

## Study Abroad Write Up

I studied abroad at IE University in Madrid, Spain fall semester of 2016. Overall I found my study abroad experience to be very enjoyable. While there absolutely were certain parts of the program that I felt could use improvement, on the whole I thought it was an interesting learning experience that would have been impossible for me to find here at Hastings.

The beginning process, even before actually leaving the country, of studying abroad I found to be a bit stressful. I was unsure of many details of the program but once I spoke with the study abroad program staff here at Hastings much of the stress was alleviated. It then seemed to change from communicating with the study abroad program at Hastings to communicating directly with IE themselves. I found this process also to be a bit stressful as the University did not seem very responsive. Very late in the summer, IE sent out a list of the classes to take and I was told to choose 5 classes. I was also given dates of a week long orientation program. Housing was completely left up to me, although this was a fairly easy process.

Once I arrived in Madrid I found the orientation week to be very helpful. I was able to meet students and get an idea of what the classes would be like before finalizing my schedule. The next week, classes began. I was enrolled in Comparative Corporations, Accounting, International Tax, Economics and Conflicts of Laws. I really enjoyed all of the classes I took at IE. It was a very different teaching system, as at IE they employ more of a business school method. A very large percentage, over half, of our grade was based purely on group assignments and there were many group presentations for every class throughout the semester. In the beginning I did not appreciate this style of teaching however as the semester progressed I began to see the

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value in it. I feel that the knowledge I gained from each class, even including accounting, is transferable and valuable to my education here at Hastings.

One of the best aspects of this program was the exposure to international students. My program consisted of approximately 25 students with at least one person from almost every continent. Most of the students are already attorneys in their countries as this is a Master program meaning most of the students already have a law degree. It was extremely interesting and in my opinion, invaluable, to have the opportunity to work so closely with attorneys from all over the world. We learning to work through language barriers, cultural barriers, different law backgrounds and different forms of training and the result was always very successful. I am unsure exactly which direction my career will take me and I am grateful to have had this semester's worth of training in working with people who may or may not have a completely different work style than you.

At the end of the semester, there were final exams which were very surprising. I think I had become so used to the system that is used here, that any of way of conducting final exams felt very foreign to me. The first major difference is that classes are still going on while you are having exams. This was difficult because, here, we are used to having dedicated study time and not concerned with attending class and keeping up with the readings still. It also felt a bit more relaxed in terms of time constraints and not having examsoft. However, despite these minor differences, the content of the finals themselves were generally the same.

I really enjoyed my time at IE and I would absolutely recommend this program to other students.

## TRAVEL SUMMARY

IE Business School  
Madrid, Spain  
Fall 2015

The IE Business Law Program is a multi-disciplinary program with various course offerings taught in the law school by business professionals and lawyers. During my semester abroad there were around 10 courses for me to choose from. Ultimately I chose the following six courses: Entrepreneurship, Comparative Corporations, International Tax, EU Law, Economics, and Conflicts of Law. Each of the courses was challenging in different ways and imparted very practical knowledge for lawyers planning to practice law in the business world. Some of the classes focused more on problem solving and critical thinking through various case studies (Entrepreneurship and Conflicts of Law) while others were more lecture-based using the Socratic method to discuss the assigned readings (Comparative Corporations, EU Law, International Tax). The Economics professor utilized a self-teaching model where the students presented a different lesson each week to the class. While each of the classes was rigorous and stimulating, I did not find any of the classes more difficult than those offered by the UC Hastings Curriculum.

My classes began around the first week of August and wrapped up the third week of December. The class format and class preparation were quite different from the American law school system I had become accustomed to. We were not assigned any textbooks to read. Instead, we were expected to study for final exams based on the assigned readings and our self-taken lecture notes. In some ways this was challenging because some of the professors' lectures were not as organized as I was used to. However, it challenged me to pay full attention, assure that I understood the lessons fully, and the professors did a great job of letting us know what to expect on the final exam. Additionally, the class schedule is different every week with different classes at different days and times based on the professor's availability. The schedule came out one week in advance with the class days / times for the following month. This made it somewhat difficult to plan weekend travelling ahead of time, but the addition of a few Spanish holidays made up for it. Lastly, our class was divided into groups of 5-6 people at the beginning of the semester. All of the assignments were completed in group work format and I worked with the same group the entire semester. I ended up really liking the group work format. It was a

refreshing change from what I was used to and it gave me more practice in thinking critically with a group whose cultural norms and ways of thinking about problems differ very much from my own.

