Experiential Learning Plan
Mendoza

Mendoza is a remarkably rich city, in terms of historic and present day cross-cultural and intercultural engagement. History has seen the indigenous Huarpe, Chileans, Italians, and Spaniards call this city home and today it serves as a remarkable monument to the lasting influences of each of these and many other, cultural traditions. This summer we will, together and independently, discover Mendoza through the City as Text framework, which allows for “active learning in various settings…structured explorations of environments and ecosystems…on-going laboratories through which small teams investigate contested areas and issues in urban environments, or competing forces in natural ones, these exercises foster critical inquiry and integrative learning across disciplines” (NCHC).

Over this summer term you will take courses at the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo (UNCUYO) and during this time I will serve as your Faculty Resident Director and representative of University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I will be accessible throughout your period abroad and will also hold prescheduled office hours each day at UNCUYO. My role will be to support you throughout through offering academic advising, support you in your coursework, ensure you are fully engaged with your classes and your study abroad experience, and to assess your final grades in light of your experiential learning.

Our goal is to engaged with the host culture of Mendoza as possible, so instead of spending more time in a traditional classroom, we will make the whole city our classroom. As cultural explorers, observing and participating, we will learn about Mendoza, Argentina, and ourselves.

As participants in a UHM Study Abroad Center program we have specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) we will meet. Upon completion of a course students will achieve at least one of the following objectives and be able to:

1. Demonstrate awareness of your own cultural values and biases and how these impact your ability to work with others.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of diversity with a focus on the population or topic of interest in your Study Abroad program.
3. Communicate appropriately and effectively with diverse individuals and groups.
4. Demonstrate an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints.

Groups will select specific themes to investigate throughout their stay—these themes may include food, music, architecture, outdoor space, sport, and so on. Each group will visit 5 key areas of the city, which can be selected in consultation with the Resident Director and may include parks, malls, areas on campus, sites we visit as a group, and so on.

In each of these areas you will look to see how your theme is represented using the four basic strategies of Mapping, Observing, Listening, and Reflecting. At least once per week all groups will come together to present their most recent exploration.

Mapping: *Where do people go, how do they get there, and what do they do when they get there?*
Pay attention to the primary kinds of buildings, points of interest, centers of activity, and transportation routes (by foot, vehicle, or other means). Look for patterns of housing, traffic flow, and social activity that may not be apparent on a traditional map.

**Observing:** *What do you see?*
Look for the unexpected as well as the expected. Pay attention to details of architecture, landscaping, social gathering, clothing, possessions, decoration, signage, and advertising.

**Listening:** *What do you hear? How is music transmitted, how do people enjoy it? How do people interact?*
Talk to as many people as you can and find out what matters to them in their daily lives, what they need, what they enjoy, what bothers them, and what they appreciate. Strike up conversations everywhere you go. Ask for recommendations. Ask what the area or aspect you are exploring means to the locals. In other words, imagine that you are moving to that location and try to find out everything you would need to learn to flourish there.

**Reflecting:** *What does it all mean? How does it fit together?*
Put everything together as a whole and analyze your host culture. Throughout your explorations, keep in mind that the people you meet, the buildings in which they live and work, the forms of their recreation, their modes of transportation--everything that they are and do--are important components of the environment. You want to discover not only how, but why they do what they do. Do not settle for easy answers. Do not assume you know the answers without doing serious research. Like all good researchers, make sure you are conscious of your own biases and that you investigate them thoroughly as you investigate the culture you are studying. *(Adapted from NCHC. (2014). Appendix D: City as Text strategies: mapping, observing, listening, reflecting.)*

You will not receive a separate grade for your City as Text experiential learning work, but it will be used to monitor your overall engagement in your study abroad experience. A strong performance in the experiential process will result in a raise in your final grade in your SAC courses, while a lack of engagement will result in a lowering of your grade. Assessment of how well you are meeting our SLOs through our explorations of the city will be done in a few ways.

**Regular meetings:** At least once a week we will convene as a group to share our most recent explorations.

**Evidence:** As you explore you will collect evidence of your analysis of the culture. This could be photos you take, videos you record, a ticket stub from a concert you attend, or a recipe for a particularly good meal you had. These should help you explain what you found to your classmates who have not shared in your investigation, so be sure you can clearly articulate their significance in context!

**Learning Outcomes Matrix:** Together we will construct a Learning Outcomes Matrix based on our shared SLOs and small group explorations. Starting with a blank table like the one modeled below each student will describe a particular instance of how they met our SLOs in their exploration. In our meetings we will review these and revise them as necessary, fostering a sustained dialogue about our growth experiences.
### Student Learning Objectives

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Observation</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Disparate Viewpoints</th>
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**Assessment Criteria**

**Exceptional:** Identifies and describes specific incident providing clear detail and connection. Engages heavily in group discussion and relates own experiences to those of their classmates. Student brings evidence to each meeting and clearly articulates how it relates to their topic and the district explored.

**Satisfactory:** Identifies and describes some incidents that may connect to SLO in some way. Engages somewhat with group discussions but not completely and fails to make regular connections with classmates' experiences. Student brings some evidence but does not fully explain how it relates to their topic and the district explored.

**Below Expectations:** Does not describe any interactions or incidents. Student shows no engagement with the group or with their host culture. Student brings no evidence of their cultural exploration.