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What is included in the Student Handbook complements other pertinent PRESHCO-related information you will receive during the orientation sessions held either on your campus or virtually prior to your departure, and the on-site ones that take place after you arrive in Spain.

PRESHCO requires that you carefully read this handbook. In it you will find three sections: Before You Go, Program Policies, and Additional Information. Note that you are required to sign the Student Release Form, part of the PRESHCO Application Packet, in order to confirm you have read and understood the contents of this Student Handbook.

BEFORE YOU GO

This section outlines the steps you are required to follow in preparation for your departure. It also makes suggestions you might find helpful regarding your travel to and study in Cordoba.

Passports

Travel to Spain requires you have a valid passport. If, however, you already have a passport, you must ensure that its expiration date is at least six months after the scheduled date of your return from Spain. If you need to apply for a new passport or renew the one you have, you need to do so immediately. For details about the procedure for making a first-time application for a passport or renewing an expired one, go to the U.S. Passport Services and Information Home Page at (travel.state.gov/passport). The site conveniently includes a link for a printable official passport application.

Spanish Visa

Studying in Spain requires a Student Visa. In order to apply for a student visa, you need to have a valid passport as specified above. You should contact the Spanish Consulate for your area of residence at the same time you complete the PRESHCO Application, as visas can take up to 4 months to be issued. It is crucial that you know as early as possible what materials you will need to apply for a student visa, and the deadlines you must follow for submitting your application, as well as picking up your visa once it is issued. The following link on the Spanish Embassy Home Page:

http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/ServiciosAlCiudadano/Paginas/EmbajadasConsulados.aspx

can be used to determine the Spanish Consulate Office you must contact for your area of residence. Please note also that some consulate offices allow you to apply in the state of your university. In order to do so, you will need your official letter of acceptance and the notarized affidavit provided by PRESHCO. You may also be asked to provide a notarized letter from your parents stating their financial responsibility for your personal expenses during your stay in Spain. If you are financially independent, however, some other proof of your financial status may be required. Additional documents may also be required.

Because, of the involvement and nature of the paperwork required, it is imperative, therefore, that you start this process early in order to allow sufficient time for you to obtain any additional materials that might be required by the consulate in your area.

You will receive updated visa information and a Frequently Asked Questions document with your initial acceptance materials. Although these documents are updated frequently, it is very important that you nonetheless check with the Consulate in your jurisdiction for the most recently updated information.

It is not unusual for students to want to extend their stay in Spain after spending their fall semester in the program. We strongly recommend that if you are studying abroad during the fall semester and think there might be even the slightest chance you might want to stay, that you apply for a yearlong visa. This helps eliminate costly trips back to the U.S. and much unnecessary paperwork.
Student Visa Applications are processed in the order they are received. To ensure the timely issuance of a student visa, your application must be filed two months prior to your departure for Spain.

A student planning to study in Spain for more than six months must produce an FBI Background Check (http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/background-checks/background_checks). The FBI document you will receive must then be sent to Washington, D.C. for the required apostille (official seal of the Hague). Some consulates allow a State Background Check, and some allow you to do this online, so please check with your State government. Also note that securing an FBI background check will take four months and it is your responsibility to get this paperwork done on time.

We strongly recommend, therefore, that after you receive notification of your acceptance into the PRESHCO program, you immediately contact the closest Spanish consulate and request a checklist of the requirements and deadlines for submitting your Student Visa Application.

Note that both your Visa and Passport Applications are independent of your PRESHCO Application. And that the program cannot be held responsible for any problems or delays arising from not having begun this process early enough, or for any complications arising from the processing of the visa by consular or governmental offices.

STEP Registration

The U.S. State Department runs a Safe Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), which allows travelers to receive alerts and important information from the State Department while traveling (including alerts on countries deemed unsafe or unadvisable for travel). All students are asked to register with this program before you leave for Spain. The process is simple, and can be done online at STEP.state.gov.

Medical Insurance and Medical Care

You are responsible for your own medical expenses. You must carry valid and current medical insurance and have a valid insurance identity card. Before you leave for Spain, you should confirm the extent of your coverage (1) by your parents’ or some other insurance, (2) outside the U.S., (3) of repatriation. If you are not covered for all three, you must secure additional coverage for the period of your stay in Spain and travel in Europe.

Medical and dental services are available in Cordoba. PRESHCO provides you with insurance in Spain that will cover basic services while enrolled in the program. The staff in Cordoba will assist you in locating doctors and obtaining needed medical and dental care. As a rule, you must pay for medical services at the time of treatment, and may later seek reimbursement from your insurance company upon your return to the U.S. Before your departure, you need to check with your insurance company regarding the procedures you will need to follow to get reimbursed, and a list of procedures and charges that are covered and reimbursable. PRESHCO, in exceptional cases, will lend limited amounts of money to students in need of routine health care in Cordoba or during one of the program-sponsored excursions, with the explicit understanding that you will reimburse the Program within reasonable time.

Useful information on medical emergencies abroad, including overseas insurance programs, is provided in the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs Brochure, Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad, available via the Bureau of Consular Affairs Home Page (travel.state.gov). Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained via the Centers for Disease Control Internet Home Page (cdc.gov).

Carrying Medication

Once you have been accepted to the program you are required to complete a medical form, which does not determine your eligibility to participate. The completed form will be placed on file in the PRESHCO Office in Cordoba and consulted when necessary. If you are taking regular medication, or have special
medical needs, be sure to bring copies of all your prescriptions. We strongly also recommend, however, that you bring with you all the medication you will need for the duration of your stay, as it is not easy to get US prescriptions filled in Spain. It is also very expensive to have medications sent to you; if they are allowed at all in the country you may have to pay a hefty customs fee in order to get them released to you. It may be very useful to have a letter from your doctor describing those prescription drugs you regularly use, and their specific use/need. Any medication you carry across international borders must be in its original prescription bottle, and include the receipts you get at the time of purchase from your pharmacy with indications on how to use them, your doctor’s name, and so on.

Some drugs (especially amphetamine salts, which are used in many drugs to treat ADHD) are illegal in Spain and other European countries. It is your responsibility to ascertain if a drug you are currently taking is illegal in Spain, and to explore with your physician alternatives you might have available that are legal. This should be done WELL IN ADVANCE of your departure for Spain, so that you may test whether an alternative prescription will work for you.

**Money Matters**

The currency of Spain is the Euro (€). 100 céntimos make up 1 €. Coin fractions are 1 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 céntimos, 1€ and 2 €. Banknotes come in 5€, 10€, 20€, 50€, 100€, 200€, and 500 € denominations.