I was amazed at how quickly I grew close the students in my program who were merely strangers a week before. The 2015 IE Business Law Program was very culturally rich and was made up of 33 or so students from all over the world. Representative countries included Argentina, Brazil, Nicaragua, Panama, Dominican Republic, Canada, USA, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Taiwan, Japan, Finland, Romania, and Mexico among others. Many were practicing lawyers with as much as 5 years of practical experience. Our group's diverse mix of cultural and professional backgrounds greatly benefitted our class discussions. The first week of the program featured an orientation week where I was able to get to know everyone more through fun group challenges like "The Amazing Race" where we explored different parts of Madrid. We even organized trips and outings among ourselves and took weekend trips to Segovia and Basque Country. I learned a lot about different cultural norms in communication and lawyering, customs, cuisines, and different perspectives on global issues. Although a majority of the students speak Spanish fluently, a majority of them made a concerted effort to speak English while we were together, both in and outside of the classroom setting. However, sometimes I asked that they speak Spanish when we were together so that I could practice speaking the language.

I absolutely loved spending my semester abroad in Madrid. The city is very modern and international, yet it retains its historical character, which lends to its authenticity. The food there is very rich – cheeses, aged meats, thick and savory paella, and red wine are prominent features of the cuisine. One aspect of Madrid's culinary culture that no other country has been able to replicate is true tapas culture. Spaniards average around 4 meals a day – a light breakfast typically consisting of espresso and toast with tomato and olive oil, a large three-course lunch at around 2 PM, a light tapas break with beers around 5 PM, and a late dinner around 10 PM. Aside from Spanish cuisine, I had some other great meals featuring authentic Indian cooking (there is a large Indian community in Madrid) and Mexican as well. Apart from the food, there is so much to do! My favorite parts of the city were the various rooftop bars, museums like the

Prado and the Reina Sofia, and the impeccably cared-for parks such as Retiro Park. There were so many running trails that I ran on my off hours each week. Lastly, Madrid's proximate location to various destinations in Europe made it very easy and cheap to take quick weekend trips to different cities. During the program, I was able to travel to London, Brussels, Sevilla, and even Paris with much ease.

Overall, I do not regret my decision to study abroad in Madrid even in the slightest. I made life-long lasting friendships and relationships that helped me grow as person and set my sights higher to discover more of what the world has to offer. The diverse business curriculum made me want to do more work as a lawyer that involves international transactions. The program rounded out my legal education and imparted memories that I will carry forever.

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IE Business School  
Madrid, Spain  
Fall 2015

### Overview and Structure of the Study Abroad Program

Through this program, UC Hastings students who study abroad in Spain get the opportunity to attend IE Law School, a very prestigious private school in Madrid. The classes, offered through IE's LLM program in international business law, are taught in English. Almost all the professors that teach in the LLM program are practicing attorneys. I believe only two of my instructors were employed full-time as professors. As a result, much of the law that is taught is focused on practical international and business related legal issues. In comparison, those courses taught by the full-time professors reminded me of my undergraduate studies, with PowerPoint slides, group presentations, mandatory attendance and participation, and final projects.

The class materials are offered to students through the University for only twenty euro per semester. Keep in mind that you will receive printed materials in the beginning, (many of which seem outdated) and handouts/resources throughout the semester, but there are no texts books. This was a challenge for the American students who are used to focusing on casebooks with the added benefit of an explanatory lecture. To do well at IE, the best bet is to focus in class. Most of the teachers taught everything in the materials as if the students had not even read it. To be honest, I would not stress about the amount of reading assigned. It is not nearly as dense as the reading assignments we receive at Hastings. One reason for this is because the IE approach is not to analyze cases, but more to generally understand the state of the law and how it is applied in practice to typical scenarios.

Only seven of us were exchange students from the United States (there for just the semester). The U.S. law schools represented were UC Hastings, Northwestern, and University of Virginia. Other students enrolled in the LLM program included a mixture of Europeans and Central/South Americans. Representative countries included Argentina, Brazil, Nicaragua, Panama, Dominican Republic, Canada, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Taiwan, Japan, Finland, Romania, and Mexico among others. Many of the LLM's had been practicing lawyers with as much as 5 years of practical experience. It is definitely advantageous to speak some Spanish because the majority of the students are native speakers. Even though classes are in English, the students will often talk among themselves in Spanish.

I really enjoyed this mixture of learning styles that allowed me to focus more on legal practicalities, rather than far-fetched hypotheticals. While some students had complaints about the organization of the courses (or lack of organization), I did not find this to be bothersome, other than the fact that it slightly limited my ability to plan trips in advance. I did not intend on setting the curve. I just wanted to fall along the same part of the curve that I otherwise would have at UC Hastings.

