

Experiential Learning and Student Mentoring Plan



¡Bienvenido a Sevilla! Welcome to the UH Mānoa Study Abroad Program in Sevilla. This program offers a unique immersive opportunity to study Spanish language and culture at the International College of Sevilla (ICS). Beyond coursework, you will live with host families, engage in the community, and participate in structured cultural learning activities designed by me, your Resident Director.

Sevilla, often called the heart of Andalucía, is a city of rhythm, warmth, and cultural vibrancy. With 700,000 residents and over a million in the metro area, it feels both intimate and easy to explore on its calles empedradas (cobblestone streets), yet expansive as a thriving cultural center. Sevilla has long been a crossroads of people and ideas, and today it is celebrated for its tapas tradicionales — small plates such as croquetas — the passion of flamenco, and neighborhoods that come alive on warm evenings. Alongside Córdoba and Granada, it forms part of the “Moorish Triangle,” where Spain’s Islamic past is still visible in landmarks such as the Patio de los Naranjos and the Giralda Tower.

Experiential Learning

Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (1978) holds that we learn through social interaction, using cultural tools and scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In other words, learning takes place when we actively engage with others and participate in meaningful, authentic contexts that extend our abilities. While in Sevilla, you will a‘o mai (learn/aprender) and be a contributing member of the kaiāulu (community/comunidad) through weekly cultural encounters. These encounters are designed to scaffold your language and cultural learning through both peer collaboration and guided mentorship.

Culture is dynamic and complex. To guide our reflections, we will use Edward T. Hall’s (1976) Cultural Iceberg Model. Hall explains that only a small part of culture is visible “above the waterline,” such as behaviors, language, dress, and food. The much larger portion lies unseen “below the surface,” including values, thought patterns, and beliefs that shape behavior. While in Sevilla, this model will help us move beyond surface-level observations to uncover deeper cultural meanings through direct participation and reflection.

Communities carry a living archive as well as active resources that deepen learning. In Sevilla, we will immerse ourselves in both the city’s history and its contemporary cultural expressions. Through reflective journaling and weekly meetings in plazas, gardens, riverbanks, and patios, we will experience Sevilla as a “living classroom.” A particular focus will be the Corpus Christi celebration in early June, when the city is transformed with processions, music, and floral decorations. Students will examine how

Spanish and Andalusian traditions animate public space and how Sevilla’s geography, climate, and setting along the Guadalquivir River shape local life (e.g., agriculture, urban gardens, water management, public leisure in plazas and patios).

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

As your Resident Director, I will support both your academic progress and your participation in the experiential learning components of the program. These activities are aligned with the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) established by the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Study Abroad Center:

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.

Learning Tools

Your knowledge will be assessed through your journal entries and participation in weekly meetings via the following methods:

- **Reflective Journal (Cultural Tool):** You will maintain a multimodal journal (comprising text, photos, sketches, and poems) to document your weekly encounters. The journal serves as a tool for reflecting on both visible and invisible aspects of culture. Entries may include *photovoice* (photography with captions) or other creative media (collages, drawings, digital art) to capture cultural encounters. These artifacts will support collective discussion and shared meaning-making.
- **Weekly Meetings (Scaffolding & ZPD Expansion):** You must participate in weekly small-group meetings at cultural sites (e.g., Triana Market, Barrio Santa Cruz, Plaza de España). The Resident Director will scaffold learning by guiding discussion, posing reflective prompts, and modeling critical cultural analysis.
- **Individual Meetings/Mentoring (by Appointment):** You may schedule one-on-one meetings with the Resident Director as needed for additional support in academic, personal, or cultural adjustment.

Assessment Procedures

As Resident Director, I will monitor both your academic progress and your active participation in the experiential learning components of the program. Students are expected to meet at least a “Satisfactory” level of performance on the assessment criteria outlined below. Failure to do so will result in a reduction of ½ letter grade (e.g., an A will become an A-).

Assessment Rubric (Students will be assessed weekly)

Study Abroad SLOs	Developing	Meeting	Exceeding
------------------------------	-------------------	----------------	------------------

<p>Demonstrate awareness of your own cultural values and biases and how these impact your ability to work with others.</p>	<p>Does not clearly articulate in writing or orally what has been learned about cultural values and biases. Provides little or no explanation of how these factors affect the ability to work with others; examples are missing or vague</p>	<p>Articulates, in writing and orally, an understanding of cultural values and biases. Identifies and describes values/biases with surface-level examples.</p>	<p>Clearly articulates, in writing and orally, what has been learned about cultural values and biases and identifies areas for continued growth. <i>Analyzes and reflects</i>, offering deeper examples plus self-awareness about growth and limits.</p>
<p>Demonstrate knowledge of diversity with a focus on the population or topic of interest in your Study Abroad program.</p>	<p>Does not clearly articulate, in writing or orally, what has been learned about the “above the surface” and/or “below the surface” aspects of culture. Provides little or no examples.</p>	<p>Articulates, in writing and orally, an understanding of the “above the surface” and/or “below the surface” aspects of culture, but examples are general or unclear.</p>	<p>Clearly articulates, both in writing and orally, an understanding of both the “above the surface” and “below the surface” aspects of culture, with specific and insightful examples that demonstrate depth of understanding.</p>
<p>Communicate appropriately and effectively with diverse individuals and groups.</p>	<p>Does not participate in weekly meetings or reflective journaling. Fails to communicate proactively when absent. Little evidence of intercultural growth.</p>	<p>Attends and actively participates in all weekly meetings. Completes reflective journal entries. Communicates appropriately and notifies proactively when absences occur.</p>	<p>Consistently communicates effectively and appropriately across group and individual settings. Completes reflective journaling with insight. Demonstrates strong growth in intercultural awareness. Models proactive, culturally responsive communication (e.g., adapting tone to context, showing sensitivity to peers and community).</p>
<p>Demonstrate an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints.</p>	<p>Rarely listens, acts, or speaks with empathy or cultural competence. Shows little or no value for diversity or perspectives different from their own.</p>	<p>Listens, acts, and speaks with empathy and cultural competence. Values diversity and responds to multiple perspectives, including those different from their own. Provides examples, though they may be general or lack depth.</p>	<p>Consistently demonstrates empathy and cultural competence in listening, action, and speech. Actively values diversity and engages positively with multiple perspectives. Provides specific, thoughtful, and insightful examples that show depth of analysis.</p>