on Facebook, students in the summer 2014 Valencia International Program were asked to choose their favorite *cheque*-accepting restaurants. Results are on this page. Within walking distance, each of the restaurants highlighted below offers low prices, friendly service, and delicious food, according to those participating in the survey. It is even possible to order an entire meal (food and drink) using just one *cheque*, depending on what is ordered. Students in Valencia get four *cheques* per week. Each cheque is worth seven euros (or approximately \$9.25 for students enrolled in the summer 2014 session).

Look for this logo on the window of participating restaurants. Graphic courtesy of www.cheque-dejeuner.es



La Pappardella € € €

Address: Calle Bordadores, 5
Located near La Plaza de la Virgen, La Pappardella offers authentic Italian cuisine. Their menu includes an exceptional variety of pasta dishes, delicious salads, and elegant wine options.



Creperie Bretonne Annaick € € V

Calle Bordadores, 6
Creperie Bretonne Annaick has some of the best crepes in town, both sweet and salty. They maintain a fun dining environment with complimentary drawing utensils and paper tablecloths.



Pan de Queso € V

Carrer de Serrans, 19
Located across the street from the FSU Gold Study Center and a block from the Garnet Study Center, Pan de Queso consistently provides students with fresh sandwiches and tasty zumo (juice).

All photos by Kerri McCoy

Out of cheques?

You cannot get change back from a *cheque*, so it is more efficient to order at least the budgeted seven euros worth of food. You can also order the difference in food *para llevar* (to-go), and eat it at your apartment later.

Another way to cope after using all your *cheques* is to cook at home. The local markets, especially the Mercado Central, are relatively inexpensive, and the majority of the local restaurants buy their ingredients every morning from the market anyway.

The best way to prevent stress after running out of *cheques* is to be aware of your financial situation and plan your meals accordingly.

Other notable restaurants

Picks that didn't make it into the top three:

- Café Lavin
- Kebap Serrano
- Zummo
- Wok to Walk
- 100 Montaditos

Reference key

- €: 0-5€
- € €: 5-10€
- € € €: 10€+
- V: vegetarian friendly

- Serranos Cervceria
- La Comisaría
- La Utielana
- Las Cuevas
- Laboratorio

The new and the old



The City of Arts and Sciences

Photo by Lina Gwynn

No visit to Valencia would be complete without a look at the City of Arts and Sciences, a complex of mostly white futuristic structures that includes an oceanarium, a planetarium, a performing arts center, and a science museum.

Inaugurated in 1998 and situated at the end of a riverbed that was turned into a park, the complex was designed by world-famous architect and engineer Santiago Calatrava, a Valencia native born in 1951.

Calatrava has won many international awards, including the American Institute of Architects Gold Medal in 2005, Eugene McDermott Award by the Council for the Arts of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2005, and the Institution of Structural Engineers Gold Medal in 1992. However, his career is not without controversy, even in Valencia, for projects that have gone over budget.

Just a few of Calatrava's projects:
Milwaukee Art Museum (Wisconsin, 2001)
World Trade Center Transportation Hub (New York City, under construction)
Florida Polytechnic University in Lakeland (2014)
TGV (French high-speed train) station in Lyon, France (1994)
Montjuic Communications Tower at the Olympic park (Barcelona, Spain, 1992)
Allen Lambert Galleria (Toronto, Canada, 1992)
Athens Olympic Sports Complex (Athens, Greece, 2004)
Liège-Guillemins railway station (Belgium, 2009)
Turning Torso skyscraper (Malmo, Sweden, 2005)

Know your neighborhood

Torres de Serranos

- The Torres de Serranos are thought to be the largest Gothic city gateway in Europe.
- The towers were built in 1392 by Pere Balaguer.
- They are the main entrance of the city and were originally built with a defensive function.
- From 1586 until 1887, the towers were used as a prison for nobles.
- During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the towers were used to store paintings from the Prado Museum.
- You can visit the towers for 2€, or if you stop by on Sunday, for free.