How much money you will need while abroad will depend on your individual lifestyle and travel plans. During the academic semester you will not pay for your room and board, and since PRESHCO covers most basic expenses, you may not need large sums of cash during your stay in Cordoba. Whatever the amount of personal money involved, you should plan ahead for its management, and note that traveling to Spain with large amounts of cash is most unwise.

We recommend that you handle your personal finances through the use of ATM/debit cards. US cash is not easily convertible into Euros, even at banks; and traveler’s checks or personal checks are no longer accepted.

In general, credit cards are accepted widely for large purchases, but not for small ones, particularly in small country towns, or small businesses in Cordoba. You should also be aware that when you use a credit card and introduce a pin in place of a signature, your bank might register that charge as a cash withdrawal and charge you a higher APR for it. Before you leave the States, check with your bank, therefore, and make sure you understand the uses and charges of your credit card. ATM machines are readily available all over Spain, and the staff will gladly assist you in locating them.

Please also note that you must notify your bank (for ATM card use) and any credit card companies of your travel dates before your departure as they may block usage of your cards until you get in touch with them. Contacting banks and credit cards from abroad can be complex and expensive. Also note that most banks and credit cards companies allow you to notify them of your travel plans on line, so before leaving, set up on-line banking and credit card payments, which will also allow you to monitor all transactions in your accounts.

In the event of an emergency there are ways for parents to send you money. PRESHCO strongly encourages you to explore the different ways money can be wired abroad, but also the possibility of direct transfers to your bank account if you both use the same bank. In either case, discuss this matter with your parents before your departure, and agree on the method they will use should your need for extra money arise.

PRESHCO recommends that you arrive in Spain with some Euros in your pocket, the equivalent of $75 to $100 should be sufficient. We also recommend you do not purchase large amounts of Euros in the U.S., as you will get a better exchange rate in Spain. For up-to-date day-to-day exchange rates, you may go to www.x-rates.com.
Sales or Use Tax: Spain has a VAT (value added tax), which applies to almost everything. It ranges from 7% to 21.5% depending on the merchandise or services rendered.

Telephones

Upon arrival in Madrid, you will be issued a cell phone for your personal use. You are not required to accept this phone, although its use will make communications much easier for you and your family. The PRESHCO phone is a “prepaid balance” one and will be issued to you with the equivalent of US$15.00 in balance. You will be able to add to this initial balance at many locations in Cordoba, and throughout Spain. As a rule, is best to text than to call on your cellphone, as rates for calls to other cell phones may run higher than to landline phones.

Important Contact Information

Please note, that should family or friends have to get in touch with you before you have informed them of your cell phone number or the number that corresponds to the family you are assigned, you can always be reached by either, calling the PRESHCO Program Office or the Resident Director at the numbers below.

When calling Spain from the U.S. dial 011 (international access code), 34 (country code for Spain), followed by the seven digits of the phone number.

The following information should be left with family members and/or friends prior to your departure.

PRESHCO OFFICE IN CORDOBA

Oficina de PRESHCO
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras
Universidad de Cordoba
Plaza del Cardenal Salazar, 3
14003 Cordoba, Spain
Tel: 011-34-957-42-17-94
Fax: 011-34-957-29-00-62
E-mail: preshco@uco.es

HOME OF RESIDENT DIRECTOR

Alejandra B. Osorio
Calle Doctor Blanco Soler, n° 4, 3º-D
14004 Cordoba, Spain
Home: 011-34-957-29-46-05
Cell: 011-34-629-83-89-79
Email: osoriopreshco@wellesley.edu

PRESHCO PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Stacia Biel
sbiel@smith.edu
Tel: 617-835-6532

CAMPUS STUDY ABROAD OFFICERS

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Director of International Study
Schneider Center
Wellesley College
Wellesley, MA 02481
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FAX: 781-283-3618
Email: jthomass@wellesley.edu
Packing for your trip

PRESHCO students often bring too much baggage and end up not wearing much of what they bring. You can survive your stay in Cordoba without packing your entire room and closet. You might find it helpful to seek advice from former PRESHCO students about what they brought, and suggestions on how and what to pack for your time in Spain.

In deciding what to take, there are two things you should know about Spain: (1) styles and (2) the weather. Good clothing tends to be expensive in Spain, so bring clothes you expect to wear during your stay. There are no special norms in Spain with respect to dress. Spaniards, or at least the cordobeses, do not dress as casually as most Americans do (e.g. sweatpants, and certainly pajamas on the streets are a no-no). It is a good idea to pack a variety of clothes that you can mix and match. Because nightlife is such a great part of Spanish culture, it is not necessary to dress formally for dinner or the theatre. Casual dress is quite acceptable. Nevertheless, it is probably safe to say that casual dress in Spain does not usually mean jeans. The color black is always in style. You should also plan to bring several outfits suitable for receptions or a dressy evening. You will do a lot of walking—both on the orientation tour and in Cordoba—often on bumpy cobblestone streets, so it is advisable to bring along at least two pairs of practical comfortable shoes, such as tennis shoes, hiking boots, and flat walking shoes. You need not bring sheets or towels, but you may want to purchase a quick dry pack towel for travel. Extra towels can also be purchased fairly inexpensively in Spain.

Winter in southern Spain is quite temperate in comparison with New England and the US mid-west. Temperatures rarely drop below freezing. Nonetheless, you will need to be prepared for cold. At the beginning of the fall semester it will most likely be quite warm and even hot (possibly into the high 90s F); at the beginning of the spring semester, however, and particularly on the tour in Salamanca and Madrid, it will be quite cold. You will need to pack everything from sweaters, a warm wool coat or a down jacket (which is highly recommended), a hat, scarves, gloves, and warm clothes to sleep in, to lighter spring-like clothing such as light cotton tops and lightweight pants. You may also wish to bring along a bathing suit.

Buildings are normally not heated, and when they are, the heat is often turned off during the night. While outside temperatures seldom get as low as in Boston or the Midwest, the inside temperatures are much colder than what most American students are used to. You should prepare to dress in layers. Also note that floor carpeting is also very uncommon in southern Spain, and tile floors, which are widely used, can feel very, very cold during the winter months. You should plan to bring a pair of warm slippers, and also warm socks, as well as an umbrella and raingear.

Depending on your personal situation, you may also wish to bring in addition to your prescription drugs, vitamins, stomach medicines, TUMS, Vaseline, insect repellant, and Visine, a money belt, a backpack to use when you travel, sunscreen as it can be quite costly, and a small camera if you do not plan to use your U.S. phone as one.