The courses I was able to choose from were also interesting. During my semester abroad there were around ten courses for me to choose from, and I was required to choose only six. While six courses may sound daunting, the program accounts for this by meeting only 10 – 20 times per course during the semester. In the end, my outlines for finals ended up being about half the length they would have been had I studied at UC Hastings.

I agree with the other Hastings students who have participated in this program that while each class is rigorous and stimulating, none of the classes were more difficult than those offered at UC Hastings. It is actually very manageable to get decent grades while still enjoying your

semester abroad. Attending about 70%-80% of the lectures for each course and collaborating with other students to collectively create outlines was enough to get by with a B+ average. If you actually do all the reading and attend the majority of the courses then I do not see why you wouldn't be able to do well.

### My Schedule Abroad

My classes began around the first week of August (orientation) and wrapped up the third week of December. I chose the following six courses: Entrepreneurship, Comparative Corporations, International Tax, EU Law, Economics, and Conflicts of Law. Each of the courses was challenging in different ways and imparted very practical knowledge for lawyers planning to practice law in the business world.

The schedule itself was somewhat of a nuisance because we did not know until orientation when each course would meet. Unlike in the U.S., courses do not occur at the same time on the same days of the week. Because the professors are also practicing attorneys, the schedule is flexibly based on their availability. One week you might have three Conflict of Law classes, while the next week you do not have any. This was frustrating for the exchange students who wanted to plan three-day weekends to travel.

Ultimately my schedule did not have many three-day weekends (lots of Monday and Friday commitments), and I ended up missing about 25% of my classes in order to travel. This was a judgment call I had to make and I'm happy that I did. Just keep in mind this balancing of attendance was common among all the U.S. students. Some even missed much more than 25%, although I cannot speak as to how well they ended up doing in the courses.

One thing that was nice about the schedule, however, was that all courses would meet between 8:30 – 2:00, so you never had to stay on campus late. Since each class is an hour and a

half long, this also meant that no more than three classes per day were held. Further, since exchange students only take six of the ten courses, there will be days when you only have one course (usually Fridays). These were the days that I ended up sacrificing my attendance record to travel.

Another great thing about the program is that they incorporate a week-long break into the semester (around Thanksgiving), which you can either use to go on the IE trip to Brussels or for your own travels. The Brussels trip is definitely worthwhile and affordable. It is an opportunity to travel with fellow students and experience another culture, while also going to meet attorneys and diplomats.

### Overall Cultural Experience Abroad

Madrid is a very modern and international city, but the architecture and museums make it seem like it has a long, rich history like other parts of Spain. My favorite parts of the city were the various rooftop bars, museums like the Prado and the Reina Sofia, and Retiro Park. If you're a night owl, you will love Madrid. The nightlife continues into the morning hours, with clubs closing around 7:00 am. Apparently it is traditional to follow up a morning at the club with a breakfast of "churros y chocolate" before drawing the industrial blinds (included on all apartments) and sleeping the day away. I'm not sure if this is true, or if the people in the LLM program really liked to go out and have fun. Either way, it is truly a unique experience.

Another cool feature is the huge amount of tapas bars and other eateries that throughout the city. While the typical cuisine includes tapas, cheeses, meats, and paella, Madrid has many American, Italian, Indian, and Mexican restaurants. The only thing that the American students really complained about missing was breakfast. Luckily the grocery stores are so cheap that you can easily fix this problem by cooking at home.

### Overall Educational Experience Abroad

To summarize my overall experience abroad here is a list of pro's and con's:

**Cons:** (1) Classes are not as organized or casebook centric, (2) Class schedule varies every week based on the professor's availability, making it somewhat (3) difficult to plan weekend travelling ahead of time.

**Pros:** (1) Professors are vocal about their expectations and what students should master for the final exam, (2) The first week of the program featured an orientation week where I was able to get to know everyone, (3) "The Amazing Race" during orientation to get to know your assigned, small work group and the city, (4) Get to practice your Spanish without being in an overwhelming setting, (5) Brussels week trip, (6) The grade curve is manageable and allows for some absences, and (7) The practical information taught in each course is interesting.

Overall, I'm so glad that I got to study abroad in Madrid during my time at UC Hastings. I made life-long lasting friendships and relationships, and gained a greater interest and respect for international lawyers. The program rounded out my legal education and I would recommend that all students take advantage of this amazing program, even if they chose a country other than Spain.