— By Zachary Souza

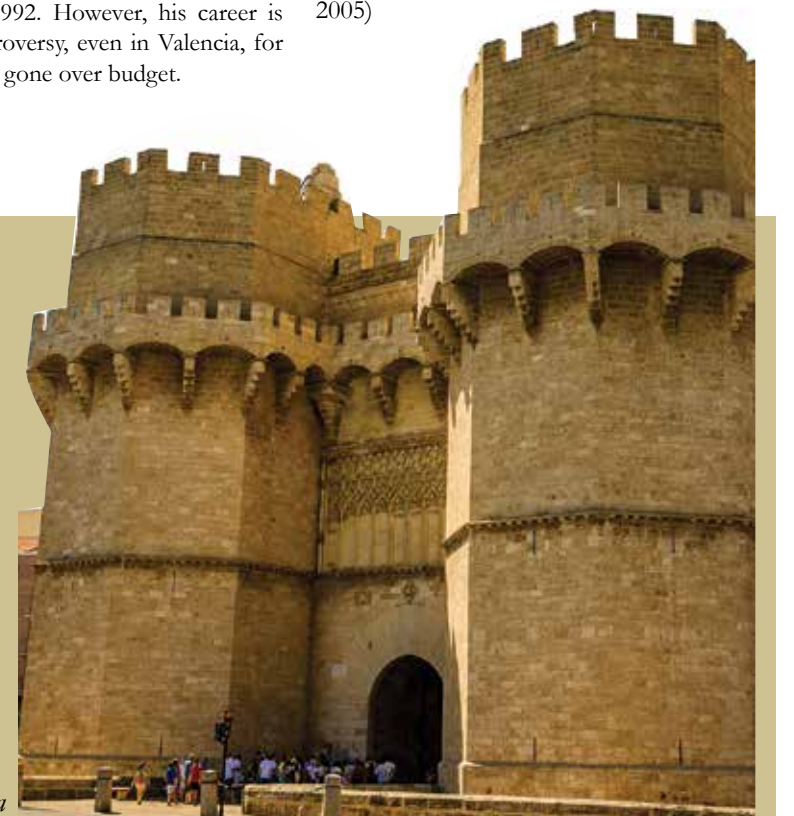


Photo by Zachary Souza

Spanish 411, ¿vale?

In Valencia, two official languages are spoken, Castilian Spanish and a dialect known as “Valenciano.” The Valencia region is considered bilingual. People in the north and in the coastal areas mainly speak Valenciano, and people in the south and interior areas mainly speak Castilian Spanish. The regional variations in pronunciation are specifically evident within the Spanish spoken in Spain vs. the Spanish language spoken in many Latin American countries. People of Spain pronounce the letter c with something that sounds to Americans like a lisp, similar to the English “th.” According to urban legend, Spain integrated the “th” into its pronunciation

because one of its kings spoke with a lisp, and instead of criticizing his speech, his courtiers decided to imitate him, adapting this style of speech into present-day Castilian Spanish and Valenciano. Some legends say the lisping king was Pedro, who lived in the 1300s; other legends attribute the lisp to King Ferdinand II, who ruled Spain in the late 1400s and early 1500s. Nowadays, Valenciano is not only used conversationally but is seen on street signs, advertisements, and throughout various parts of the city. Knowing basic words and phrases in both dialects can be extremely useful during one’s stay in Valencia.

— By Paula Nicole Meneses

English	Valenciano	Castilian Spanish
Good morning	Bon dia	Buenos días
Good afternoon/ evening	Bona vesprada (vesprà)	Buenas tardes
Good evening/night	Bona nit	Buenas noches
How much?	Quanto val aixó?	Cuanto vale esto?
The check please	El compte, per favor	La cuenta, por favor
Food-to-go	Menjar per a portar	Comida para llevar
Menu	La carta	El menu
Street	Carrer	Calle
Square	Plaça	Plaza
City	Ciutat	Ciudad
Shop/store	Tenda	Tienda
Restroom	Serveis/servici	Baños/aseos/servicios
Exit	Eixida	Salida
Beach	Platja	Playa
Thank you	Gràcies	Gracias
Bye	Adéu	Adiós
OK	¡Val!	¡Vale!

Placate the parents, protect yourself

Tips for being travel savvy while studying abroad

It doesn’t matter if you’re 12 or 22 years old, parents will always worry about you. And the older you get, the more vocal they seem to become, never failing to remind you to lock your car or double check if tuition has been posted.

As far as they’re concerned, your going away to college might as well mean you’re walking around with a sign hanging from your neck that reads “sheltered child: easy target.”