Wireless access is available in all PRESHCO housing, and in many areas of the Facultad de Filosofia y Letras where you will have most of your classes. Access is free to all students with a university email
account, which you will receive upon arrival in Cordoba. Most students bring laptops for general use and class assignments. A Spanish/English dictionary and a good guidebook may also come in handy.

It is a nice gesture to bring a gift for your host family. You may want to bring something that is particularly meaningful and local from your region of the U.S. or your state.

Whatever you decide to bring, and before your pack, check the website of your airline for information regarding the size, weight limits, and number of checked luggage and carry-ons you are allowed. If you are connecting to a different airline during any leg of your journey, be sure to check with those airlines as well as they might have different requirements.

A Note About Electricity and US Appliances

Voltage in Spain is 220V, 50 Hz (cycles). You will need to use a transformer (converter) if your appliances are 110V. The voltage in the U.S. is 110V, 60 Hz. In general is not a good idea to bring U.S. appliances (hairdryer, flat iron, and the like) that are not dual voltage, as you will need to also get a transformer in order to use them in Spain. These small appliances can easily be purchased in Spain for little money. Also note that you will not need a converter for your computer, tablets, or phone (smart and not so smart), as they are designed now to automatically function with both voltages.

Electric plugs in Spain have two round pins, and are International Type F plugs, while the US uses both Type A and B. You will need an adapter plug for your flat pin plugs. Upon your arrival at the airport you will receive a transformer plug that will allow you plug your electronic devices while in Europe. If you plan to travel to the United Kingdom you will need a Type G plug, which is included in the multi-prong plug you will receive from the program at the airport. You may also purchase additional ones for a Euro in any corner store throughout Cordoba, should you need more than one.

Your Pre-Departure Checklist

- Passport/Visa and three photocopies of the passport ID/data page. Be sure to leave one of the photocopies with your parents, and keep the other two with you, separate from your passport!
- E-ticket receipt and itinerary
- Money (cash, credit/debit cards, etc.)
- Check with airline(s) luggage allowance and weight, size and number restrictions
- Luggage
- Insurance information
- Health precautions (prescriptions for necessary or recommended medicines, eyeglasses or contact lens prescriptions, allergy tags, etc.)
- Arrangements for receiving money from home
- Contact information and other contact arrangements if necessary
- List of credit/debit cards you will carry with name, account number and international toll free phone numbers to call in case of loss or theft. (Leave one copy of this list behind with your parents.)
- A huge measure of flexibility and a sense of humor
PROGRAM OFFERINGS AND POLICIES

Academic Responsibilities

Before departing from your home institution, you should become aware of your home school’s policies regarding grade reporting from PRESHCO. You should also ascertain how many classes you are expected to take each semester (four at most institutions) in order to complete graduation and major requirements, as well as maintain full time status for financial aid purposes. Depending on your institution’s policies, a grade of C or better is needed in a PRESHCO course to receive credit at the home school.

PRESHCO faculty assigns grades according to the American system of A to F. In the case of schools that record only credit transferred on an official transcript, there may be future occasions when you may need an official PRESHCO transcript. In those cases, you may request a transcript directly from the PRESHCO office in Cordoba at Preshco@uco.es.

Attendance Policy

The formal academic component of the program is critical, and serves as the basis for cultural and social learning. You must attend all classes. Both faculty and the Resident Director will monitor your attendance. You are expected to keep up with homework assignments and actively engage in class discussions and group projects. Your repeated absence from lectures and class-related activities is grounds for expulsion from the program.

Your participation in excursions and special cultural events is required, as these constitute an integral part of your education while enrolled in the program. Participation in excursions and special cultural events is mandatory, therefore, unless you are explicitly excused from participating by the Resident Director.

PRESHCO students are bona-fide students of the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. As such, you have regular University of Cordoba student status including use of libraries, computer services (including e-mail), limited use of sports facilities and other student services that will be specified upon your arrival in Cordoba.

PRESHCO students return to the U.S. a few days before the exam period ends at the UCO. The PRESHCO Academic Coordinator will work with UCO faculty members to make arrangements for you to complete your course work and (if necessary) exams according to the PRESHCO calendar.

Academic Offerings

PRESHCO student choose their courses from two different curricular options: PRESHCO courses taught by Spanish faculty for program participants only, and direct-matriculation into regular University of Cordoba courses. You will need to enroll in both PRESHCO and UCO courses during your semester.

During orientation you will be given an overview of how to navigate the UCO course roster on line in Barcelona, and during orientation in Cordoba you will participate in a session that will teach you how to choose courses from the online catalog, register for them, and so on.

The program provides all course texts and other instructional materials for PRESHCO courses. A stipend is allotted for materials for other non-program courses when necessary.

PRESHCO Courses

PRESHCO courses are taught for program students only by Spanish faculty. You should consult the program brochure or website during the application process, and the updated class schedules upon your arrival in Cordoba. There will be many opportunities for you to discuss possible course options once you arrive in Spain, also note that it is not unusual for students to change their course registrations once the
semester has began. In anticipation of such potential changes, we strongly recommend that you be in contact with the study abroad office at your home institution and with your advisor(s) to be sure you will be meeting necessary requirements, should you decide to change courses once in Cordoba.

PRESHCO classes in which fewer than five students are registered will be canceled. The Resident Director, in consultation with the appropriate individuals at your home institution, will work with you to choose alternative courses. It is very important for you to have alternate course choices not only on your application, therefore, but also have these alternatives pre-approved by your home institution before departing for Spain.

University of Cordoba (UCO) Courses
You are normally required to take at least one direct-matriculation course offered as part of the University of Cordoba’s regular offerings. Once in Spain, you will meet with the Resident Director and Academic Coordinator to review your preferences, and help you choose appropriate UCO course(s). A sample list of UCO courses taken in the past by former students appears on the PRESHCO website; courses marked with an asterisk (*) note those popular with former PRESHCO students.

Grades received in these classes are translated to American grading standards and reported to your home institution for program credit. Also, keep in mind that, as a registered student at the UCO, you are entitled to audit courses at the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Additional fees required by the UCO for direct-matriculation are covered by PRESHCO.

Studio Arts Courses at Mateo Inurria and Dionisio Ortiz Schools of Art
By special agreement, you may utilize the facilities of the Mateo Inurria and Dionisio Ortiz Schools of Art (as space and conventional student class enrollment size permit). A listing of times, the instructor’s name of the different media courses offered with the number of PRESHCO students that can be accommodated in each, will be available in the PRESHCO office. Please note that students enrolled in these art courses are expected to contribute $100 from their reembolsos culturales to partially cover group instruction.