## TRAVEL SUMMARY

IE Business School  
Madrid, Spain  
Fall 2014 Semester

Instituto de Empresa is a well-known institution in Madrid, Spain. The Law School is rather small, but the International Business Law Program that UC Hastings is part of has the added benefit of being part of the IE Business School as well (which is a much bigger operation). Because of this collaboration, the focus of the exchange program is on entrepreneurial business, which is the reason many people choose this program.

It is important to note that this program is run more along the lines of a business school, meaning there is a lot of group work and project-based learning, as well as less focus on black letter law. For me, it was the perfect way to experience alternative learning styles and it gave me a lot of insight into the various ways curriculum can be taught and learned. My classes included some law-based classes (EU law and International Law) as well as some business classes (Accounting, Entrepreneurship, Economics). While they were rigorous and intense, I did not find them to be any more challenging than our UCH curriculum and standards. In addition, IE provided many speakers, events and activities that were focused on international relations and international business development, which was an added bonus to the curriculum.

While I appreciated the coursework and style of Exchange program, my favorite part of it all had nothing to do with the curriculum itself. The richest part of my experience was the people I got to sit in class with everyday. We were a class of 50, with 30 being international students from all over the world. Only six of us were exchange students (there for just the semester), while everyone else was a full three-semester LLM student. This meant that some of the people in class were already lawyers in their home country and some were still acquiring their J.D. In our class, we had people from Italy, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Mexico, Chile, Russia, USA, Ecuador, Jordan, Switzerland and Brazil, just to name a few.

The people in the program were fantastic and were the reason the experience was so special. It was fascinating to speak to the other students, who quickly became friends, about

their home culture, schooling and jobs, and made me realize the true international scope the lawyering profession can have. Everyone was friendly and fun, and many group events and outings were organized because we became such a close-knit group. The people from Spain were always willing to help, give advice, and work with us internationals if we didn't understand something. Language barriers were hardly ever a problem at the school because (almost) everyone speaks fluent English.

Madrid itself is a very international city, and I will forever have fond memories of my time there. It is definitely advantageous to speak some Spanish, because you will need it outside of school, but there are enough people around that usually someone can help you with translations if you speak no Spanish whatsoever. The museums, cafes, parks and city center are all places where students frequent and these places really enrich the Exchange program experience. IE also offers one organized trip each semester. During my semester, the group spent a week in Belgium going to the EU Commission etc. It is also very easy to get around via train in Spain, and early weekends in the semester (before finals stress starts) are a great time for you to go see the many awesome cultural sites of Spain. I would highly recommend Valencia and Granada to anyone who does this program! !!

As you can see, IE offers a little bit of everything in an exchange program. If you are interested in business law and the international interplay between law and business, please consider the IE Exchange program. You will meet amazing people, have awesome experiences, and create memories that will last a lifetime. I would be happy to talk with anyone who is interested in learning more about my experience.

Dear UC Hastings Study Abroad Department,

My overall time at IE in Spain was absolutely extraordinary.

Before Arriving: Hastings provided little to no guidance as to moving. There was no packet I received that let me know about good areas and bad for living, ways of transportation, etc. I had to do lots of research on my own and ask for advice from several people because I could not seem to get any good guidance even as to housing from Hastings or IE. I also wish that I had known more about the rail systems, general transportation, perks for students (like free museum viewings), etc. The general lack of information I was provided about Madrid could be discouraging to somebody who has little to no travel experience.

Education: The first week at IE was spent doing orientation classes and the first day at IE was spent at their off campus sight about an hour and a half away by bus. This experience in Segovia would have been enjoyable but students were not given any time to explore the city or even leave the dark auditorium room where lectures were given all day in Spanish and translated into headphones into English. Since this program prides itself on its English basis and international focus, it would have been a much nicer introduction had it actually been in English. The orientation week was also not very helpful at all, other than ice breakers, but likely did not need an entire week.

Learning how to work in groups is something that I found to be very helpful and also very stressful. The different levels of engagement required on certain projects and the number of projects at once required more of a divide and conquer attitude for some assignments. Group projects and presentations are very good practice for the real world, but having 6 students write a two-page memorandum seems like superfluous and unproductive work - so that is something where a balance needs to be struck. The variety of classes and introduction into EU law was extremely helpful and wonderful to learn about for my future plans in law.

IE was very accommodating and reactive to our concerns. I had several meetings with various heads of departments at IE and I do believe that they are extremely dedicated to ensuring that exchange students have a very positive and very insightful time providing many opportunities, etc. We voiced our concerns about the spread out schedule which did not allow for much free time or ability to travel and they immediately changed the schedule for the following semester to allow for students to have the bulk of their classes over three days instead of five. They listened and quickly acted and this was something that was very nice to see. They also put on several job fairs, career exploration, resume workshops, etc to enable students to take advantage of the wonderful international opportunity that they had to offer.