So, going to study across the Atlantic? Be ready to assuage some fanatical fears and live up to those promises if you want to prove to the parents that you’re a capable adult.

First, it should be stated clearly: Valencia, with approximately 1 million residents, is an incredibly safe city. Students and visitors from big cities and small towns alike mention how comfortable they are in this part of Spain. The people are friendly, the public transportation is easy to learn, and the atmosphere is welcoming. And FSU officials go above and beyond to ensure the safety of students, posting staff at the front desks of each residential building and providing students with official FSU Valencia IDs that must be shown when visiting a different building after class hours.

Even with these measures, FSU staff recognize that study-abroad participants are adults, so they do not hand hold. When on their own, students are responsible for themselves and their belongings, and despite the safety of the city, situations occur.

Here are 10 tips to make it out of the semester without having to explain to your parents why exactly you need a new phone.

- ❖ Travel in groups
- ❖ Stay aware of your surroundings
- ❖ Plug important numbers into your phone
- ❖ STEP: Sign up with the U.S. Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program before leaving the U.S.
- ❖ Keep possessions close
- ❖ Know what you have with you
- ❖ Have locks in hostels
- ❖ Respect your party limit
- ❖ Map out where you’re going
- ❖ Bring your ID

— By Beth Canova

July festival

Food, fun, and free. Throughout July, you will see those three F’s recurring around Valencia.

Feria de Juliol is a fair that offers activities for everyone from nights with free tapas and wine to movies or musical performances in city parks. Established on July 21, 1871, the goal was to attract outsiders to the city and to encourage locals who would normally leave in order to escape the heat to instead stay in the city. Now it has evolved into a bright celebration full of life and culture.



Photos by Emily Brooks



There are three main ways to find information about the various activities offered daily around Valencia: the city of Valencia’s website; FeriadeJuliol.com; and the FSU Study-Abroad Facebook page. All of them provide specific details for *Feria de Juliol* events.

Melissa Claessens, FSU Valencia’s activities coordinator, encourages students to immerse themselves in the Spanish culture all around them. The activities give students opportunities to meet new people as well, she says.

“The FSU Valencia program in the summer is so short that you need to make the most of it,” she says. “Also, you’re in your little island of Americans there, and it’s not easy to get in contact with Spaniards, but it’s not impossible either.”

— By Emily Brooks

Class from page 11

center and the Gold building are great examples.”

Roman walls have been incorporated into the classrooms, and the original wooden doors are still used. Students living in the study center have views of the Torres de Serranos and the Turia Riverbed Park. Meanwhile, the ultramodern architecture of the City of Arts and Sciences is a short Metro ride between the FSU center and the beach.

The Art, Architecture, and Artistic Vision course gives students a full tour of Valencia’s

historical sites and connects them to artistic movements around the world. For now, though, the students want to be connected to some café con leche. So, the class stops at a café for coffee and snacks while waiting for their next destination, the Church of St. Nicolas, to open its doors.

Small cafés like this one are all over Valencia. Coffee and sandwiches are available for a few euro, and WiFi is mostly absent.

“People actually sit down and have conversations at the dinner table,” says FSU student Matt Peacock about the lack of WiFi. “Everything is within walking distance, so you really get to experience the culture. You

realize that life is happening outside the United States, with or without you. It’s a really eye-opening experience.”

Students set aside their phones and listen as Robles answers questions about his previous job as an architect. One student asks Robles which period of architecture he prefers, and for a moment he is speechless.

“They all have something to offer,” he says. “One might be more glorious with bigger buildings, but that doesn’t make it better. It’s all about people making things. The more you understand why and how we do these things, the better you understand your own life.”

Students from page 13

native says. “But then, you know, I didn’t give up, and I finally found a group of people that I really love.”

She attributes the small rough patch of the first day to the fact that most of the FSU students seemed to know one another, making it more difficult for her to break into a group. Incidentally, she says, the majority of the people she socialized with in Valencia were also non-FSU students, and adds that it was definitely a comfort knowing others were in the same boat.

Unlike Rodriguez, Velazquez believes that

some sort of icebreaker on the first afternoon could have helped, commenting that while all the students who are a part of this program are adults, as an education major she understands the importance of icebreakers as a way to give people common ground.