As studio-art workshops do not normally carry academic credit (unless you arrange it with your home institution prior to arrival in Spain), you are able to participate only in those hours of instruction that fit within your academic schedule. Some of the media courses require supplies not furnished by the school (e.g., film for photography, some ceramic glazes, etc.) that must be purchased by you. Reembolsos culturales can be used for these expenses upon presentation of receipts.

Cultural Offerings

Sevillana Dancing
The program offers weekly instruction in Sevillana dance open to all students at no additional charge. Full-year students who have taken basic Sevillana in the fall semester have the option of studying flamenco in the following spring semester. Some students have been able to petition their home institution to receive Physical Education or Dance credit for participating in these classes. If you are planning to petition for credit, you must establish a mechanism for verifying your attendance at the outset of the semester.

Spanish Cooking Classes
The program offers cooking classes in traditional Andalusian and Spanish cuisine led by a local noted chef. These courses are wildly popular, fun and most of all, delicioso!

Guitar Classes
The program provides group guitar instruction. Information about days and times will be made available once you arrive in Cordoba. Guitars may be rented from the program or purchased.
Theatre
You may also enroll in theater classes. During the semester PRESHCO students work on a theater piece by a Spanish author together with other theater lovers from the community, which is performed at the end of the year. This experience allows you to seriously practice and perfect your Spanish language skills.

Compañeros de Conversación
The program sponsors an exchange by which Spanish students and American students are able to practice conversational skills in each other’s language. If, for whatever reason, you do not wish to participate, please inform the Resident Director upon your arrival in Spain. You will be notified of the name and contact information for your compañero/a(s) at the beginning of the semester. There will be an initial social event where you will formally meet your conversation partner. It will be up to you to set the times and dates to meet thereafter.

Language Tutors
The program employs two language tutors each semester. Typically these tutors are graduate students at the UCO. Tutors hold daily office hours and are available to help you with your homework and/or research, as well as improve your conversational skills. They will assist you with reading your papers and making suggestions on how to improve your writing, answering grammar questions, and practicing your spoken language. They cannot, however, correct your papers and/or write them for you. Tutors are a wonderful resource, and one more way to meet locals.

Lectures and academic colloquia
The program occasionally sponsors lectures and/or scholarly presentations and conferences at the Facultad. Information on these is posted on the office notice boards.

Volunteering
There are a number of NGOs and other local organizations where you can participate in Experiential and Service Learning in Cordoba. Throughout the years, PRESHCO students have worked with a number of NGOs in the area. A listing of these organizations will be provided to you during orientation, as well as the steps you will need to follow to participate in this most rewarding activity.

Program Excursions
You should become familiar with the excursion schedule for the semester before making any personal travel plans. Excursions are an important component of the program and are considered part of the overall academic undertaking (and of your credit). You are expected to take part in all program-sponsored excursions. You should speak to the Resident Director well in advance of these events if you need to be excused. Due to insurance regulations, it is not possible to provide transportation or accommodations for persons other than registered PRESHCO participants and employees.

For the duration of all excursions your ground transportation, meals, entrance fees and guides are fully covered. You will receive a meal stipend, however, when no group meals are scheduled. All activities you undertake on your own, and which are not sponsored by PRESHCO, are your sole responsibility.

Reembolsos Culturales (Cultural Reimbursement Program)
As part of the program’s reembolso offerings, each semester you are given a predetermined amount of funds in Euros that can be used for individually planned cultural events and activities that help integrate you into Spanish life. They may include among possible others, culinary samplings, concerts and musical performances, travel in Spain (only), purchasing books about Spain, paying for art supplies for your cultural classes. You will not be reimbursed for alcohol, clothing, meals (unless as noted, they are directly related to Spanish culture), or travel outside of Spain.

Upon your arrival in Cordoba, you will be notified of the total amount to which you will be entitled for the semester. At the beginning of the orientation tour, you will be issued a small amount (usually about 40 Euros) to be used for incidental expenses during the tour. You need not present receipts for this initial
distribution. To receive the remaining amount, you will need to present original receipts, before being reimbursed. Receipts will need to be organized, individually labeled, and amounts totaled on a separate sheet of paper. These will be submitted to the Academic Coordinator according to a schedule that will be given to you at orientation. The Academic Coordinator will then verify your expenses, file receipts, and issue reimbursements in Euros. In the event that you require a sizeable amount from these funds, to pay for an activity in advance, you will need to discuss it with the Resident Director. In the event you are granted an advance, you must repay all debts to the program within reasonable time and before returning to the US.

**Summer Scholarships**

Each summer the Science Department at the University of Cordoba hosts two PRESHCO students to do research. There are two stipends of up to US$2,500 for living expenses and a round-trip flight for (fall or spring) students wishing to participate in this program. You are encouraged to identify a professor in advance and inquire about his/her availability during the summer term to mentor you with your research. There is a short application where you will need to describe your research interests and plans, and (if you already know) the faculty member you will work with. The PRESHCO staff will coordinate with the UCO Science Department to determine their needs and find a good fit for you. If you are interested in this option, please speak with the Resident Director for more details.

**Housing**

You will find living in Spain exciting and culturally enriching. Your Spanish will most certainly improve, particularly if you resist the temptation to both, hang out with other Americans and speak English. You will find, that in Spain, when compared to the U.S., there is much more community life present in streets, parks, plazas and cafes. There are, of course, many aspects of Spanish life you should research before arriving in Spain.

All PRESHCO students live and eat all meals in a private residence shared with a Spanish host or family. The “family” may number anywhere from one to ten. Some families are headed by heterosexual parents in their fifties to sixties, while others are by single women in their twenties to sixties, while still others are made up of young couples (who may or may not be married, who may be of different sexes or of the same sex). If you have a particular “ideal” of what family or private residence you would like to be in (or not), you should describe those concerns in the housing section of your application. Most of the hosts we use have worked with the program for years and maintain a high level of food quality, openness to conversation, and an understanding of your needs and preferences as a U.S. student in Spain. You will normally occupy a single room.

Living with a family or Spanish host can be a wonderful way to experience home life in Spain, as upon arrival, you will have a core Spanish connection. Such an arrangement, however, carries many of the obligations you may, or may not have at your own home back in the States. Your family in Cordoba will expect you to be present at meals (otherwise you will need to call ahead to let them know of your absence), to respect fully quiet times (such as siesta after lunch), and to not invite friends to eat without their expressed permission, discretion in commentaries on food and family life, cleanliness in the use of all facilities (especially bathrooms), and general congeniality in your daily dealings with them.