Knowing how to balance is something that is definitely important to know if you decide to study at IE. The program does demand a lot from you, but if you are efficient and understand that you have a great team to work with you will be able to enjoy the city and the culture you are so lucky to be in as well as successfully complete the coursework.

Leaving IE: The school worked with me to ensure that I was able to take my finals on time and leave Spain to get back in time for my sister's university graduation. Our grades were released in a timely fashion and now the only problem still remains that our credits are not showing on our transcripts. I am still in contact with all of the great people that I met.

Overall Experience: Madrid is an incredible city. There is so much culture, history, food, art, etc to explore and learn about. The people are extremely welcoming and many people are able to speak basic english. I found it very helpful to learn basic spanish phrases before my arrival so that I could communicate more effectively and respectfully with the Spainards. Traveling throughout Spain is very easy, they have trains that quickly and cheaply take you to many of the great cities like Valencia, Barcelona, Toledo, and so many more. It was amazing to take advantage of how cheap the travel is!

I have attached a work sample from the entrepreneurship class at IE. It is a piece of work that I am truly proud to have in my portfolio.

Please let me know if there is anything else that you may need from me!

## **Instituto de Empresa Law School, Madrid, Spain**

I studied abroad at Instituto de Empresa (IE) in Madrid, Spain during the Fall semester of my 2L year at Hastings. I found the program both intellectually and socially stimulating, and I highly recommend it to anyone looking to study abroad.

My experience began in the middle of September with the IE LAUNCH program, a two-week orientation for students to get to know one another and become familiar with working in teams. Classes were taught in a business school-like fashion, so teamwork became very important as the semester went on. The class was split into teams of 5-7 people, who we had to work with on assignments for every class. The professors assigned small written assignments for many classes each week. Doing every assignment alone would be nearly impossible, so we quickly learned to delegate work and trust in team members. The LAUNCH program also contained sessions on the customs of international legal practice in nations like China, India, and Brazil. Given the vast diversity of my classmates, this gave me very interesting background information on the legal systems in their countries.

Classes took place from October 1st to December 21st, which constituted the first of four semesters in a year-long International Business Law L.L.M. at IE. Accordingly, most of my 40 classmates had already graduated from law school and were practicing attorneys in their home countries. There were, however, 5 or 6 other exchange students like me that were only attending the first semester of classes. Students came from every corner of the world, from Singapore and Australia to Chile and Romania. I had always heard schools advertise the "diversity" of their student bodies but IE actually delivered on its promise. Class discussions were always interesting due to the diversity of experiences and practices

of my international classmates. I found their input especially relevant considering our coursework in international business.

During the semester, I took four classes: Economics, European Union Law I, Introduction to Civil Law Systems, and International Taxation. While this seems like a full course load by US standards, those enrolled in the full L.L.M. program took 8-9 different classes. The classes were quite difficult but we were not expected to memorize as much substantive law as one might be in a class at Hastings. Grading was done on a standard bell curve, which was a foreign concept to most of my classmates. Although a couple of my classes factored in participation, most of my grades were dependent on our final exams. Given IE's ranking as the best university in Spain and a top five business school in the world, my professors were extremely qualified in their fields. Instead of being academic professors like in the US, most were attorneys that gave us practical insight into their areas of expertise. For instance, my International Taxation professor was the former tax planner for David Beckham and other Spanish soccer players. Hearing tax planning techniques directly from a lawyer of that prominence was a rewarding experience and taught me things that I couldn't find in a textbook. Overall, the classes were of comparative difficulty to those at Hastings and were very academically stimulating.

Madrid was also a wonderful city and served as a great destination for study abroad. I found Spanish culture to be very relaxing and social, which helped ease any stress from my coursework. Many of my fellow classmates were Spanish and were happy take everyone out in the city to bars, restaurants, and soccer matches. The people of Madrid were also very friendly and I found the city to be even safer than San Francisco. Due to the city's size and location in the middle of Spain, I had easy access to transportation and

traveled on some weekends throughout Spain and Europe. I found Madrid to be an ideal study abroad destination and am considering looking for jobs there in the future.

Overall, I had an amazing experience studying abroad at IE and highly recommend it to other students. The semester gave me the unique chance to learn and get to know other law students from around the world. I made a lot of close friends who I know that I will keep in touch with, and potentially do business with, in the future. Although the classes are difficult for a study abroad program, the people and culture of Madrid easily made it worthwhile. After having such a great time over the semester, my only regret was not having signed up for the year-long L.L.M. program!