“I have made some unsuspecting friends with that,” she says. “Some of my great friends were because of icebreakers in class.”

Overall, Velazquez agrees with Rodriguez that she felt welcome in the FSU program, though if there were anything she would change, it would be that other students and professors don’t ask if she is an FSU student.

“I’m an FAU student and I feel like that

shouldn’t even matter,” Velazquez says, as she pulls out her camera and kneels to photograph the Torres de Serrano in front of the FSU Study Center.

As the summer 2014 second semester session came to a close, and participants had become more familiar with the city and with each other, the lines between them blurred and the school colors faded. Each student was simply a Valencia student.

“We’re all here in the same program,” Velazque says. “I feel weird saying that I’m a Seminole, because I don’t feel like I’m a Seminole. I just feel like I’m a student in this program.”

Staying in touch

Traveling abroad can be both exciting and scary. Plunging headfirst into a new environment is thrilling, but that feeling can be diminished by the anxiety of losing contact with your friends and family back home.

Luckily, there are many ways to stay relatively connected.

The study centers for FSU Valencia International Programs have free Wi-Fi, and communication apps such as Viber, WhatsApp, and Skype allow students to text message and call for free.

Keep in mind, though, that with so many new and great things to see and do, it's easy to get carried away when it comes to using social media to share your adventures.

Here are some dos and don'ts for cellphone and app usage abroad.

Do

- Keep in touch with friends and family by using apps such as WhatsApp and Viber.
- Share cool pictures of your adventures on social media.
- Stay updated on program events with the FSU Valencia Facebook page.
- Bring a converter with the proper voltage to keep your devices charged.
- Remember the time difference when calling friends and family in the United States.
- Consider purchasing 15 minutes of emergency international data.

Don't

- Spend more time on social media than on exploring and sightseeing.
- Clutter your newsfeeds and timelines with too many photographs.
- Brag about how much fun you're having. (It's hard not to!)
- Be afraid to leave a free Wi-Fi zone.
- Bring your cellphones, tablets, or laptops to places like nightclubs or bars.
- Ask if centuries-old castles have Wi-Fi. They don't.
- Ignore the 'No Photos' rule at museums — your phone could (and should) get confiscated.

— By Caitlin Lang

About the contributors

Monique Boileau

Boileau is a Florida State senior, majoring in studio art and English with a concentration in editing, writing, and media (EWM). She has interned for *College Social Magazine* and *Palm Beach Illustrated* and hopes to work as a freelance travel writer and fine artist. Her paintings have been exhibited in galleries in Tallahassee and South Florida, and she plans to continue exploring new techniques and expanding her work to include installations and public art.

Emily Brooks

Brooks is a junior studying English with a focus in EWM. Hoping to attend graduate school in journalism at the University of Colorado, she has a passion for broadcast news.

Beth Canova

Canova is a senior at the University of Central Florida in Orlando who is majoring in English with a focus in literature and is minoring in Judaic studies. The New York native looks forward to returning to the North after graduation in spring 2015 to pursue a career as an editor in the Big Apple.

Katherine Cornelison

Cornelison, a Tallahassee native, is an English major with a concentration in EWM and a minor in Spanish. She plans to attend graduate school and aspires to work globally with children and students as well as to work on global environmental issues.

Katie Feyko

Coming from sunny Boca Raton, Fla., Feyko is an English major with a concentration in EWM and a minor in communications who plans to graduate in December 2014. She is a lover of the beach, music, and food—especially chipotle and sushi.

Lina Gwynn

Gwynn, born and raised in Tallahassee, is an English major with a concentration in EWM. She plans to graduate in the fall of 2015, and she is excited to finally move out of her hometown and start a career in a big city. She enjoys relaxing on the beach with friends and loves traveling.

Allison Killip

Born and raised in Boca Raton, Fla., Killip is a senior majoring in English (EWM) with a minor in communications. With a passion for social media, she hopes to move out west to pursue a career in social media/digital marketing. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling and spending time with family and friends.



The students in the 2014 Summer Editing, Writing, and Media Program take a break from class in front of the Turia Fountain in Valencia's Plaza de La Virgen.

Caitlin Lang

Lang is a junior at FSU, majoring in English with a concentration in EWM. She hopes to someday work in publishing, and dreams of traveling the world.