The private residences range from apartment/condo format to freestanding housing, and the three main neighborhoods are San Basilio, Ciudad Jardin and Tendillas (in the Center). If you are taking science courses at the Rabanales campus you may also be assigned housing located closer to the train station in Vial Norte. In the downtown area closest to the Facultad, apartments predominate. These are normally modern/functional in structure and decor and most have central heating (not at all the norm in Cordoba). Some of the host families live in charming—and even elegant—historic homes (some of which are removed from the Facultad and may require the occasional use of public transportation, and most of which do not have central heat). Some hosts’ smoke, while others do not; some permit smoking in common rooms, while others do not.

Revised: December 2015
Members of the household regularly sit down to meals together, particularly lunch, which is usually served at about 3:00 p.m. and is considered to be the main meal of the day. In general, everyone is expected to eat the same dishes. If, however, you have special dietary needs and/or restrictions, you need to make these known on your application in order to avoid misunderstandings and unpleasant situations with your host family later on. Your family will provide basic laundry service, and furnish you with the necessary towels and bed linens for the semester. While they do not impose a curfew, they will expect, however, that you arrive and leave their house quietly. And that you notify them ahead of time when you will not be joining them for meals, and/or returning home overnight. Normally, unless specific arrangements have been made, having overnight guests is not permitted.

Electricity and gas are much more expensive in Europe than in the U.S. Due to the high cost of electricity, Spaniards can be quite frugal in terms of bulb wattage. Hall lights in public buildings are frequently on timers. You are expected to be mindful of the cost of utilities. As a rule, do not leave lights on unnecessarily and do not take long showers. Until very recently, in Spain central heating and cooling was virtually unknown. Most everyone depended on electric fans for cooling and small space heaters for warmth. Modern buildings are more apt now to have some sort of central heat, although not necessarily central cooling.

In the case of most regions of Spain, temperatures are mild when compared to the extremes of heat and cold of U.S. cities such as Boston and Chicago. Andalucia in general, and Cordoba, specifically, can be, however, extremely warm (over 120 degrees Fahrenheit is not unusual in the peak of the summer). Traditionally architecture, therefore, was designed (and building supplies such as marble, tile, etc. were selected) to address the sustained heat of the summer months. Consequently, interiors in historic homes are relatively cool even on the hottest days. While this feature might be great in the summer, it is less so for the winter, when it may be cooler inside than outside a home. It is recommended that you bring clothing (sweaters, fleece, down), therefore, that can be layered, and thus adjusted to rapid changes in temperatures.

**Housing during Semana Santa (Holy Week)**

Classes are not held in the Facultad during the week right before Easter Sunday. PRESHCO secures housing in Cordoba for those students who wish to remain in town but who may not be able to remain in their usual lodgings. In order to accomplish this task, it is essential that you inform the office staff of your needs for alternate housing six weeks in advance of Holy Week. Cordoba is an important tourist destination during Semana Santa and the program cannot assume any responsibility for securing housing for students who do not notify the office of their needs on time.

**Meals**

Spanish meal times and servings differ considerably from those common in the U.S. Breakfast, usually at about 8:00 a.m. for those going out to work or college study, consists of coffee, tea, milk or a chocolate-flavored drink, some rolls, bread or toast, and sometimes juice. Most people take a break at about 11:00 a.m. for a cup of coffee and a very small snack. Lunch, as already mentioned, is the important and substantive meal of the day, usually served anytime between 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. and generally eaten together. Some people have a merienda at about 5:00 p.m. usually consisting of a small snack. Dinner is usually light (unless it is part of a formal social event) and is usually eaten at about 9:00 p.m.

Most students relish Spanish cuisine and delight in paella, gazpacho, jamón serrano, tortilla española, olives, hearty cocidos and crusty bread, not to mention Spain’s many famous tapas. At the same time, one of the most complex issues for some students will be food. The Spanish diet caters to meat and fish-eaters. Vegetarianism is becoming more common, and PRESHCO has identified a number of host families that are willing to accommodate vegetarians and/or vegans. If you have any special dietary needs please be sure to indicate them on your housing application form, so that suitable housing can be arranged.

Despite traditional grumbling about dining hall food, US students probably enjoy a degree of variety and flexibility in food items and eating times that is practically unknown in Europe. In Spain, a family will serve...
a specific meal and will assume everyone will eat the same dishes. Eating is considered to be a pleasant, communal activity, and eating alone is less sociably acceptable. Spaniards consume much less “junk food” than Americans, and eating while walking about is frowned upon.

Most of the issues U.S. students have with Spanish cuisine are related to the ubiquity of pork, the reliance on what is viewed as an “excessive” use of oil (especially olive oil) in cooking (various fried foods are very common), and a paucity of lettuce-based salads, which usually include tuna. Most students adjust after a few weeks. If you have serious problems with the food, you should speak with your host parent and/or with the Housing Coordinator and Resident Director, who will assist you in dealing with this.

We cannot emphasize enough the need for you to share with us any issues you may have related to food, not only allergies, but also any eating disorders or concerns you may have. Living in a new environment can be exciting and invigorating. Changes in habit and environment, however, can also cause stress.

If you are a particularly finicky eater or must have things exactly as you have them in the U.S., you might want to think about whether or not you will be able to adjust to and survive life abroad. If you also have previous or current eating issues, you need to carefully consider whether or not you will be able to handle these concerns while living abroad in a very different environment, and, if so, what steps you will need to take to minimize the possibility of any recurrences of your eating disorders. Also remember that in order to receive help from the program, you will need to communicate your needs and concerns to us.

**Speaking Spanish with your host family and beyond**

One of the most important benefits of studying and living in Spain is the opportunity to *vivir en español*. The goal that you be immersed in the Spanish language is the single most important reason we make every effort to provide housing in which English-speakers make up the minority of those sharing the home. Unfortunately, what we often find is that students themselves undermine these efforts by speaking English with each other. Besides keeping you from perfecting your Spanish, speaking English will have negative consequences for your success (or lack thereof) in making Spanish friends. When your Spanish peers see you speaking English, they might think that either you are more comfortable with your own compatriots than in getting to know them on their terms, or that you are talking about them.

**Smoking**

Smoking is quite common in Spain. There are, however, many campaigns in place to dissuade smoking, including increasingly heavy taxation on tobacco products and a reduction in the number of places smoking is permitted in public and communal buildings. There are many places where smoking is prohibited or the rule is strictly enforced, and some restaurants now do offer smoke-free dining areas. In general, however, many Spaniards do smoke, a lot.

Non-smokers who prefer others not smoke in their company, or those allergic to smoke, need to take the initiative in making this fact known. There is no smoking allowed in any PRESHCO classrooms or office.

*It is very important, therefore, that you list on your housing form whether or not you would tolerate living in a family where one or more members do smoke!*

**Additional Homestay Tips**

The following are additional suggestions to those already mentioned aimed at facilitating your homestay experience with your new family. Please read them carefully, as they may impact the quality of your stay and the impressions you and your hosts make of each other.

1. Try to avoid a preconceived notion of what you think things “should” be like while abroad. The more open you are to adapting to different ways of life, the more fulfilling your stay will be.
2. Do not expect the same standard of living as that which exists in your own country. Families are generally middle class, which means that you might be sharing a bathroom with them; keep it
short and keep it tight. Most households are typically noisier than what you might be accustomed to. Street and traffic activity outside can be noisy, and televisions are often on throughout the day.

3. It is a nice gesture to give the family a small welcome gift as a token of your appreciation. Something nice from your region of the US or your town will be appreciated. You may also bring photos of family and friends from back home. This is a good icebreaker and way for your hosts to get to know you better. You may also want to share music, magazines and your family’s recipes.

4. An electrical water heater often heats showers. Do not hesitate to ask your family for a demonstration if you are not sure about how it works. Also be conscientious about your water use. Do not take prolonged showers or shower multiple times per day if you can avoid it. The cost of water and electricity is infinitely higher in Spain than it is in the U.S.

5. Remember to turn lights off when not using them. Electricity is very expensive. If you forget to turn a light off upon leaving a room, even for just a few minutes, don’t be surprised if someone in your host family turns it off while you are gone.

6. Do not expect to use the landline telephone in the house unless you are given permission to do so. Local calls are often free, depending on the plan they have but they will be charged for long distance calls. Since you can receive calls on your cell phone that do not count against your minute allotment, you should plan to have your friends and family call you on your own phone.

7. All meals are included with your homestay. You should ask what their meal schedule is so as not to miss meal times. Let your family know early on what it is you like and do not like to eat. Do it politely, so as not to offend them; they will rather see you eat what they serve you than waste it!

8. Please let your hosts know if you damage or break something. This will help avoid future tensions, and most items are easily replaceable.

9. Remember to always respect house rules on subjects such as smoking and visitors even when family members are not at home, as this shows respect for them, their space and their rules.

10. Do not borrow from or lend money to your host family. This may lead to an uncomfortable situation in the future and spoil an otherwise enjoyable stay.

11. Use slippers, flip-flops, or socks inside the house. Be mindful that very revealing clothing might be seen as offensive. Between the shower and your room, always either use a robe or get dressed in the bathroom.

12. Be sure to be responsible about closing doors and locking gates behind you. Be responsible with your keys and respect this custom! Also remember not to slam doors and gates; this goes for taxis/cars as well as houses.

13. Feel free to discuss cultural differences but be mindful. Be critical but not judgmental, and try to accept and understand cultural differences.

14. Try to keep a sense of humor. Instead of letting yourself get stressed about minor problems, try to learn from difficult moments and experiences.

15. Do not expect host families to provide you with VIP service and entertainment. The idea is for you to integrate and live as a family member by sharing in their routines and chores and joining their outings.

16. Although host families do receive a fee for each student, they are selected based on their interest in and friendliness towards their students. While each family is different, as long as you contribute towards an open and friendly relationship, you should enjoy a positive, rewarding homestay experience. If you have any problems or feel unhappy where you are, do not hesitate to talk to the PRESHCO staff so that we can rectify your situation.

17. Always be courteous with your host family, greeting them each morning, excusing yourself from the table, letting them know when you will be home or not, and so on. Discussing problems should be addressed in a polite and pleasant manner for best result.

18. If you have any problems, comments or concerns about your family, please talk to the housing coordinator right away! And remember that cultural differences that might otherwise be taken as personal insults can usually be easily explained.

19. Upon your return to the US, write to your host family thanking them. They will appreciate the gesture, and you may solidify the personal relationships you develop during your stay.
Liability and Standards of Conduct

Participation in a study abroad program involves risks not found at your home institution and for which PRESHCO is not liable. These include risks in traveling to and within, and returning from, international locations; foreign political, legal, social, and economic conditions; different standards of design, safety, and maintenance of buildings, public places and conveyances, and local medical and weather conditions. PRESHCO does not act as an agent for, and cannot control the acts or omissions of its host institution, the Universidad de Cordoba, host families, transportation carriers, hotels, or any other service providers involved with the program.

The students in the program are responsible for their personal safety at all times, especially when not in class and not on Program-sponsored trips. They assume an important personal obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the Program and its reputation, with local laws and regulations, and with the regulations for student conduct at their home institution. It is expected that students in the Program will act responsibly in a way that is not deemed reckless or inappropriate by the Program and will agree to take the advice of the Resident Director regarding personal conduct during their time in Spain.

While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country’s laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the U.S. and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the U.S. for similar offenses. Persons violating Spanish law, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. PRESHCO cannot be made responsible for a student who breaks the law and cannot defend a student in court.

The Resident Director retains the right to return a student to the U.S. if s/he feels that the student poses a threat to his/her own safety or that of the other participants in the program, or if his/her behavior is in gross violation of program policies, or if there is a medical or psychiatric condition that cannot be properly attended to in Cordoba.

Alcohol

Spanish culture presents a rich and varied configuration of traditions and customs, to which you will be exposed, and many of which you will learn to appreciate. One such custom you will need to adjust to is the different consumption patterns of alcoholic beverages (primarily wine and beer) in Spanish culture.

Consumption of alcohol in Spain is a more common socially accepted activity than it is in the US. It entails in part consuming moderate quantities of wine or beer, usually accompanied by food (tapas), and also drinking from “earlier” in the day than in the US. Drinking in Spain, however, is not done alone, without eating, or to the point of inebriation, which is never desirable and/or socially acceptable.

PRESHCO, like the other member programs of the Asociación de Programas Universitarios Norteamericanos en España (APUNE), recognises this Spanish practice, while also stressing the need for you to be informed about the safety and health concerns related to it.

The drinking age in Spain is 18 years of age. You should not confuse Spanish social drinking with “power drinking,” which is considered uncouth, distasteful, offensive, and also dangerous.

If you drink, you are expected to always do so in moderation. Serious intoxication and/or hospitalization for alcohol-related problems are both grounds for your immediate dismissal from the program.
Drugs

PRESHCO’s official policy is that there be no use of drugs by its students. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs in Spain are strict. Offenders can expect stiff jail sentences and fines. If accused of violating the country’s laws, U.S. citizens are subject to be tried and sentenced under Spanish law. If you are arrested on a drug charge, it is important that you know that neither PRESHCO nor the U.S. Embassy can demand your release, represent you at trial, provide you with legal counsel, and/or pay your legal fees and/or fines. The rule is a simple one: PRESHCO students may not use drugs or engage in sales or trafficking. Doing so may result in your expulsion from the program.