Kerri McCoy

From Panama City Beach, Fla., McCoy is scheduled to graduate in May 2015. An English major with a concentration in EWM and a minor in education, she hopes to become an education volunteer in South Africa with the Peace Corps in the fall of 2015.

Paula Nicole Meneses

Born in Quito, Ecuador but growing up mostly in Tallahassee, Meneses chose to spend summer 2014 in Spain improving her Spanish while taking part in the new EWM program in Valencia. An English major with a concentration in EWM and a minor in communications, Meneses plans to graduate in spring 2015. After that, she hopes to have a career in communications and public relations.

Victoria Messina

A third-year University of Florida journalism major and Tampa

native, Messina enjoys eating coffee ice cream, longboarding, spending time outside, and traveling to new cities. With a passion for fashion, she hopes to write and edit for a magazine in the future.

Zachary Souza

A South Portland, Maine native, Souza is a recent graduate of FSU with a degree in communications. His dream is to move to Europe and raise his dog Arya, while becoming a traveling photographer for *National Geographic*.

Alexia Swanson

Swanson, originally from Clearwater, Fla., plans to graduate from FSU in spring 2016. With a double major in English and public relations, she would like to work for a PR agency after graduation. Currently, she interns for in-house, boutique, and agency-style public relations businesses in Tallahassee and expresses herself through her media blog.

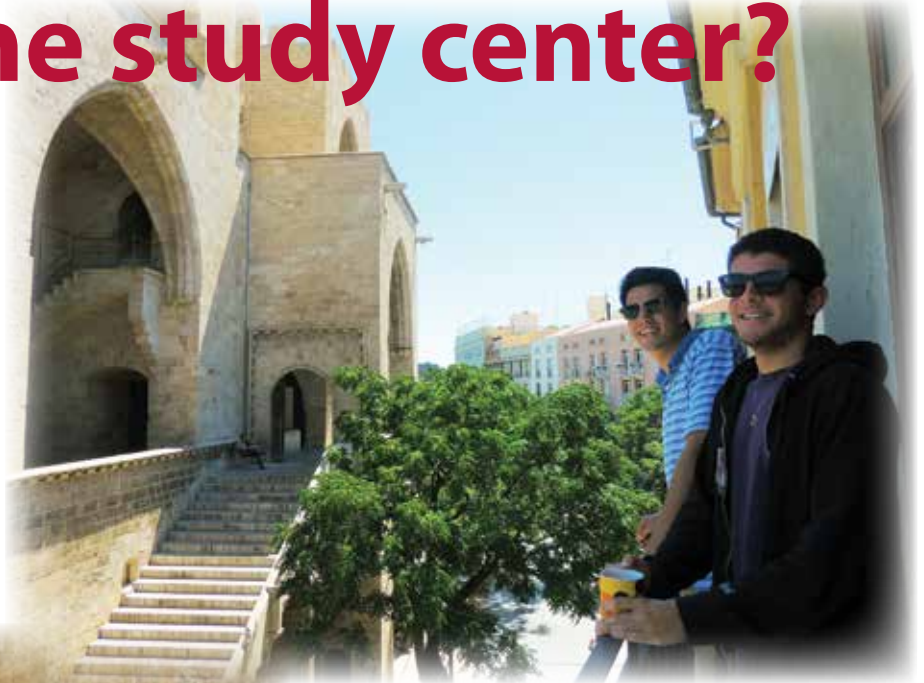
Advisors: Susan Hellstrom and Jack Clifford
Student editor: Allison Killip

What's your favorite part of living in the study center?

Text and photos by Victoria Messina

“ I love waking up every morning and seeing the Torres in my front yard. It also doesn't hurt that I have two balconies to see it from. ”

— Stephen Sakmar,
a hospitality major pictured at left



“ My favorite part of my apartment is the 1,000-year-old wall in my bedroom. It's a reminder of how old this city is and how lucky we are to be living in the heart of it. ”

— Emily Brooks, an English major

“ Rolling out of bed and having this coffee machine here in the study center is super convenient. The 50-cent café con leche keeps me going during my early classes. ”

— Daniela Almella,
an exercise science major



“ The common room in my apartment is definitely my favorite part. I'm always studying, cooking, or just hanging out in here with my awesome roommates. ”

— Ashley Hubaykah, an international affairs major pictured at right