Non-Program Travel

It is likely that you will travel around Spain and other countries in Europe while abroad. You are required to let the staff know where you will be going, your mode of transportation, and the contact information for your accommodations. You will go over this in more detail during orientation, as well as what to do in an emergency. In addition to letting the staff know, it is a good idea you register your travel with STEP at STEP.state.gov, as previously mentioned above in the Before You Go section.

Cancelling Your Participation in PRESHCO

If you cancel your participation in the PRESHCO program at any time you are responsible for all expenses (travel, housing, etc.) incurred by the program on your behalf and will be required to reimburse funds according to the cancellation penalties stipulated in the confirmation of participation letter you signed upon acceptance to the program.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Post-Arrival Safety

When you arrive in Cordoba, keep your passport in a safe place. We recommend that you walk around only with a photocopy. We also recommend that you scan your passport and keep that scan in your email. The PRESHCO office also keeps a scan copy of it. In the event your passport is lost or stolen, immediately inform the Resident Director. The nearest U.S. Consulate and the local police will also have to be informed. If you can supply the Consulate with a photocopy of the ID/data page of your passport, it will hasten the replacement process.

Spain in general has a low rate of violent crime. Yet as in any case when traveling away from home, you should use common sense and take extra precautions. Travelers using public transportation or wandering about alone, for example, should be alert to the potential for pickpocketing. When you travel—whether inside or outside of Spain—you should be at least as thoughtful about safety as you would be at home.

To get update-to-date reports on worldwide safety via the U.S. Department of State Travel Warnings, visit http://travel.state.gov/travel.

PRESHCO also recommends that prior to their travels, students consult the U.S. State Department section “Precautions to Take While Traveling,” found on its “A Safe Trip Abroad” at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html.

Getting Around Spain

Spain’s network of train and bus services is one of the best in Europe and there aren’t many places that cannot be reached using one or the other. Spain’s high-speed train network is expanding rapidly, while domestic air services from Madrid, Seville and Malaga are plentiful over longer distances and on routes that are more complicated by land.
Trains
RENFE is the national train system that runs most of the services in Spain. A handful of small private railway lines also operate. Spain has several types of trains, and short- and long-distance trains have a variety of names, including Cercanías, Regionales, Talgo and AVE (tren de Alta Velocidad Española). You will find consignas (left-luggage facilities) at all main train stations. They are usually open from about 6 am to midnight, and charge anywhere from 4€ to 6€ per day per luggage piece.

All long-distance trains have first- and second-class seating, known as preferente and turista, respectively. First-class travel can be 20% to 40% more expensive. Fares, however, vary enormously depending on the service (faster trains may cost considerably more), the time when you purchase tickets, and on the day and time of your travel. High-speed services such as the AVE can be purchased for a reasonable price if booked well ahead of your date of travel. You may also be eligible for additional student discounts on many routes and services. It is advisable, therefore, that you plan your travels with time.

On overnight trips within Spain on trenhoteles it is worth paying extra for a litera (couchette; a sleeping berth in a six- or four-bed compartment) or, if available, single or double cabins in preferente or gran clase class. The cost depends on the class of accommodation, type of train and length of your journey.

Reservations are recommended for long-distance trips, and you can make them in train stations, RENFE offices and travel agencies, as well as online. In all major stations (including Cordoba) you can pick up pre-booked tickets from machines found in the station’s concourse.

Flying
If you are traveling within Spain taking the train can be the cheapest and most efficient way to go. If you wish to fly, particularly outside of Spain, you will need to go to Madrid, Malaga or Seville. Getting to the latter two airports is often cheaper by bus. You should always factor travel time and expenses related to getting to and from the airport when deciding on airports and airlines to use. In addition to Iberia, most European airlines fly from Spain to other international destinations (Air France, British Airways, Lufthansa). A number of discount airlines, such as EasyJet, Ryan Air, SkyScanner, among others, may offer better deals, however, when booking your flight keep in mind that these discounted airlines also charge fees for everything from carry-on baggage to using their toilets.

Important Contact Information
The following may be of use while you are in Spain:

U.S. Embassy in Spain:
Calle Serrano, 75
28006 Madrid
Telephone: 91-587-2200
Fax: 91-587-2303
American Citizen Services
Phone: 91-587-2240 (8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Monday-Friday)
Phone: 91-587-2200 (emergencies after hours)
Home Page: http://www.embusa.es/indexbis.html

Emergency number in Spain (equivalent to 911): 112

Calling home
To call the U.S. from Spain, you may dial the international access code (00), 1, Area Code, and the 7-digit phone number. Remember that Spanish cell phones do not normally pay for incoming calls, so others can call you in Spain without your having to pay. Discuss with your family prior to your departure the various options for being in touch. In addition to calls to the cellphone, some PRESHCO students use an international calling card to call the U.S. from Spain. And, of course, there are now many additional internet-based options, including Skype, Googlechats, Facetime, among others.
Bear in mind that Spain is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST) and 9 hours ahead of Pacific Time (PT).

Mail
You can receive mail at the PRESHCO Office. Letters should have your name on the first line and the office’s complete address (see Telephone and Addresses in the Before You Go section) directly underneath your name.

Mailing packages from the United States
If you are going minimalist and don’t intend to take all of your clothes with you for the entire semester, or if you wish to have your family send you items during the semester (or year), please keep in mind that you may be charged custom fees when your box arrives in Spain. You are required by law to fill out a customs form in the U.S. that lists the purpose and value of the package. You should write “personal items” or “efectos personales” instead of gifts, and never check off “commercial goods or merchandise.” Do not list the value as being more than $50; otherwise you will be asked to pay customs tax, and/or risk having your package returned. Never have your parents send electronics or medications to you.

Newspapers
A useful thing you may wish to do before leaving for Spain is to read one of the many on-line national newspapers to educate yourself on their current political, sporting, and cultural events. You may access El País at http://www.elpais.es, ABC at http://www.abc.es, or El Mundo at http://www.el-mundo.es; the first is a liberal paper, while the latter two are conservative. Informing yourself about current events in Spain will provide you with a sense of important developments and issues (not just in Spain but also the rest of Europe), as well as allow you to engage with your host family and new found Spanish friends in deeper and more meaningful ways, as well as impress them with your knowledge!

The PRESHCO Staff (El Equipo)
The staff in Cordoba is composed of a dedicated and knowledgeable group of individuals, who have worked with the program for many years. In addition, a faculty member from one of the consortia schools in the U.S. serves as Resident Director, on a one to two year rotation.

The staff in Cordoba (affectionately known as the Equipo) will work closely with you, and will be your main line of support during your stay. It is important you communicate to them your difficulties and/or challenges.

Their names and roles are as follows:

Alejandra B. Osorio – Resident Director
Alejandra Osorio is the Resident Director for the 2015-2016 and the 2016-2017 Academic Years. She is an Associate Professor of History at Wellesley College. As Resident Director, Professor Osorio serves as the overall program, academic, administrative and fiscal director of PRESHCO in Spain. She will be your primary contact and advisor. She also oversees the staff and acts as the main liaison with the University of Cordoba. Professor Osorio’s research focuses on the urban political culture of the Spanish Habsburg Empire (16th and 17th centuries), and teaches courses on the early modern Spanish American and Iberian worlds.

Eva Sánchez Guijarro - Academic Coordinator
While the Resident Director is your main academic advisor in Spain, Eva will guide you through the registration process, recommend courses to take at UCO, and work with you and the Resident Director if anything arises related to your courses. Eva also organizes many of the logistics for the orientation tour and excursions, and is responsible for reembolsos culturales. Eva is originally from Madrid but has lived in Cordoba for many years. She studied archeology at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and pursued doctoral work at the UCO. She has been with the program since 1997.
Maribel Blanca Nieto - Housing and Events Coordinator
Maribel’s primary responsibility is to find and maintain excellent relationships with the host families. She will be your main point of contact for anything related to your housing, special dietary needs or other issues that may come up related to your host family. She also assists with the coordination of special events and programming. Maribel, originally from the small town of Cañete, has spent her adult life living in Cordoba. She studied history and geography at the UCO, and has worked with PRESHCO since 1998.

Encarnación Muñoz Diaz - Student Services Coordinator
Encarnación (or Encarni) assists in all matters related to the smooth running of the PRESHCO office. She will make appointments and accompany you to medical visits when necessary, help you with directions and information about life in Cordoba. Encarni is also responsible for coordinating student arrivals and departures at the airport, as well as assisting the rest of the staff where needed. She studied English at the UCO and has lived her entire life in Cordoba. She has worked for PRESHCO since 2007.

Office hours
The PRESHCO office is open Monday-Thursday from 9:30am to 2:30pm and from 4:30pm to 7:00pm. On Fridays the office is open from 9:30am to 1:00pm. In the case of an emergency you should always reach the RD or one of the staff members at the numbers you noted above, which will also be given to you in card upon arrival in Spain.

Being a Foreigner
For many of you, Cordoba will be your first long-term experience with another culture. In addition, it will probably be the first time you are considered an “outsider.” The cultural barrier exists, but mostly only to the extent that you let it. Remember that you are the visitor; Spain, in this case Cordoba, is your host. You should also remember that you are a representative of your own country and culture. As such, you should leave the best impression possible so other Americans can be judged in your light.

The greatest differences you will notice have to do with cultural customs. The simple rule to remember is that you are the visitor, and it is up to you to adjust. Spain is not the US. Pay attention, and take your social cues from the people around you. Dealing with these cultural differences will be one of the most interesting parts of the time you spend in Spain. The important thing about being in a different culture is to be sensitive to your surroundings.

Social customs
Spaniards tend to get up somewhat later in the morning and to stay out later at night than the rest of their European neighbors.

Shops and businesses are usually open from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and from 5:00 or 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 or 8:30 p.m., though it has become more and more common for businesses to stay open through the traditional siesta hours. Business establishments are usually closed for a day-and-a half per week, most often Saturday afternoon and Sunday, while many shops close only on Sunday. In tourist areas, in summer, business hours are often expanded to 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. with stores open 7 days a week.

Restaurant hours are quite varied, with the norm being from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. for lunch and from 8:30 p.m. to 11:00 or 11:30 p.m. for dinner. In summer, these hours are often expanded, with many establishments offering continuous service and still others serving food into the small hours of the night.

Bars are usually open all day and close late at night. In general, the nightlife in Spain is quite intense, and the bars and discotheques stay open long past midnight. In summer, they often stay open past 3:00 or 4 a.m. In big cities, like Madrid and Barcelona, there are many places that stay open until dawn, even in winter.

Pharmacy hours are established by each town’s City Hall, though such establishments are generally open from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. Besides this set schedule, however, a series of
pharmacies are required to remain open on an “on call” basis as well. All pharmaceutical dispensaries provide a list of addresses of the establishments that are “on call”, with the nearest ones clearly indicated. This list is also printed in the daily newspapers.

Bank offices are open for business from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday, except in the summer months when they are closed on Saturdays. Some branch offices are open in the afternoon.

Tipping
While college students are not often in situations where it is necessary, we ought to mention tipping, or leaving money for waiters and waitresses and taxi drivers. Tipping is a great tradition in Spain. In restaurants the law requires menu prices to include service charge, and tipping is a matter of personal choice. This custom, common in bars and restaurants, has extended to hotel porters, theatre ushers, and taxi drivers, though in none of these cases is it obligatory nor will anyone recriminate a client for not tipping. Most people leave some small change if they are satisfied and 5% is usually plenty. A good practice is to round up the bill in restaurants. It is common to leave small change at bar and café tables. Taxi drivers are generally tipped 5% of the fare, if at all. In restaurants, the tip is usually included in the price of the menu item. When it is not, it is usually stated on the bill as “No Service Charge Included.” Then you should leave a 10% tip.

Public Bathrooms
There are some public bathrooms in various cities, but typically you are not supposed to use a bathroom in a bar or restaurant without purchasing something to eat or drink. It cannot hurt to ask if you are in dire need.

Fitting In
Fitting into a new culture requires some work. To that end, keep an open mind and be ready to adapt to the Spanish culture, observe and take part in the customs of Spain. No one expects you change your nationality or characteristics, but you can certainly suppress them for a while as you experience a different lifestyle. Remember that you need not agree with the opinions of the Spaniards you will meet but you should listen to what they have to say. Much of what you say and do—and especially how you say and do it—can be helpful in promoting an understanding between the country you call home and your host country. As you already know, and as your experience abroad will confirm, customs, lifestyles, and habits differ between the U.S. and Spain. To experience firsthand those differences and become familiar with them will be uniquely rewarding for you as an individual and as an American.

Photos and Videos
PRESHCO program staff occasionally takes photographs or video that will feature participants at academic and cultural events. If you prefer to not be included in photos or videos (which may be used in program publications and other materials), please inform the Resident Director.

PRESHCO also has a small presence on social media, including a Facebook page and an Instagram account. We would very much like to encourage you to submit photos to either. Social media is used primarily for promoting the program to schools and prospective students. You may join at facebook.com/preshcospain and Instagram is instagram.com/preshcospain.